PSYCHOPATHS

2013 Psychology Department Student Awards

On Friday, May 10, 2013, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS) hosted the ninth annual reception for its graduating seniors from 4:00 to 5:00 in Brooken’s Auditorium. Students and faculty were able to share stories and say good-bye one final time before the graduation ceremony. During the ceremony, various CLAS departments presented awards to their outstanding graduates. Students received a certificate on stage as a faculty mentor read a short biography about their achievements at UIS.

In the Psychology Department, the following awards were given to our graduating seniors:

Robert Torrence was chosen to be the Psychology Department Student Marshal for the 2013 graduation ceremony. This honor is given to a graduating senior who best exemplifies the goals and spirit of the department. Robert received this award for his academic success, research experience,

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My participation in research at UIS has easily been my most rewarding academic experience. As a student, participating in research has provided me with an invaluable set of skills and understanding that cannot be gained in the classroom. I have formulated hypotheses, designed research methods, interacted with research participants, collected and analyzed data, and had various opportunities to present my research to the public. While many of these things can be taught in a classroom setting, there is nothing quite like going through the entire hands on process of conducting research. These skills aided me in nearly every psychology course I attended at UIS, and will continue to be valuable by helping me get into graduate school.

Once I began attending UIS, I immediately started to inquire about research opportunities. I knew that research experience was an important stepping stone towards graduate school, but I was also passionate about scientific inquiry. I was fortunate enough to be granted several opportunities to get involved and I think much of this was due to how vocal I was about my research interest. The faculty at UIS has been extremely helpful guiding me towards my research goals, but it was up to me to take the initiative. Research is an opportunity that is available to every student, but not many are aware that it is up to them to get the ball rolling.

During my junior year at UIS I was granted a position as a research assistant for Dr. Karen Mooney. I not only gained a tremendous amount of research knowledge by helping with her study, I was also allowed to formulate my own research hypothesis with her study’s data. Dr. Mooney was examining relationship networks using cluster analyses. I decided to use these same analyses, but instead to examine self-perception. Participants were categorized into five self-perception profiles based on six self-perception variables. The results showed that using a global self-perception measure (e.g., self-esteem) as an indicator of behavioral problems is not as effective as a person oriented approach.

I decided to take on an independent research project during my senior year at UIS. Tackling an independent research project provided me an even more in depth research experience. I learned about the IRB approval process, conducting ethical research, and how to manage a research study. The process was challenging, but I was fortunate to have an amazing research partner in fellow student Rachel Tohme. Our faculty advisors, Dr. Carrie Switzer and Dr. Marcel Yoder, were also extremely helpful and provided us with all the necessary guidance to conduct our study.
Doing an independent study allowed me to research a topic of my own choosing. I wanted to examine “cultural evolution” and how emotion is associated with the spread of information. I find cultural evolution to be a very fascinating theoretical framework. This is because it elegantly explains an aspect of human behavior that had puzzled me for years. Why do human beings behave irrationally when they know that what they are doing is irrational? We overeat, procrastinate, watch too much television, and engage in all sorts of activities that are detrimental to our goals and well-being. And we do these things even with the knowledge that they are bad for us. Many would argue that it is some aspect of the individual that is causing these sorts of behavior. Cultural evolution would suggest that it is instead aspects of the information that they are spreading and retaining which influences such behavior.

For example, a particular species of insect may be weak, fragile, and have a short life span making it seem like an inferior species. Even so, if the insect is extremely good at reproducing, or spreading its genetic information, it can be considered a “successful” species and could greatly impact its ecological system. Cultural evolution extends this same concept, but to the realm of ideas. A particular idea may be irrational, contain no truth, and influence negative behavioral patterns. Yet, this idea does not need to be a “good” idea to have a profound impact on society, it needs only to be very good at spreading. To examine this phenomenon, we decided to look at information that does this very thing. We had participants read from eight urban legends and record their emotional responses to these legends. Our results suggested that there are associations between emotional responses to legends and individuals’ willingness to spread and believe these legends. I am currently working on an updated version of this study and hope to present my finding at UIS’s StARS symposium in April.

Ultimately, I cannot say enough about how much participating in research has helped my academic pursuits. I learned more than I could have hoped for, gained invaluable experience, and met so many great individuals along the way. If you are a psychology student and you are even considering getting involved in research, I would strongly urge you to do so. The first step is simply talking to your professors and finding out what opportunities are out there. So, what are you waiting for? Go out there and do some science!

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and involvement in Psi Chi and Psychology Club. At the graduation ceremony, Robert led the other psychology graduates through the procession and presentation of their diplomas.

**Andrew Hathaway** received the Outstanding Psychology Student Scholar award for his excellent academic performance and conducting his own independent research project with Dr. Karen Reinke.

**Hannah Mock** received the Outstanding Service to the Psychology Department award for her active leadership and service as the student representative, member of the department’s industrial/organizational faculty search committee, and involvement in Psi Chi and Psychology Club.

