

Psych Matters

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The Newsletter of the University of Mary Washington Department of Psychology

David Mac Ewen Retires After 42 Years of Service

by Robert Meissner ('13) and Clifton Wise ('13), Psychology Student Representatives



Professor
David Mac Ewen

Professor David Mac Ewen will retire from the Department of Psychology at the end of this academic year. Although students and faculty are sad to see Dr. Mac Ewen go, we appreciate the adventure and relaxation we hope his retirement will bring him and his family. Here, we take the opportunity to reflect on Dr. Mac Ewen's career at UMW and the impact he has had on the department and its members.

Dr. Mac Ewen received his bachelor's degree in Music from La Verne College, his master's degree in psychology from UCLA, and his doctoral degree in psychology from Arizona State University. He was hired by UMW as an Assistant Professor in 1969, and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1974. Dr. Mac Ewen received full professorship in 1983. He served as chair of the department from 1977-1983.

As the longest standing department member currently on staff, Dr. Mac Ewen has had a tremendous influence on the department. Modestly, he stated, "I'd like to think that I had a hand in developing the psychology department, both the curriculum and the general atmosphere surrounding faculty-student interactions."

Over the years, Dr. Mac Ewen has taught many courses; these days, he teaches Introductory and Advanced Statistics for Psychology, Learning and Motivation, and the Applied Behavioral Analysis laboratory course (i.e., "Rat Lab") regularly.

In addition to teaching the aforementioned courses, Dr. Mac Ewen has supervised countless independent research students. Mentoring student research has been one of his most rewarding activities. According to Dr. Mac Ewen, "One thing that has kept me going is that I got to dabble in research, both my own and students' projects."

Dr. Mac Ewen's research interests include applied statistics; animal behavior and cognition; visual memory, including change blindness; and development and testing of instructional technology. Reflecting on his research experiences with students, Dr. Mac Ewen stated, "I'm proud of all of the

wonderful research students I've mentored over the years, though I can take only minimal credit for their successes. Many of these students have gone on to do wonderful things both inside and outside academia."

To disseminate his research, Dr. Mac Ewen has published a number of papers in journals such as *Learning and Motivation*, *Animal Learning and Behavior*, and *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*. Also, he has presented his research, often with students, at a number of conferences including meetings of the Virginia Psychological Association and the Psychonomic Society, and at the Conference of Comparative Cognition.

Dr. Mac Ewen has made notable contributions to instructional technology, presenting such work at the UMW Faculty Academy, an annual conference sponsored by the Division of Teaching and Learning Technology, and at the Eastern Conference on the Teaching of Psychology. To sponsor his instructional technology work, Dr. Mac Ewen has applied for and received multiple grants from UMW to develop and test of instructional technology protocols.

In addition to his accomplishments in teaching and research, Dr. Mac Ewen has provided valuable service to the department, university, and community. Of the many responsibilities he has at the department level, his most demanding one is running the animal facility. Another demanding task Dr. Mac Ewen performs for the department is designing and maintaining its website. An additional service he has performed for years includes designing the department brochure. Last, Dr. Mac Ewen usually mans the grill at the Fall Picnic!

At the university level, Dr. Mac Ewen has been the chair of the committee to select the students who will become UMW's Washington Scholars. Washington Scholars receive full support to attend the university, so making these selections has life-changing implications for the selected students. Dr. Mac Ewen has held his position as chair of the committee since the inception of the program. In addition, he has served on other university-wide committees, for example, the Faculty Development and Grants Committee.

Dr. Mac Ewen has been active in the community also. For 19 years, he judged Chancellor High School's annual science fair. Recently, Dr. Mac Ewen has made efforts to foster wildlife preservation by repairing shelters for migratory osprey and

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building oyster cages for the Potomac River.

So, does Dr. Mac Ewen's retirement promise adventure and relaxation? Dr. Mac Ewen plans to enjoy his hobbies, including kayaking, and to develop the perfect martini. Surely sounds like a plan for adventure and relaxation! In his own words, "Honestly, I don't have specific plans, and that's kind of the way I like it. If I stay healthy, I plan to do lots of kayaking. I have a list of rivers I want to run starting with the Greenbrier in West Virginia. I own seven kayaks – it's sort of an obsession."

Reflecting on his many years in the classroom at UMW, Dr. Mac Ewen cannot choose just one memorable teaching moment. "There are many," he said. "I've been associated with some wonderful colleagues and some wonderful students. I've never won any awards for my teaching, and my style is rather old school, but I like to think I've done something positive for students. I have expected a lot from them, and I am rewarded when the few and the proud take up the challenge."

