

SPRING 2012 | NEWS FROM THE UNL DEPARTMENT OF

PSYCHOLOGY



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

psychology.unl.edu

Dear Alumni, Students, Colleagues, and Friends,

I am pleased to once again have this opportunity to say “hello” and share some brief updates. It has been an exciting and productive time for the Department.

We are pleased to welcome two new Psychology faculty members since our last newsletter. Jeff Stevens joined us in August, 2011. He earned his Ph.D. in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior from the University of Minnesota and came to Lincoln from the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. Jeff’s interests integrate cognitive and evolutionary perspectives to study decision making in humans and other animals. Jonathan

Templin will be joining us in August, 2012. He received his Ph.D. in Psychology (Quantitative) from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is currently a faculty member at the University of Georgia. His research program focuses on the development and application of diagnostic classification models, also known as cognitive diagnosis models, that provide support for diagnostic decision making.

We also welcome three new staff members. Kristi Hurley and Betty James have joined the Main Office and Ashley Brauer works in the Psychological Consultation Center. They are wonderful additions to the Department and make many valuable contributions. We are delighted to have them on board!

We had two faculty departures in 2011. John Flowers is now enjoying retirement after 39 years as a major contributor on our faculty. Gus Carlo left to join the faculty of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Missouri. We wish them both well in their future endeavors (and we know that includes more fishing for John!). We are pleased that John and Gus continue involvement with the department, with John serving as a Professor Emeritus and Gus as an Adjunct Professor.

The Nebraska Symposium on Motivation continues its rich history of valuable contributions. The 2011 Symposium, “The Influence of Attention, Learning, and Motivation on Visual Search,” coordinated by Mike Dodd and John Flowers was another engaging and informative event with outstanding speakers. The 60th annual symposium in 2012, “Motivational Perspectives on Dehumanization, Objectification, Anthropomorphism and Humanization,” coordinated by Sarah

Gervais, just took place this past April and was another tremendous success. Please join us for future symposia and watch for future symposium volumes, published by Springer Science + Business Media.

An exciting development for our Department is a new research center being developed on campus: the Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior (CB3). Dennis Molfese, Thompson Professor of Psychology, will serve as the Director of CB3. The interdisciplinary Center is scheduled to open in the summer of 2013. It will be located within the new expansion of the east side of Memorial Stadium, which as you may know is a very short walk from Burnett Hall. The Center will include state-of-the art space and equipment, including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Psychology faculty and students will be collaborating with researchers from a variety of campus units, including Athletics, in CB3 endeavors.

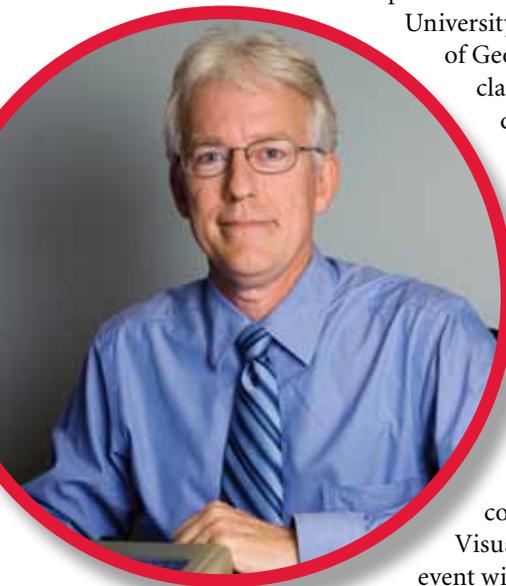
As some of you know, after 11 years of serving as Department Chair, I have decided to step down. The Department has made many advances since 2001 (described in an article in this newsletter) and I felt this was a good time for the transition. I actually decided to step down well over a year ago, but chose to continue one more year so that Rick Bevins, our next Chair, could take a well-deserved faculty development leave before assuming the duties. Rick has been my Vice Chair for nine years and I am extremely delighted to see him take on this position. Rick will have the support of a tremendous team of faculty and staff as the Department continues to grow and excel.

I hope you enjoy reading our third Department of Psychology Newsletter. Thank you to Mike Dodd for continuing to serve as editor of the newsletter and to everyone who contributed articles. You may also keep informed via our Department webpage at <http://psychology.unl.edu>, or our Facebook group, “UNL Psychology: Students, Faculty, and Alumni.” When visiting our web page you may notice that it has recently undergone major revision and updating. Thanks to Jeff Stevens for his tremendous efforts accomplishing that!