The faculty members of the department were proud to see these students introduced at this ceremony. These students are great members of our department and are fine representatives of the 2013 UIS graduating class.
Psi Chi & Psychology Club

BY BRIANNA WERNER

This fall, Psi Chi and Psychology Club participated in a variety of service, social, and fundraising events. To start the semester, we participated in the Involvement Expo on the quad to recruit members and spread the word about Psi Chi and Psychology Club. In September, we raised funds with a bake sale for the Out of the Darkness Suicide Awareness Walk. A big thank you goes to Rachel Pilling, who fundraised over $100 on her own as a part of the Psychology Club team! In November, 14 students were inducted into Psi Chi and a celebratory dinner was held at Olive Garden. Psi Chi and Psychology Club hosted an Internship Social. The director of the local Autism Program, Applied Study Term representative, Career Development Center representative, and Hannah Mock, a UIS Psychology Department alumni who obtained a full time position at her internship placement, spoke about internship opportunities and available resources to aid in student internship placement. Prior to the Internship Social, Psi Chi and Psychology Club hosted a Caramel Apple Nacho Bar for all students. Psi Chi and Psychology Club ended the semester with a bake sale and sold Springfield coupon books to raise funds to attend the Midwestern Psychological Association convention this spring. All students are encouraged to become active members of Psychology Club!

Psi Chi and Psychology Club Spring Events:
Psi Chi T-Shirt Sale
Plastic Bag Drive, Date TBD
January, Mental Health Stigma Reduction Campaign
February, Valentine's Day Bake Sale
March – April, Penny War and Raffle
April, Penny War BBQ
April, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes Sexual Assault Awareness Walk

Fall 2013 Psi Chi and Psychology Club Officers:
President – Brianna Werner
Vice President – Brittany Sievers
Treasurer – Nathaniel Ed Schackmann
Secretary – Samantha Schackmann
Faculty Advisor – Dr. Michele Miller
Faculty & Student Research

DR. MICHELE MILLER
Alex Fruth, Nathaniel Ed, and Samantha Schackmann have been working with Dr. Michele Miller to assess 3-year-olds’ cognitive skills in a laboratory setting and gather data from parents and preschool teachers regarding social-emotional development and early school readiness. Alex and Dr. Miller have submitted a proposal for a poster presentation at MPA entitled Positive Affect and Social-Emotional Development from 6 to 36 Months.

DR. KAREN REINKE
Dr. Karen Reinke has been on a sabbatical focused on learning new research techniques. She has continued working with electroencephalography (EEG) and is learning a new data analysis, frontal alpha asymmetry, which is thought to be related to an individual’s emotional state and trait. Additionally, she is developing a grant in conjunction with Drs. Jeffrey Bennett and Jan Hill-Jordan of SIU School of Medicine to use this technique to better understand how transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) functions to relieve severe depression. She traveled to Toronto, ON in October where she was invited to give two talks and meet with former colleagues. She is excited about pursuing this new line of research as well as getting back in touch with students at the end of the sabbatical.

DR. SHERYL REMINGER
Elizabeth (Liz) DeSuno has been assisting Dr. Sheryl Reminger on two studies of cognitive function in cancer patients. The first study involves individuals diagnosed with head and neck cancer. In this study, patients were assessed with a cognitive performance test soon after diagnosis. The testing showed that patients had impairments in memory and attention/concentration even before treatment had begun. Liz has been helping prepare these research findings for publication. The second study involves individuals with a history of breast and endometrial cancer. In this study, the cognitive performance of these patients was assessed and will be compared to the cognitive performance of a control group. Liz has been assisting with the data analyses for this study.

In August 2013, Dr. Reminger presented a poster entitled, Cognitive Function, Mood, and Leptin Levels in Cancer Survivors and Healthy Controls at the American Psychological Association convention in Honolulu, HI. The poster reported the findings of a study that showed that attention performance was correlated with body mass index, symptoms of depression, and levels of leptin (a cytokine that modulates appetite and metabolism) in study participants with a history of breast and endometrial cancer.

DR. FRANCES SHEN
Dr. Frances Shen is working with Brittany Sievers on a study that examines whether religious/spiritual faith, coping, and support buffers the effect of academic and college life stress on academic and college life self-efficacy. They received the 2013 CLAS Student-Faculty Creative Activities Funding to support this research study. Trenton Adams assisted Brittany with data collection on this study in the fall, and Daniell Bennett will be assisting Brittany with data collection in the spring.

