Congratulations to Keith Huddleston, Tori McColez, Leanne Hudson, Besarion Mkheidze, John Roskopf, Jessica Neighbors & Ashleigh Sanderfield

5th Annual CLAS Graduation Reception

In May 2009, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences hosted the fifth annual reception for its graduating seniors. Students and faculty were able to share stories and say good-bye one final time before the graduation ceremony. Various departments also gave out awards to their outstanding graduates. In the Psychology Department, the following awards were given to our graduating seniors:

Keith Huddleston was nominated as the Psychology Department Student Marshal at the 2009 graduation ceremony. This honor is given to a graduating senior who best exemplifies the goals and spirit of the department. At the graduation ceremony, the student marshal leads the other psychology graduates through the procession and the presentation of their diplomas.

Tori McColez received the Outstanding Psychology Student Scholar award for her excellence in academic performance.

Jessica Neighbors & John Roskopf received the Outstanding Student Research Projects for their independent research projects.

Besarion Mkheidze & Ashleigh Sanderfield received the Outstanding Service to the Psychology Department award; Besarion for his work as the Department Student Representative and Ashleigh for being an officer of Psi Chi.

Leanne Hudson received the Outstanding Psychology Senior Seminar Portfolio award for creating exceptional portfolios in the Senior Seminar capstone course.
Currently, there are two student organizations affiliated with the UIS Psychology Department: Psychology Club and Psi Chi. **Psychology Club** is a student organization that is open to all UIS psychology majors and minors. **Psi Chi** is the National Honor Society in psychology. Its purpose is to encourage excellence in scholarship and advance the science of psychology. Membership in Psi Chi requires the completion of a minimum of 12 semester hours of psychology courses at UIS, no more than 8 hours of incomplete courses, and a GPA ranking within the top one-third of the class.

This Fall, Psychology Club and Psi Chi worked together on several philanthropic events through the semester:

On October 25, Psi Chi and Psychology Club participated in the Out of the Darkness Walk in Washington Park for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. They raised a total of $615. Over 70 people from the community participated in the walk and collectively raised over $6,000.

On October 29, they held a Halloween-themed bake sale and raised $169.42 to be donated towards the Washington Street Mission breakfast and other community service events.

On Halloween, Psychology Club and Psi Chi also participated in the University’s Trick or Treating for Canned Goods. A total of 53 pounds of food and $50 in cash donations were collected to benefit the Central Illinois Food Bank.

Finally, both student organizations sponsored two visits from admissions counselors from graduate programs in clinical and counseling psychology from the Forest Institute and Valparaiso University. Psychology students who were interested in graduate school were invited to attend.

### Officers

**Psi Chi & Psychology Club**

**2009 - 2010**

**Psi Chi President:** Amy Quarton  
**Psychology Club President:** Michael Stephens  
**Vice President:** Christie Yopst  
**Secretary:** April Fountain  
**Treasurer:** Alison Davis  
**Webmistress:** Jeanine Sellman  
**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Karen Mooney

### Upcoming Events:

- **December**  
  Holiday Cards for Cancer Patients at Memorial Hospital

- **January**  
  Bowling Fundraiser

- **February**  
  Washington Street Mission Breakfast

- **March**  
  St. Patrick’s Day Bake Sale

- **April**  
  Homeless for a Night (St. John’s Breadline)
What have you done since you graduated from UIS?

Jason finished his MBA at Texas A&M in May 2008 and is currently completing his masters degree in public health program at UIS. His current occupation is in research science.

What made you decide to apply for graduate school after receiving your degree at UIS?

Jason reported that he decided to apply for graduate school to gain a "competitive advantage in the market place. If you don’t go to grad school, there are a lot of options and doors that are closed to you. To get a better job or move up the career ladder, I think graduate school is pretty much a prerequisite for today."

How easy or difficult was it to get into graduate school after receiving your degree at UIS?

"Very easy;"

Were there things about your education at UIS that set you apart from other graduate school applicants?