As you have news or requests for the newsletter, please let us know. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes and warm regards,

David J. Hansen, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair



A Select Review of Changes in the Department

BY RICK BEVINS

In August of this year, Dave Hansen will be finishing his 11-year tenure as Chair of the Department. We thought it would be interesting to reflect back across these 11 years (2001 to 2012) and the changes and advances that have been made in the Department. These advances have required the coordinated efforts of many individuals. We want to thank them here for their dedication and valuable service to the Department and to the University. Of course, such transformational changes do not occur in a vacuum. They require strong and thoughtful leadership. Before describing some of the changes over these 11 years, I want to take this opportunity to thank Dave on behalf of the faculty members, staff, students, and alumni for his selfless and tireless efforts to strategically build and strengthen all aspects of the Department. His leadership has left us on a strong foundation and on an upward trajectory—Thank you!

Context and Challenges

As with the economy, in general, times have been tight at the University for quite awhile. The Fall of 2001 began a period of budget cuts that almost never ceased. In the 11 year period, there have been nine budget cutting years on campus; the other two years, including the 2011-12 academic year, were very lean. In response to this fiscal climate, we have prepared five budget cut proposals in that time period, with budget reduction scenarios as high as 8% of our permanent budget. Fortunately, we have not had to implement such a stern cut. Doing so would have meant a significant loss of supports for faculty members and staff, as well as elimination of some teaching assistantships. However, this does not mean that we have avoided budget cuts and reallocation of resources. For example, there has been no increase in operating budget since the mid 1990s, thus levying a budget cut at the rate of inflation each year. To get an idea of the extent of this cut, we needed \$14,760 in 2011 to have the same purchasing power as \$10,000 in 1995—a 47.6% reduction. Further, during that time, our portion of indirect costs returned to the Department from external grants has dropped from 22.67% to approximately 13.25%.

The good news in all this is that we have maintained our day-to-day operations and supports for faculty members and staff—not making all the advances we'd like, but not losing ground or taking away supports. Further, the Department is on an upward trajectory in all of its critical missions: effective teaching and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students; outreach and service to Nebraskans and

the profession; research publications and external grant submissions.

Since 2001, we have had two Academic Program Reviews [APR (2003-04 and 2010-11)]. The review teams in both cases were quite complimentary regarding the extent to which we accomplish so much within our mission while being under resourced. Indeed, Psychology is the largest undergraduate major in the College of Arts and Sciences, and second largest at UNL, only behind Business Administration which is shared across multiple departments. We have approximately 845 majors/double majors and 348 minors, as well as over 100 graduate students in our graduate program; these numbers are trending up in the past few years. Starting in the Fall of 2012 with the start of one new hire, Jonathan Templin, we will have 27 faculty members (FTE 24.73); this marks a return to our historic high from 1996. With new hires, departures, and retirements over the past 11 years, the face and nature of the Department is quite different now. In the span of 11 years, we have hired 16 faculty members. This means that more than half of our faculty members currently in the Department have been hired since 2001. Fourteen out of the 16 individuals hired in this time have been retained. Although there are no data to explicitly support this idea, we would like to think that the increased attention paid to mentoring junior faculty in the past decade, as well as the collegial and supportive environment provided by the Department, in general, have contributed to this retention. With the new faculty hires, we have made a variety of strategic additions and strengthened a number of areas that have lots of promise for the future. Along with the hires, there have been 16 promotions (8 to Associate Professor with tenure and 8 to Professor), counting the two cases this year. Every promotion case has been a positive decision.

Growing the Next Generation

There have been a number of challenges over the past 11 years that needed to be met given the large number of majors relative to the size of the faculty. A notable one that was highlighted in the 2003-04 APR was the need for more effective advising. Since this time we have made, and continue to make, great progress in this front. For example, we hired Celeste Spier, a Masters level advisor and the focus of a newsletter piece on page 5 of this issue. She, along with the coordinated help of many others, has made many innovative improvements to the advising process. There was a major shift in the University-



level general education requirements as well. With the leadership of Dan

Leger, the Undergraduate Issues Committee Chair, and the

efforts of many other Department members, we have implemented the new general education curriculum (ACE), and transitioned away from the previous curriculum (IS/ES). Assessment of this ACE program is an ongoing process.