Dr. Shen and Dr. Sheryl Reminger are working with Brianna Werner on a study that examines veteran college students’ experiences in college. The first part of the study is to conduct focus groups with veteran and non-veteran college students on the veteran students’ experiences in college and non-veteran college students’ perceptions of veteran college students. The second part of the study involves developing a measure to assess veteran students’ experiences in college. They received the 2013 CLAS Student-Faculty Creative Activities Funding to support this research study. Irina Mason will be assisting Brianna with data collection on this second part of the study in the spring. Both Brittany and Brianna are submitting proposals to present their findings at the 2014 National Conference on Undergraduate Research, UIS StARS Symposium, and Midwestern Psychological Association.
Faculty & Student Research

**Brianna Werner** and **Brittany Sievers** are also assisting Dr. Frances Shen on two studies on Asian American body image. The first study involves conducting focus groups with Asian American men and women on their experiences with body image and its impact, while the second study involves developing measures to assess for Asian American men and women’s concerns about body image. They presented *Asian American Men's Body Image Issues* at the American Psychological Association convention in Honolulu, HI in August 2013, and are submitting a proposal to present *Body Image Ideals and Concerns among Asian American Women* at the 2014 American Psychological Association convention in Washington, DC.

In addition, Brittany and Brianna have been assisting Dr. Shen on a study examining the cultural factors that impact internalized homophobia and psychological well-being among Asian American LGB. Results were presented at the 2013 MPA, Association for Psychological Sciences, American Psychological Association, and Asian American Psychological Association conferences.

**Psychological Association**

**DR. CARRIE SWITZER**

Drs. Carrie Switzer and Marcel Yoder are working with **Wesley Hill** and **Rachel Tohme** on a study focused on Memes (ideas or behaviors spread through culture). They have presented some initial results at the 2013 UIS StARS - Student Arts and Research Symposium and 2013 annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association in Chicago. They are submitting proposals to present their findings at the 2014 National Conference on Undergraduate Research and UIS StARS Symposium.

Dr. Carrie Switzer is currently working on the Educational Aspirations study. This study examines the differences between traditional and nontraditional aged college students and students from underrepresented groups in terms of their motivation to go to college, their perceived barriers to attending college, and their academic self-efficacy while in college. Drs. Switzer and Shen, **Rachel Tohme, Lucy Parker,** and **Stacey Windisch** presented *Academic Self-Efficacy Mediates Perceived Educational Barriers on Motivation to Attend College* at the annual meeting of the Association of Psychological Science in Washington, DC in May 2013. Drs. Switzer and Shen, **Rachel Tohme, Lucy Parker,** and **Stacey Windisch** also presented *Racial/Ethnic Differences in Educational Motivation, Self-Efficacy, Barriers, & Vocational Outcomes* at the American Psychological Association convention in Honolulu, HI in August 2013.

Dr. Switzer also won the 2013 University's Pearson Teaching Award and 2013 CLAS Teaching Award.

**DR. MARCEL YODER**

Dr. Marcel Yoder is conducting a study to investigate the effect of interaction on person perception. The study purpose is to determine what similarities and differences there are between our impressions depending on whether we interact with another, see a short video of that person, versus merely a photo. He presented his findings at the 2013 Association for Psychological Sciences in Washington, DC in May. He is also presenting on *Forming Impressions of Strangers without Interaction: Consensus Varies by Trait but Accuracy Varies by Mode of Presentation* at the 2014 Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference in Austin, TX, in February 2014.

Dr. Yoder also won the 2013 University's Spencer Service Award and 2013 CLAS Service Award.
PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT PRESENTERS AT THE 2013 UIS STARS SYMPOSIUM

- **Andrew Hathaway** (Dr. Karen Reinke - Mentor) “Neural Processing of Male and Female Fearful Faces in a Spatial Attention Modulation Task”
- **Kadylyn Havemeyer** (Dr. Marcel Yoder - Mentor) “In Your Face: Judgments of Attractiveness Depend on Context”
- **Wesley Hill & Rachel Tohme** (Drs. Carrie Switzer & Marcel Yoder - Mentors) “Pass it on? The Spread of Urban Legends”
- **Brittany Sievers** (Dr. Frances Shen - Mentor) “Body Image Ideals and Concerns Among the Asian American Female Population”
- **Robert Torrence** (Dr. Sheryl Reminger - Mentor) “The Impact of Eating Habits on Thinking Skills”
- **Brianna Werner** (Dr. Frances Shen - Mentor) “Asian American Men’s Perceived Body Image”

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2014 StARS Symposium

**When:** Thursday evening, April 10 & Friday, April 11, 2014

**Who:** All students involved in research. You can give a short oral presentation or a poster presentation.

**Early Registration:** Abstracts and online registration will be accepted beginning November 1, 2013. The first 30 posters submitted will be paid for by StARS.

**General Registration:** General registration will continue until Friday, February 14, 2014, at 5:00 p.m. Abstracts will be accepted as space allows.

**StARS Web Page:** [http://go.uis.edu/StARS](http://go.uis.edu/StARS)

**StARS Facebook Page:** [https://www.facebook.com/UISStudentArtsAndResearchSymposiumStars](https://www.facebook.com/UISStudentArtsAndResearchSymposiumStars)

**Questions?** Contact Carrie Switzer at cswit1@uis.edu