Jason stated that "the critical thinking skills developed in a liberal arts curriculum allow you to evaluate things from multiple perspectives at one time. Being able to synthesize a lot of information at one time is something that is beneficial for grad school because you move through a lot of content. UIS really prepares you for that."

How did the UIS Psychology program prepare you for grad program? What specific experiences or educational opportunities come to mind?

Jason stated that "the class that prepared me the most was also the hardest course that the UIS Psych program had, which was the Psychological Tests and Measurements with Dr. Lynn Pardie. She was definitely one of the tougher professors."

"I also did independent research with Dr. Keith Burton for four semesters. That was very valuable in being able to get into grad school. Grad schools, which have such a competitive selection process, want to see a student that is willing to go the extra mile and do research on their own at an undergraduate level. I would say that also presented the opportunity to get published in the field, so I would encourage any current student to reach out to the UIS faculty to pursue research opportunities."

What was the hardest thing you faced in your grad program? How did your education at UIS Psychology program that lead to your success?

Jason reported that the hardest thing he faced was balancing a full-time job (40 to 50 hours per week) with his academic work.

What was the best experience you had while you were enrolled in the UIS undergrad program that lead to your success?

Jason stated that “The independent research was by far the best experience I had. The reason being that working with the statistical software packages, such as statistics for the social sciences that I know Dr. Yoder teaches, provides the opportunity for you to learn how to use SPSS. Learning those software packages are very beneficial skills once you get into a private sector in the work force because employers want people who have those skill sets."

If you had a chance to re-do your educational experience at UIS, what would you do differently?

Jason stated "No. I have to say I’m pretty content with my UIS experience."

What recommendations would you have for students who are planning on applying for graduate school after their degree at UIS? Any tips or advice for those students getting close to being done with their junior/ senior year?

Jason stated that "I would say maximize while you’re an undergrad the opportunities made available to you. Meaning if there are research opportunities, take them. If you know you’re weak in an area such as math, take as many math-oriented classes as you can. Any discipline where you feel you are deficit, take extra electives or extra courses to improve in those areas. Grad school requires a broad set of knowledge that you bring to the table and they operate under the expectation that you already know something. Say you are a psych undergrad and you enroll in the public health program at UIS at the masters level, they will operate under the assumption that you understand statistics. You may not have taken an undergrad statistics class, but you have to be better prepared for it."
What You’ve Always Wanted to Know - Interviews with Recent UIS Psychology Graduates

**What have you done since graduating from UIS?**

Zach is currently in the Human Services graduate program at UIS and is expecting to graduate in the Spring of 2010. He also currently works for a non-profit organization in the school district in DC, does things in social work for children and parents, as well as developmental therapy screenings. He has also written and managed a federal grant so that he can lead a support group for fathers, and has also presented at several Human Services conferences. Zach is also currently conducting his master’s thesis research on the effect of father involvement’s on children’s development. He plans to apply this research to training for social work/human service professionals.

**What made you decide to apply for graduate school after receiving your degree at UIS?**

Zach wants to do some work at the administrative level. In order to reach this career goal, he will need to obtain a graduate degree. Zach would also like to teach at the community college level, which is something that will also require a graduate degree as well.

**How easy/difficult was it to get into graduate school after receiving your degree at UIS? Were there things about your education at UIS that set you apart from other graduate school applicants?**

“It was pretty easy,” says Zach, “especially after taking Dr. Reminger’s Clinical Psychology helped a lot in researching grad school programs and also what you would need to get in.” Also, UIS’s psychology program heavily pushed for knowing how to write in APA, which has greatly helped him in his current graduate program.

**What was the hardest thing you faced in your graduate program? How did your education in the UIS Psychology program prepare you?**

Zach said that the hardest thing that he’s had to face in the graduate program is his thesis. The class that has helped him with the writing process of his thesis was Senior Seminar. Senior Seminar helped him develop a writing process that was especially helpful to apply to his thesis because the class taught him the process of “break[ing] the task down so that it’s not such a daunting task.”