We have continued to refine and advance our undergraduate and graduate curricula. For example, we have added a new, and quite popular, undergraduate diversity course, as well as Graduate Diversity Concentration. While we still offer the needed courses in the core disciplines of Psychology, we have updated and shifted course offerings to reflect recent trends in the field at all levels of instruction. As an example, there is now a Psyc 100 course (Career Planning for Psychology Majors) required for majors that introduces them to areas of study, career opportunities, and training needs for those opportunities. Increasingly, potential genetic influences are studied alongside psychosocial factors. We now offer Behavior Genetics to undergraduate and graduate students. There are quite a few examples, so we apologize for only noting a few. The course Psyc 990 (Practicum in Teaching Methods) provides a unique training opportunity for our graduate students. To be competitive in the current academic job market, students who have focused heavily on research or service during their time here still need experience teaching. This course provides a structured, as well as mentored, way to teach a small undergraduate course in their area of interest. We have also added more advanced statistical training for our graduate students with Multilevel Models for Longitudinal Data (Psyc 944) and Advanced Multilevel Models (Psyc 945). There is no doubt that such advances in training make the graduate students more independent and more competitive for jobs.

Over the past 11 years, we have solidified our standing in the University as a leader in providing undergraduate research training and opportunities. For instance, one University support for research is the grants provided to students through the Undergraduate Creative Activity and Research Experiences (UCARE) program. The Department averages more than 28 UCARE funded students per year. Over 90% of our faculty members have supervised a UCARE student in recent years, and Psychology students account for approximately 15% of all posters

at the UNL Undergraduate Research Fair. This standing is a clear continuation of the exceptional and long history of psychological research at UNL that dates back to 1889 with Harry K. Wolfe. A quick glance at faculty members' curriculum vitae will show the extent and the importance of undergraduate research assistants to the research success of the Department. More than ever, undergraduate students are presenting research at local, regional, and national conferences. They are increasingly involved in the publication process, including co-authorship. There are also recent examples of undergraduate students securing funding for their research from external organizations such as Psi Chi and the American Psychological Association (APA).

The Department now celebrates these accomplishments in an annual "Undergraduate" Recognition Ceremony. See the back cover of this newsletter for information on the 2012 ceremony. Over the past decade, this event has grown from the Wolfe Award Ceremony to now include induction of new Psi Chi members and presentation of several new awards. These new awards are the Levine Diversity Awards for graduate and undergraduate research, the Jensen Undergraduate Research Award (generously endowed by Don Jensen's family), the Faculty Member of the Year (selected by the undergraduates), and the new Graduate Student Teaching/Mentoring awards (generously endowed by President Milliken and the University of Nebraska Foundation).

Combined, the recent advising, teaching, training, and mentoring activities of the Department resulted in us receiving the very prestigious University-Wide Department Teaching Award for 2010. Please see last year's newsletter for more on this Award [<http://psychology.unl.edu/newsletter>].

Further Productivity and Needed Elbow Room

The past 11 years has seen faculty members of the Department becoming much more active in pursuing and securing funding for their research. The reasons for such a shift likely differ by the individual—nature of the research expenses, expectations of the profession or administration, cultural shift within the Department and University, etc. Regardless, submissions increased from an average of \$8.2 million per year in fiscal years 2001 and 2002, to an average of \$20.6 million in the past two fiscal years (2010 and 2011). In that same period, awards have increased from an average of \$940K per year to an average of \$3.9 million. This reflects just over a 250% increase in submissions with a 4-fold increase in dollars for research secured. Notably, the success rate also went up. In the 2001 to 2002 fiscal years, we were awarded 11.46% of dollars requested; this increased to 18.93% for the 2010 and 2011 years. We are on track this fiscal year to keep up the positive trend.

Other research productivity is up as well. We already highlighted the involvement of undergraduate students in research. Another example is our overall publication rate. The 2010 APR found an increase of about 33% in journal publications over the 2003 APR. External grants and

fellowships (e.g., National Research Service Awards from NIH) by our graduate students have increased from a relatively rare occurrence to having at least five or six students with such funding in a given year. Also, we have gone from sometimes having one grant-funded post-doctoral fellow, to currently having eight post-docs and research assistant professors. Further, our faculty, students, and staff have received more awards than ever before. This includes College and University Teaching Awards for faculty and graduate students, College Research Awards, College Applause Awards for staff, dissertation awards and fellowships for graduate students, APA fellow status for faculty members, and much more. The number of named professorships has also increased. In 2001, we had one named professorship; there are now six in the Department.