One teaching moment that Dr. Mac Ewen recalled illustrates the humor students have often found in his classroom. "One of the best jokes students ever played on me was in General Psychology," Dr. Mac Ewen said. "We used to teach classes of 70. This makes for a sea of students, and I don't have very good vision. There was a student who sat in the front row who had curly red hair, freckles, and a rather round face. One day, her friends put a large Raggedy Ann doll in her place. The class began to roar with laughter when this old, four-eyed professor didn't notice the difference between the real student and the doll. I don't think I ever asked her any more questions!"

Dr. Mac Ewen will leave the Department of Psychology a richer place. His influence has been felt in the classroom, in the laboratory, at the university, and in the surrounding

community. Dr. Mac Ewen will be remembered as an instructor, a mentor, a colleague, and as a friend. He is a component of the department's and the university's living history. In his words, "I have been at UMW for so many years; I can remember when Mother Washington was still alive!"

Thank you, Dr. Mac Ewen for each and every year of your service. We wish you a healthy, happy, and fulfilling retirement. For now, we'll wait to raise that perfect martini!



Dr. David Mac Ewen at the Grill

Graduate in Residence Dr. Matthew Hunsinger Discusses the Formation and Modification of Intergroup Bias

by Courtney Lynn ('13) and Kate Boggs ('13), Psychology Student Representatives

One tradition of the UMW Psychology Department is an annual visit, including guest lectures in classes and a talk that is open to the public, by a former psychology student. Last September, the department invited Dr. Matthew Hunsinger to be the seventeenth Graduate in Residence.

Dr. Hunsinger graduated from UMW in 2001. As an undergraduate under the supervision of Professor Denis Nissim-Sabat, Dr. Hunsinger completed an honors thesis, in which he investigated the effects of level of stigma on memory reconstruction. After graduating from

MWC, Dr. Hunsinger attended Illinois State University, where he completed a master's degree in Cognitive Science. At Illinois State University, he studied the relationships between attitudes, values, and behavior in the workplace. Finally, Dr. Hunsinger obtained his doctoral degree in Social Psychology at the University of Massachusetts, where he studied the effect of fear on race bias during rapid decision making.

Currently, Dr. Hunsinger is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, VA. At Mary Baldwin College, he teaches undergraduate courses in introductory psychology, behavioral statistics, history of psychology, learning and behavior, cognitive psychology, and social cognition. In addition, Dr. Hunsinger has taught a special topics course titled, Psychology of Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Dr. Hunsinger's research interests include prejudice, stereotyping, and intergroup relations. Furthermore, he is interested in the role emotion plays in the evaluation of groups. These interests were reflected in the talk he gave titled, "Paths to improving intergroup relations and decreasing intergroup bias in a diverse world."

During his talk, Dr. Hunsinger discussed how it is human nature to automatically categorize people into groups, specifically "ingroups" and "outgroups." An ingroup is one to which an individual feels he or she belongs. An outgroup is one to which an individual feels he or she does not belong. People in one's ingroup tend to be viewed positively, whereas people in one's outgroup may be viewed negatively. Furthermore, negative evaluation of an outgroup may result in feelings of competition or conflict.

Dr. Hunsinger discussed how our emotions affect the evaluation of an outgroup. Specifically, he has investigated how incidental emotion, or emotion resulting from a source other than intergroup relations, affects the evaluation of an outgroup. Dr. Hunsinger found that even incidental emotion creates a negative bias toward an outgroup.

Furthermore, Dr. Hunsinger found

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Dr. Matthew Hunsinger ('01)

that this negative evaluation is more likely to occur if the induced incidental emotion is consistent with the outgroup stereotype. For example, incidental disgust increased bias against homosexuals, for whom disgust is central to the group's stereotype, but incidental anger did not. Also, incidental anger increased bias against Arabs, for whom anger is central to the group's stereotype, but incidental disgust did not.

In addition to discussing the influence of emotion on the formation of intergroup bias, Dr. Hunsinger discussed ways in which bias might be reduced. One potential modifier of intergroup bias may be meditation. In related research, Dr. Hunsinger found that meditation may lead to an increase in empathy which, in turn, may lead to a decrease in prejudice.

The take home message of Dr. Hunsinger's talk was that each of us must strive to be aware of how we perceive others and, in turn, how those perceptions influence our interactions with others. Furthermore, engaging in practices that foster positive perceptions and interactions may decrease intergroup bias. Decreasing intergroup bias is increasingly important as the world becomes increasingly diverse.