**What experience in the UIS psychology program lead to your success?**

Zach found the UIS course in Introduction to Clinical Psychology the most helpful and the most enjoyable. He also stated that one specific enjoyable experience in the course was his work at the Washington Street Mission, a homeless shelter in downtown Springfield. At the homeless shelter, Zach learned interview techniques and gained actual fieldwork experience while serving breakfast and talking with these homeless individuals. Zach said that this experience was enjoyable and really made it “hit home.”

**If you had a chance to re-do anything about your undergrad experience, would you do anything differently?**

Zack reported regret for not taking the Statistics course, which he could use in his current research for his Human Services thesis project. Another class he wished he took was the psychoactive drug class, which is also applicable to understanding things in his profession.

**What recommendations would you have for students who are planning on applying for graduate school after their degree at UIS? Any tips or advice for those students getting close to being done with their junior/senior year?**

Zach reported that it is crucial to apply to different graduate schools; as well as researching each of these school’s programs thoroughly. Another important thing to think about when applying to grad schools is to make sure your answers on your application are specific and detailed. Lastly, Zach stated that it’s important to apply to a program that interests you and not just one that is easy to get into.

**Where do you want to go or what do you want to do when you’re done with your graduate degree?**

Zach wants to eventually work at the administration level; specifically, he has an interest in training professionals in the Human Services field. He has an interest in public speaking and wouldn’t mind working part-time as an adjunct faculty at the community college level.

**When you graduated from UIS, was it difficult for students with bachelor’s degrees to find a job?**

Zach stated that he didn’t have a lot of trouble finding a job, as he already had a position at the non-profit organization he worked with during his undergraduate studies. However, Zach also stated that he knew with a major like Psychology, an advanced degree is always beneficial for the job search.
The word “cancer” is one that instills shock, fear, and dread in the doctor’s office. After a person receives a diagnosis of cancer, he or she begins a long, arduous process of medical tests and consultation with medical professionals. These consultations often taken place as the person is still coming to terms with this major life crisis. In the rush to begin treatment, doctors often neglect the important psychological factors that play a huge role in how a person copes with their illness.

There has been an increasing interest in the contributions that can be made by psychologists and other mental health professionals to aid individuals coping with cancer. Specialists in this field, known as Psycho-Oncology, have attempted to call greater attention to the impact of psychological factors on cancer progression and physical health. For example, life stressors and depression have been suggested to have a negative impact on the immune system which can subsequently affect tumor growth (Reiche, Nunes, & Morimoto, 2004). However, the results of such research studies are by no means clear-cut. Findings in this field can be extremely difficult to interpret, owing to the fact that controlled research studies are difficult if not impossible to carry out. Researchers have to take into account the numerous biological and behavioral factors that can impact patient outcome.

Some studies have shown that participation in supportive group therapy can increase life expectancy in individuals diagnosed with cancer (Fawzy, Fawzy, Hyun, Elashoff, Guthrie, Fahey, et al., 1993; Spiegel, Bloom, Kraemer, & Gottheil, 1989). However, other studies have failed to show this effect (Goodwin, Leszcz, Ennis, Koopmans, Vincent, Guther, et al., 2001). Even though research has not definitively shown that participation in psychotherapy will change survival time, psychotherapy can nonetheless improve the coping skills and outlook of individuals facing cancer. Mental health professionals should be active participants in cancer treatment teams, as they can do much to enhance the quality of life of cancer survivors. In essence, psychologists can help transform the harrowing experience of cancer survivorship into one of renewed strength, hope, and growth.

**Psychology Department Graduate Assistants**

Stephanie Meyers and Ashley Kaye are the current graduate assistants for the Psychology Department. Both GAs are graduate students from the Human Development Services Master’s Degree program at UIS.