We moved into Burnett nearly 15 years ago, filling the research and office space fast. Space has been tight since, but we made some improvements and advancements in space, with more to come. Here is a list...

- The shared Behavioral Sciences Data Collection Lab in the basement was created.
- Room 12 was renovated to accommodate twelve teaching assistants.
- Room 236 was renovated from storage and copy space to a nice conference room.
- This room was also recently updated with teleconference capabilities.
- Room 106 was acquired and is now used for research, classes, and meetings.
- Room 79 was refurnished and made into a valuable research, teaching, and seminar space.
- Neuroscience and behavior labs in Manter Hall were improved and expanded.
- Additional research space in Manter Hall was acquired for recent hires.
- An additional faculty lab in the 501 Building was acquired.
- We successfully pushed to have all Burnett classrooms made multi-media.
- This push included our rooms (e.g., Burnett 328, 313, 77, and 79).
- We are positioned to benefit greatly in space (East Stadium expansion) and equipment from our involvement in the new Center for Brain, Biology, and Behavior (CB3).

Other Notable Advances

As I write this article, I keep thinking of other changes in the Department over the past 11 years that should at least be noted so that we have a longer institutional memory. In this time, we started this Department newsletter—now on its third annual edition. The Psychology Department Colloquium was

also started. There were 11 more Nebraska Symposia on Motivation, keeping this tradition of exceptional scholarship and exchange of ideas in psychological and motivational theory going for a continuous 60 years. In the last decade, we also doubled the amount of annual support for the Nebraska Symposium on Motivation and switched publishers to Springer Science+Business Media.

Department governance, committee structure, and administrative tasks have also been revised and remolded to provide greater efficiency. One of the largest gains was the creation of the Graduate Executive Committee. Historically, all faculty members formed a “committee” that would oversee all graduate student and curricula issues. These meetings would last a better portion of the day, as each student was discussed, regardless of standing in the Department. The Graduate Executive Committee, made up of an appointed Chair, each Program Coordinator, and two members-at-large, now provide a streamlined review of graduate students and handle graduate issues and administrative tasks. With the advent of an online system of review, we also saw the loss of the Ethics Committee that provided pre-IRB review of proposals—many faculty work hours saved. The nomination, election, and/or appointment processes for a variety of committees were made less cumbersome. While making some of these changes, the Department Bylaws were updated significantly to reflect current process and practice. In the end, these and other changes have saved a significant amount of faculty and staff time, allowing them to focus on the other missions of the Department.

Future Possibilities and Challenges

In the Chancellor’s State of the University speech, he set out ambitious goals for growing the UNL student body, number of faculty members, and research expenditures. As the campus mobilizes to achieve these goals, there is no doubt that the number of Psychology undergraduate majors will grow. To meet this increase in demand for classes, research experiences, advising, etc., there will need to be significant investments in infrastructure, supports, and faculty for the Department. If tight budgets and budget cuts continue, then we will be hard pressed to maintain the high quality major, as well as make further strides in our service and research missions. We presume, however, that we will be benefiting from the projected university growth in students and faculty. This should include strategic hires that fill training needs, while at the same time building on current strengths and interdisciplinary initiatives, as well as developing new possibilities brought forth by our creative and energized faculty members. If the Department is included in these plans for growth, then such inclusion will help us increase research productivity and visibility, as well as advance educational opportunities for our students. As I said in the opening paragraph, Dave’s leadership has left this Department on a strong foundation and on an upward trajectory. Now is the time for strategic investments.

John Flowers retires

BY DAN LEGER

Some folks delay retirement because they don't know what they'll do with their time afterwards. After all, work is a time-demanding enterprise and there isn't always something to fill the void.

John arrived at UNL in 1972 as a greenhorn assistant professor, fresh from completing his Ph.D. work at Yale. Through most of his career John was the linchpin of the Department's cognitive program. His work has focused on many fascinating topics, including such things as synesthesia (in which a person perceives numbers as colors, etc.), and data sonification (in which numerical data are converted into sounds to help the visually-impaired grasp the information contained in graphs). Although we now are fortunate to have a much larger group of cognitive psychologists, there were times when John was pretty much on his own.