Prior to his talk, Dr. Hunsinger lunched with students and described the path he took to his masters, and doctoral degrees. In addition, Dr. Hunsinger discussed his experience applying to graduate school, and offered students tips for success during the application process.

The Psychology Department would like to thank Dr. Hunsinger for visiting UMW to share his expertise and experience with students and faculty. It was a pleasure to have you back on campus; we wish you all the best at Mary Baldwin College and beyond.

New and Improved Psychology Major for Fall 2012

by *Kate Boggs ('13)* and *Courtney Lynn ('13)*, Psychology Student Representatives

Continually, the psychology faculty discusses the major curriculum to assess whether it is meeting the needs of psychology students. For some time, the faculty had been concerned that the major did not represent all areas of psychology for all students who experience the major. This concern was the primary impetus for redesigning the major last year. One resource the faculty consulted while redesigning the major was an American Psychological Association (APA) report, published in 2007, titled, the "APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major."

The report presented a number of goals of the major curriculum, one of which described the appropriate knowledge base that a psychology student should gain from majoring in the discipline. The authors of the report recommended students take courses in each of four content areas, including: learning and cognition; individual differences, personality, and social processes; the biological bases of behavior; and developmental changes in behavior.

The old major required students take a set of core courses, including General Psychology, Introductory Statistics for Psychology, Advanced Statistics for Psychology, Research Methods for Psychology, and History of Psychology. In addition, students selected one course from the following areas: social/developmental; applied psychology; and experimental psychology. Last, students completed an out-of-class experience, either independent research, internship, or community service in addition to some electives.

The new major retains the core courses as well as the out-of-class experience described above; however, students must select one course from a set of courses in each of four content areas. These areas reflect the four APA-recommended areas. The first area is called Abnormal, Personality and Social Psychology, and students must take either Abnormal Psychology, Social Psychology, or Psychology of Personality to fulfill this requirement.

The second area is called Biological Psychology, and students must take either Cognitive Neuroscience (formerly called Biocognition), Sensation and Perception, Biological Psychology (formerly called Physiological Psychology), or Psychopharmacology to fulfill this requirement. The third area in the new major is called Cognition and Learning, and students must take either Cognitive Neuroscience, Sensation and Perception, Cognitive Psychology, or Fundamentals of Learning and Motivation to fulfill this requirement. (Note that students cannot take Cognitive Neuroscience or Sensation and Perception and fulfill the requirement in both of these areas. For example, if Cognitive Neuroscience is taken to fulfill the requirement of the second area, a different course must be taken to fulfill the requirement of a course in the third area.)

The last area is called Developmental Psychology, and students must take either Developmental Psychology: The Infant and Child, Developmental Psychology: the Adolescent and Adult, or Psychology of Aging to fulfill this requirement.

Some of the courses listed above, for example Sensation and Perception and Cognitive Psychology, were experimental psychology courses with labs under the old major. These courses used to be four credit courses which met six hours per week. Under the new major, these courses have been changed to three-credit courses that meet three hours per week; essentially, these courses no longer have a laboratory component.

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Nevertheless, the new major includes a research component. Specifically, there is another area in the new major called Research in Psychology. Students must take one course from this area, too, and these courses are research seminars in Abnormal, Personality, or Social Psychology; Biological Psychology; Cognition or Learning; Developmental Psychology or a semester of independent research. As a pre-requisite for these seminars, students must complete a content course in the corresponding area described above.

A meeting of over 75 prospective and current psychology students with the Psychology Department Chair, Dr. Debra Steckler, and the psychology student representatives was held in October, 2011, to describe these changes and address students' concerns. Overall, students' responses to the new major were favorable. Students graduating at the end of the '11-'12 academic year will complete the requirements of the old major; however, students graduating after spring 2012, will complete the requirements of the new major. Although this may necessitate a minor change of plans for some students, completing the new major will yield a more well-rounded education in and experience of psychology.

Psi Chi Inducts New Members

Assistant Professor Hilary Stebbins, keynote speaker, welcomed a number of psychology majors into the UMW chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology. The fall 2011 inductees were: **Alyssa Dembrowski, Katherine Dubrowski, Natalie Fraize, Janet Greider, Sarah Hunt, Caroline Lupsha, Tammy Marshall, Shaun Mayer, Amy Newcomb, Mara Rowcliffe, Lucas Ruth, and Leia Strahs.**

Career Column: Twin Registry Administrator

by Dr. Virginia Mackintosh, Assistant Professor and Career Advisor

The majority of our graduates do not head off to graduate school, instead preferring to take their degrees and hit their career paths running. Career Column highlights some of the interesting directions our students have taken since their graduations.