As GAs, they assist the faculty with grading assignments and exams, proctoring exams, guest lecturing classes, or provide any other assistance that faculty may need. Their offices are located in UHB 3140.
Dr. Sheryl Reminger and Amy Quarton are currently working together on two research projects. The goal of the first project is to examine if women who have been treated for breast cancer show problems with cognitive function. Amy and Dr. Reminger are evaluating magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain images from breast cancer survivors to determine if the volumes of certain brain structures show a relationship to cognitive function. The second project involves a study of quality of life in individuals diagnosed with head and neck cancer. For the study, Amy and Dr. Reminger are evaluating the cognitive performance of patients diagnosed with cancer of the oral cavity, pharynx, and larynx before and after treatment to determine what difficulties they experience in their day-to-day function. The first project was funded by a grant from the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and the second project was funded by a grant from Excellence in Academic Medicine Program of the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

UIS Psychology Department alumnus Aaron Shilling submitted a manuscript entitled Face Your Fears: Attentional Biases toward Emotional Faces Depend on Specific Low-Level Anxiety Symptoms, co-authored with Dr. Reminger, to the Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research. The manuscript was based on independent research that Aaron completed when he was an undergraduate student at UIS. For the project, Aaron investigated the effects of emotional facial expressions, social anxiety, and negative self-evaluation on attention.

Dr. Karen Pressley and Amy Quarton are in the process of finalizing a research project that they began together in the summer 2009 on “Attention modulation and Electroencephalography”. The data for this research study has been collected and is currently being analyzed. They have submitted part of this dataset as an abstract for the Cognitive Neuroscience Society Conference in April 2010 in Montreal, QB.

Dr. Keith Burton, Jeanine Sellman, Amy Hargis, and Brett Stallone are currently working on an ongoing study of emotional experience and expression across the menstrual cycle. Dr. Burton presented some of their research at the annual meeting of the Society for Psychophysiological Research in Berlin, Germany in October.

Brett Stallone’s master’s project will begin in the spring semester, in which they will be examining the influence of the menstrual cycle phase on women's emotional reactions to male faces that vary in masculine characteristics. They are also developing a student project for Jeanine Sellman to examine the relationships between emotional labor, display rules of work settings, and a variety of other emotion variables (such as regulation, trait emotional intelligence, personality traits, etc.). They hope to begin data collection on that project in the spring.

Dr. Marcel Yoder’s current research is focused on self-enhancement. Self-enhancement is typically defined as an overly positive view of the self. Historically, self-enhancement has been defined as one’s self-view compared to either (1) how one views others (a social comparison process) or (2) one’s self view compared to how others view the self (an indication of self-insight). Unfortunately, both of these definitions have been shown to contain confounding influences (e.g., Kwan et al., 2008). One result of this confounding is that literature in self-enhancement has overestimated the relationship between self-enhancement and adjustment (e.g., self-esteem).
**Faculty & Student Research & Accomplishments**

Dr. Yoder’s current work applies new techniques in the measurement of self-enhancement to examine the relationship between positive self-views of facial attractiveness and adjustment.

**Dr. Frances Shen, Amanda Davis, Michael Stephens, and Linda Crider** are currently working on two research projects. The first is a qualitative research project that examines the effects of internalized stereotypes on Asian American students. Data has been collected thus far, and currently several UIS psychology students are helping with the transcriptions of the interviews, including Rosanna Ramilo, Stacey Potts, Lindsey Durbin, Alicia Wilson, Sandy Hurtubuis, Elisha Hughes, Ashley Pearson, and Kate Johnson. Data analysis of this project will begin in the Spring semester. The second research study is a path analysis project that examines the relationship of internalized stereotyping on the career development of Asian Americans based on the Social Cognitive Career Theory. Initial data collection has begun on this websurvey study, and will continue through the Spring semester.

Finally, **Dr. Shen, Amanda Davis, Michael Stephens, and Amy Quarton** have submitted a roundtable conversation proposal entitled *Overcoming Barriers to Multicultural Training & Development* to the 2010 APA convention in San Diego, CA.

**Dr. Carrie Switzer** was awarded a sabbatical leave for the fall 2009 semester. Her plans are to research personality and situational influences on non-traditional college-student aged women’s decisions to begin or return to higher education.

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**Upcoming Conference Dates**

**Dates:** April 29 to May 1, 2010  
**Location:** Chicago, IL

**Dates:** May 27 to 30, 2010  
**Location:** Boston, MA

**Dates:** August 12 to 15, 2010  
**Location:** San Diego