In addition to his teaching of cognitive psychology and related fields, John was a stalwart in the Department, a respected colleague and departmental citizen. For example, John served for many years as the Department's Vice-chair, doing the many thankless jobs of that position (such as scheduling classes) and doing them well. When not busy being Vice-chair he was elected over and over to the Department's Executive Committee, a testament to the trust accorded him by the faculty.

Nearly 40 years after joining UNL, John accepted the University's early retirement offer, and is now spending his time much differently than before. Rather than worrying his students with a term paper deadline, he's worrying fish with his next cast. Rather than reading journal articles, he's reading music as he goes about learning to play the organ. And rather than cooking up a set of tough exam questions, he's in the kitchen cooking up an exotic dish. John hasn't had any trouble filling the void caused by no more classes to teach, papers to write, or meetings to attend.

If I had a nickel for every time John and I had lunch together, or grouched about some goofy university policy, or dissected the last Husker game, I'd be rich enough to join John in retirement! So I will carry on, glad to have had the opportunity to work with John over the decades, and happy when he does stop by to tell a few new "fish stories!"

Congratulations, John, on a great career and thanks for all you've done for psychology at Nebraska.



ABOVE | Dave Hansen (right) pays tribute to John Flowers at his retirement celebration

BELOW | Psychology faculty, friends, and family celebrate John's long and storied career at the University



An Academic Advisor Who Makes a Difference

BY LISA CROCKETT

Some academic advisors make a real difference in students' lives. Celeste Spier is one of those advisors. As the primary advisor for more than 800 Psychology majors, she has her hands full. Yet she takes the time to learn about students' personal circumstances and goals which help define their academic needs and future directions.

Celeste stepped into the position of Undergraduate Psychology Advisor in 2008 and quickly became an expert advisor and key department and college resource. One gap in the advising program had been career-related resources tailored for psychology majors. Drawing on her experience in career counseling, Celeste compiled information on internships and jobs, and developed a detailed handout summarizing internships, volunteer opportunities, and part-time and full-time jobs of interest to Psychology majors.

Celeste has updated and managed the department's web-based and email advising efforts for Psychology majors. She is also active in recruitment and retention efforts, meeting regularly with visiting students and parents, and participating in New Student Enrollment and Red Letter Days.

Celeste co-teaches PSYC 100 (Careers in Psychology) and has introduced numerous innovations. She has integrated an exploration of career goals into the course and devised new ways of presenting material. As one example, she revamped information on careers in psychology into a game show format which students find much more engaging.

Celeste's expertise in advising has been recognized with numerous awards. She received two Applause Awards from the College of Arts and Sciences (including the annual award), a KUDOS Award from the University of Nebraska, and two

awards recognizing contributions to students from the UNL Parents' Association. She was also selected as an "Academic Star" by the College of Arts and Sciences. According to Psychology Department chair David Hansen, "This is an unprecedented number of awards during such a short time in our department."

Comments from undergraduates reflect the high quality and caring nature of Celeste's efforts. One student noted, "As the undergraduate advisor, she has always provided a very personal approach to advising for courses and preparing students for whatever their next stage in life is after graduation." Another remarked, "When I met with Celeste for advising she would always take the time to understand the personal aspects of my life that might influence what direction in psychology would be best for me."

Celeste's capacity to understand the goals and needs of Psychology majors at UNL stems partly from her Nebraska roots and personal connection to UNL. She was an undergraduate major at UNL and graduated with a B.A. in Psychology. She later earned a Masters degree in Counseling from Doane College and worked for the Nebraska Department of Labor as Coordinator of the Veterans' Workforce Investment Program. She is once again a student at UNL – and is currently pursuing a PhD in educational administration while continuing as Undergraduate Advisor. She is one of our own, and she is making a difference by helping our Psychology majors chart their path to the future.



Spier

Undergraduate Recognition Ceremony

The Department of Psychology held the annual Undergraduate Recognition Ceremony on April 25, 2012 in the City Campus Union. The event provides an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of some of our outstanding students. The Harry K. Wolfe Award for the outstanding psychology major was presented to Alyssa Lundahl.