Emily Lilley ('03)

When Emily Lilley (nee Hill) graduated with a Psychology degree from Mary Washington College (MWC) in 2003, she thought she might attend graduate school at some point, but she had no definite plan. So, in the meantime, she went to live back home with her family where she was able to pursue her interest in horseback riding while looking for a job.

Through a friend of a friend she learned of an opening for a Research Interviewer at the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry (MATR) at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). The MATR acts as a liaison between twins and researchers from all over the country (and some from outside the U.S. as well). Emily had always been fascinated by twins, partly due to the fact that her younger brothers are monozygotic (identical) twins, but also because of her studies at MWC.

Emily got the job as a Research Interviewer, and has been at the MATR ever since, rising up the ranks to her current position as Registry Administrator. As Registry Administrator, Emily supervises interviewers, project managers and data specialists, while overseeing multiple research projects involving twins.

The MATR is the largest twin registry in the United States, and the second largest in the world. All multiple

births in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina are reported to the MATR so the families can be contacted and asked if they would like to sign up as potential research participants. Twins from many other states volunteer to enroll. The registered twins range in age from birth to over 90, and are from all races and zygosity (i.e., fraternal and identical). The registry also contains information on those Emily refers to as "higher order multiples," for example, triplets.

The use of twins allows researchers to explore the genetic underpinnings of many things, including physical and mental disease. Some examples of twin studies in progress include ones designed to investigate rheumatoid arthritis screening, the effects of microbes in the body, and factors in human aging.

Even though most of the studies being conducted through the MATR are not directly related to psychology, Emily's background in psychological research methods has served her well. It was at MWC that Emily learned the ethical principles of research, which is important because, as Emily stated, "protecting research subjects is an integral part of what I do at the MATR."

Emily not only works with twins, but also with researchers. When researchers contact the MATR, their studies are sometimes in the early planning stages. Emily and her team work with the scientists to bring the study to fruition. This involves helping the researchers write up the proposal for the VCU Internal Review Board (a skill Emily learned at MWC), writing interview scripts, and recruiting and interviewing the participants.

Emily has some contact with the twins, and enjoys meeting with them; however, her work these days is largely managerial. Nevertheless, she loves her job. In Emily's words, "it's a cool job, a very unique one."

A Moment in the History of the Psychology Department

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

In '85-'86, the first Psi Chi Research Symposium was held. Given that there were fewer than 100 majors at the time, it was undoubtedly a smaller production than today's Psi Chi Research Symposium, which accommodates over 350 majors! The present day Psi Chi-sponsored event unfolds over two days and includes oral presentations by honors students, independent research team students, and experimental laboratory course students. In addition, research methods course students present posters. Nearly as popular as the presentations is the food available at breaks and lunches, much of which is solicited by Psi Chi members who seek donations from local businesses. The event culminates in a keynote address by a speaker often invited from an area college or university. The keynote address is followed by presentation of student awards for achievement in research, scholarships for academic achievement, and the psychology department's Outstanding Senior Award. The annual Psi Chi Research Symposium takes place at the end of the spring semester; this year, the dates of the symposium are Thursday, April 19 and Friday, April 20. The symposium is open to the public; come one, come all!

Faculty News

Dr. Mindy Erchull, Associate Professor, published a paper titled, "The treatment of evolutionary psychology in social psychology textbooks," in *Sex Roles*. In addition, she participated in two discussions at the Association for Women in Psychology meeting last March. They were titled, "Live to tell: The experiences of early career feminists" and "Early career research: Fitting it all in." Last August, Dr. Erchull presented a poster titled, "Not as it seems: Sexualization, self-objectification, agency, and pleasure," at the American Psychological Association meeting. Also, she presented a poster titled, "Perceptions and misperceptions of women's and men's attitudes about sexual activity during menstruation," at the meeting of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research last June. Finally, Dr. Erchull presented a poster titled, "Young women's sexual attitudes and behaviors: What predicts 'hook-ups' and casual sex?," and participated in a symposium titled, "Publishing your research in a psychological journal: Tips for students," at the Association for Psychological Science meeting last May.