The David Levine Diversity Research Award for undergraduate student research was presented to Taylor Flairty and the graduate student award was given to Jill Allen and Lindsey Wylie. Shaina Bergt

received the Donald D. Jensen Undergraduate Research Award. A number of other students were recognized as honorable mentions and nominees.

New officers for the student organizations were sworn in and the accomplishments of the outgoing officers were recognized. Our chapter of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology, also inducted 32 new members.

In addition, Psi Chi and the Undergraduate Psychology Organization (UPO) annually present an award to the Psychology Teacher of the Year "who has made a difference in the lives of psychology undergraduate students." This year's recipient was Professor Cal Garbin.

Congratulations to everyone recognized at the event and thank you to the generous donors who made many of these awards possible.



Bergt



Lundahl



Flairty

Celebrating the 60th Volume

BY DICK DIENSTBIER & DEB HOPE

Throughout most of its existence, our Symposium has been the most influential and well recognized of any annual symposium in psychology in the world. Wow! How did that happen, and especially, how did it happen in self-effacing Nebraska?

The answer begins with a brief history of psychology at the University of Nebraska. For that history, and for a great deal we know about the Symposium's history as well, we rely on the scholarship of Ludy Benjamin, who was a Professor of Psychology at Nebraska Wesleyan University before he became the APA's Executive Officer and a renowned textbook author. Benjamin's special interests were in the history of psychology, and especially the history that related to our department. Much of that history is recorded in his book about Harry K. Wolfe, the founder of the teaching of psychology at UNL.

After completing his PhD in Wilhelm Wundt's lab in Leipzig Germany, Wolfe returned to his native Nebraska in 1898 as a faculty member teaching psychology courses within the Philosophy Department. Here he designed the first undergraduate psychology lab west of the Mississippi—a lab credited by some as the first in the entire US. From those undergraduate courses and that lab, six students emerged who later became APA presidents—an astonishing number for a university in a state with such a small population.

A few decades later, when Marshall Jones became Director of the Clinical Psychology Training Program and secured a USPHS Clinical Training Grant, he used some of the funds to sponsor a symposium. Motivation was a natural theme, being general enough to allow coverage of various topics, and motivation was a key topic in psychological theory and research. Happily, by the mid 20th century our reputation was such that, despite being a department of only eight faculty, invitations were gratefully accepted by prominent psychologists to participate in the first Nebraska Symposium on Motivation in the 1951-52 academic year. Celebrating the first 25 years of the Symposium in the 1977 volume, Ludy Benjamin and Marshall Jones wrote "the list of speakers reads like a 'Who's Who' of American

psychology. Benjamin and Jones further noted that of the 68 Distinguished Scientific Contribution Awards that had been given by APA between 1956 and 1977, 24 of those recipients had been Symposium speakers. In 1964 and 1971 the Harvard List of Books in Psychology described the Symposium series as "by far the best source of information on modern American thinking and experimentation in the field of motivation."

Although funding for the Symposium was originally tied to the Clinical Training Grants, funds for such grants became scarce. These days the Symposium is supported by a combination of proceeds from annual volume sales, University of Nebraska Foundation support and campus support through the Chancellor's office.

The Symposium continues to attract the brightest and best scholars from around the world. A few people such as Albert Bandura and the emotion theorist Carroll Izard have contributed more than once, reflecting their long and distinguished careers. Even now, our distinguished contributors are appreciative of the honor and recognition that comes with being part of a Nebraska Symposium on Motivation. The two-day conference is a rare opportunity for extended interactions with one's colleagues. The chapter in the volume allows tremendous freedom to delve into a topic in depth and take some risks to push the field forward. Volume editors have a rare opportunity to build relationships with the distinguished scholars and shape a significant scientific contribution, to the benefit of the field and their own scholarly development. Graduate students get to hear and interact with contributors, beginning to build their own relationships.

What is new at the Symposium in recent years? Publication of the series was moved from University of Nebraska Press to Springer Science+Business Media starting with the 53rd volume in 2005. We now offer live web-streaming of the Symposium, making it available to anyone with an internet connection. This year we are celebrating the 60th Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, entitled Objectification and (De)Humanization, with Sarah Gervais as volume editor. Check us out at psychology.unl.edu/symposium/



Studying the Cycle of Drugs and Violence

BY DAVID DILILLO

Substance abuse and violence are serious public health concerns that often co-occur and are associated with severe negative consequences for individuals and society. Consider the following examples:

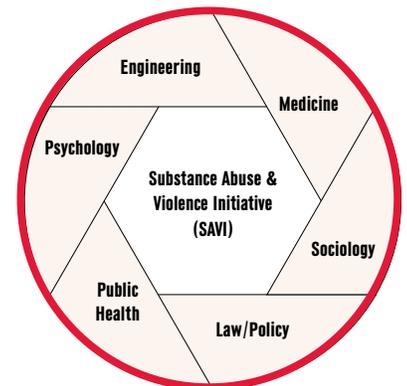
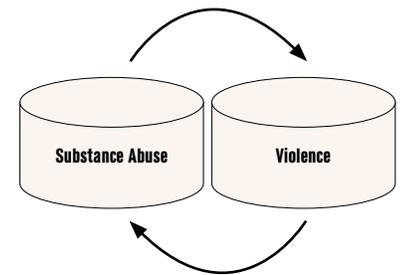
- Alcohol and illicit drug use are the strongest predictors of domestic violence.
- Adults who were abused as children are more likely to drink to excess and use drugs.
- Traumatic brain injuries among veterans are a risk factor for chronic substance abuse.
- Rapists often engage in substance abuse before or during the sexual offense and may use alcohol and drugs as a way of luring and manipulating their victims.

The Substance Abuse and Violence Initiative (SAVI), formed in 2010, is an interdisciplinary group of researchers, many from Psychology, who have come together to address the complex intersection between substance abuse and violence. Led by David DiLillo and Rick Bevins (psychology), Kim Tyler (sociology), and Kathleen Grant (UNMC), SAVI includes approximately 20 investigators representing diverse disciplines such as psychology, sociology, criminology, engineering, management, medicine, and public health. SAVI is also multi-institutional, with members from UNL, UNO, UNMC, and the Omaha VA. In addition to David DiLillo and Rick Bevins, Psychology faculty who are active in SAVI include: Brian Bornstein, Mike Dodd, Lisa Crockett, Sarah Gervais, Dave Hansen, Lesa Hoffman, Ming Li, Dennis McChargue, Dennis Molfese, Mario Scalora, and Scott Stoltenberg.

The group includes content experts seeking to collaborate in studying substance abuse and violence in a translational fashion ranging from animal and computer models to community-level interventions. SAVI also involves individuals who are experts in methodologies that can be used to study substance abuse and violence at multiple levels of analysis e.g., neuroimaging through the Center for Brain, Biology, and Behavior (CB3), human genetics, visual attention, analysis of longitudinal data). SAVI complements existing research centers in substance abuse and violence, but its focus on bridging these traditionally “siloes” areas is unique in the Big Ten/CIC and nationally.

SAVI meets regularly to discuss mutual interests and ongoing collaborations. Several “research pods” have formed from these meetings. One such pod is conducting an interdisciplinary study examining the behavioral and neural impact of IED-like shock waves on rats. The project involves Rick Bevins and Ming Li (psychology) and Namas Chandra (engineering) and collaborators at the University of Utah.

SAVI recently received a two-year Strategic Research Cluster Grant from the UNL Office of Research to facilitate its ongoing work. SAVI’s goals over the next two years include: establishing a track record of successful research collaboration within the group—including national and international conference presentations and peer-reviewed publications—and submission of interdisciplinary grants addressing the intersection of substance abuse and violence.



Justice, Conflict and Wellbeing Project in the Department of Psychology

BY RICHARD L. WIENER

In accordance with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's new affiliation with the Big Ten Conference, the Law and Psychology Program in conjunction with the Weibling Project is developing a new effort aimed at furthering interdisciplinary social science scholarship focusing on empirical investigation. The cluster of faculty currently studies formal and informal methods of conflict resolution that promote justice and wellbeing at multiple levels of social organization. The new group of collaborators working under the rubric of Justice, Conflict and Wellbeing (JCW) include researchers from 3 Colleges at UNL: Arts and Sciences (Departments of Psychology, Political Science, and Sociology), Education and Human Sciences, and Law. The focus of this collaboration includes research about conflict resolution at multiple levels of analysis, starting with the interpersonal interactions among and between children and adults in their everyday environments and small group functioning such as bullying and other forms of spontaneous aggression erupting among temporary groups. Our work at each of these levels of analysis includes (1) organizational studies of mental illness, (2) workplace violence, (3) hate crime, (4) threats of terrorism, and (5) forms of traditional and alternative dispute resolution in the public and private sectors. Our efforts at this collaboration, unique among universities in the Big Ten Conference, will allow us to move our social science scholarship to a new level to attract outside attention and funding in both the public and private sectors.