Dr. Erchull and **Dr. Miriam Liss**, Associate Professor, presented a poster titled, "Own and others' desire for marriage and children: A comparison of feminist and non-feminist women," at the Institute for Academic Feminist Psychologists meeting in January. Furthermore, Drs. Erchull and Liss

participated in two symposia, which Dr. Erchull chaired, titled, "Is feminism only for single, non-mothers?" and "Feminism and attachment parenting: Stereotypes and realities," at the Association for Women in Psychology meeting last March.

Dr. Chris Kilmartin, Professor, gave the keynote address titled, "The nature of violence on campus: Framing questions for prevention," at the NCAA's first Summit on Interpersonal Violence. Also, he gave a talk titled, "Understanding and treating the traditionally-gendered man in psychotherapy," at an international conference called Future Perspectives on Intervention, Policy, and Research in Men and Masculinities. Dr. Kilmartin participated in three symposia at the American Psychological Association meeting last August, which were titled, "Interventions to reduce men's sexism: Findings and prospects," "New research pathways to improving men's mental health," and "Male-friendly strategies for improving outcomes for prostate cancer." Last, Dr. Kilmartin conducted three workshops: one titled, "Violence in the media: Why it is there?, What does it do?, and What can we do about it?," at the National Organization for Men against Sexism conference; another titled, "Teaching the psychology of men," at the American Psychological Association meeting; and the last titled, "Psychotherapy with men," at Virginia Commonwealth University Counseling Services. Finally, Dr. Kilmartin provided training briefings for senior military

officers at Fort Sam Houston Army Base and Randolph and Lackland Air Force Bases.

Dr. David Kolar, Associate Professor, and **Dr. Christine McBride**, Professor, published a paper titled, "Mentoring at-risk youth in school: Can small doses make a big change," in *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*.

Dr. Virginia Mackintosh, Assistant Professor, gave a talk at the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research Conference in June titled, "Tell me about your first period: A mixed-methods study of women's menarche experiences." Shortly, Dr. Mackintosh will publish two papers she has written with colleagues from Virginia Commonwealth University. She is first author on a paper titled, "What do you like/dislike about the treatments you're currently using?" A qualitative study of parents of children with autism spectrum disorders," which will be published in *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*. She is second author on a chapter being published in the monograph *Relationship Processes and Resilience in Children of Incarcerated Parents*. The chapter, "Teasing and bullying in children of incarcerated mothers," examined emotion regulation in both teasers and their victims. Children of incarcerated parents were also the topic in April, when Dr. Mackintosh was a guest on the National Public

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Radio program *With Good Reason*.

Dr. Jennifer Mailloux, Associate Professor, presented a poster titled, “Influence of numeracy and need for cognition on a novel ratio-bias task,” at the Association for Psychological Science meeting last May.

Dr. Holly Schiffrin, Associate Professor, will publish two papers shortly, including “Do positive and negative emotion have a symmetrical effect on creativity?” in the *Journal of Psychology and the Behavioral Sciences*, and “On-line self-disclosure behaviors” in the *Encyclopedia of Cyber Behavior*. In addition, she gave a presentation titled, “Predicting student success in introductory statistics,” at the National Institute for the Teaching of Psychology last January, and a presentation titled, “Students in research,” at the Virginia Institutional Review Board Consortium Conference last October. Also, Dr. Schiffrin presented a poster titled, “Positive psychology and attachment theory: The impact of affect versus attachment on outcomes,” at the Positive Psychology World Congress last July. Last, she conducted a workshop called, “Positive psychology: The science behind being happier,” for the University of Mary Washington Alumni College last June.

Dr. Hilary Stebbins, Assistant Professor, published a paper titled, “Making connections: Creating a human neural network to demonstrate Hebbian learning,” in a special issue of the *Journal of Behavioral and Neuroscience Research* dedicated to pedagogical activities for courses on learning and memory. Also, Dr. Stebbins presented a poster titled, “The influence of emotional faces on the attentional blink,” at the Association for Psychological Science meeting last May.

Announcements

Please consider recognizing the Department of Psychology with a monetary contribution. Please make checks payable to the University of Mary Washington Foundation, and specify that the donation is for the Psychology Department. Please send checks to the following address: University of Mary Washington Foundation, Jepson Alumni Executive Center, 1119 Hanover Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401-5412. Your donation would be used to support student scholarships and student presentations at conferences. We would appreciate your support!

Keep in touch with your psychology department and fellow graduates. Join the **UMW Psychology Department** and/or the **UMW Department of Psychology Alumni** groups 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!