Themes and Frameworks

The interactive bodies of theory and research centering these collaborative efforts come from existing work on problems that arise in the pursuit of justice and wellbeing, such as social aggression and discrimination related to ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability. Research on JCW at UNL applies frameworks borrowed from 4 overlapping but distinct areas of behavioral science and legal scholarship to explore how the behavior of individuals, groups, and institutions create conflict and develop mechanisms to prevent and resolve it:

- Therapeutic Jurisprudence (the study of how law and policy can and should promote psychological health and emotional wellbeing consistent with the applicable principles of justice);
- procedural and distributive justice (the study of how perceptions of fairness in formal and informal conflict resolution influence behavior, compliance with rules, and

satisfaction with dispute resolution outcomes);

- citizen empowerment models (the study of how empowering people in their everyday interaction with others adds to their wellbeing and psychological health);
- and social ecology (examination of the effects of micro, meso, and macro social systems on the social behaviors of children and adolescents)

Specific Scholarly Activities

The JCW faculty will engage in a number of specific activities in collaborative work teams. The major activities include:

- Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration through monthly meetings.
- Inviting outside experts to visit UNL, to present their own research and explore collaborative possibilities.
- Writing papers and books. The joint research projects will result in peer-reviewed journal articles, edited books, and multiple author books. The PIs have established a productive relationship with Springer Publishing, and have already been in contact with them about publishing a book based on the kickoff symposium that took place in late 2011.
- Writing grant proposals. The participating faculty members have a history of successful extramural funding from organizations such as the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, National Institute of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and the Institute of Education Sciences. They will continue to target these agencies with new proposals arising from the JCW initiative, as well as exploring other private and public funding sources.

Leadership and Project Goals

Faculty in the Law and Psychology Program, housed in both the Department of Psychology and the College of Law, will lead this new effort integrating empirical legal studies with theory and models in the social sciences and the law to understand how conflict arises and how people manage and mismanage disputes and their outcomes. Dr. Richard Wiener (Charles Bessey Professor of Law and Psychology and Director of the Law and Psychology Program) together with Dr. Brian Bornstein (Professor of Law and Psychology and Associate Director of the Law and Psychology Program) will lead the collaboration bringing together scholars at UNL with scholars at other institutions.

New Center to Establish International Reputation

BY DENNIS MOLFESE

The University of Nebraska Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior (CB3) is a broadly based interdisciplinary research Center whose three ultimate goals are to: (1) establish an international reputation as a pioneering, premier, world-class, interdisciplinary Center investigating the interface between social, biological, behavioral, engineering and neurological issues; (2) provide state-of-the-art imaging equipment to faculty and students as well as training in its application to mainstream behavior, social and biological issues; and (3) create a transdisciplinary hub for cutting-edge research and innovative graduate education focusing on an unfilled niche encompassing the spectrum of translational research that extends from basic research to applied research to social policy.

To accomplish such goals, this interdisciplinary Center will make available to faculty and students – and train them in the use of – multiple, state-of-the-art brain imaging techniques and research methodologies to study brain-behavior relationships that encompass a broad spectrum of disciplines within the University. The Center will integrate the disciplinary building blocks of genetics, neuroscience, physiology, affect/emotion, cognition, socio-political attitudes and behavior, reflected in the largely extant faculty expertise, campus assets, and UNL strengths. Research includes domains ranging from the heritability of social attitudes to the neurological basis of human decision-making to the study and remediation of brain concussion in athletes.

Ultimately it is hoped that the work conducted through the Center will lead to a qualitative leap forward in the advancement of world knowledge. Such efforts will redefine the way that disciplines world-wide conceptualize themselves in light of the new knowledge generated.

The Center will be housed in a three-story, 25,000 sq. ft building that is part of the East Memorial Stadium expansion project.

Rendering of East Stadium renovation



Center for Brain, Biology & Behavior

Center for Brain, Biology & Behavior



Rendering of Center for Brain, Biology and Behavior facility currently being constructed inside East Stadium.

238 Burnett Hall
P.O. Box 880308
Lincoln, NE 68588-0308

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