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Dear Friends of UB Psychology,

We are pleased to present the 2013 Psychology Newsletter. This year has been very busy for the Department. We added a new faculty member - Dr. Paul Meyer - who joined the Behavioral Neuroscience Area in August. Dr. Megan Pailler joined the Department in January of 2012 as the new Director of the Psychological Services Center. Also this past fall, 8 new graduate students joined our Ph.D. program and 12 students entered our Masters program. We will be growing further in the near future, as we have just hired two new faculty members who will be joining us this fall. We have also had some notable promotions: Julie Bowker (of the Clinical Area) and Mark Seery (of the Social Area) were tenured and promoted to Associate Professor. Finally, we have had two retirements: Dr. Sherry Thomas retired as Director of the Psychological Services Center in January of 2012, and Professor Joel Raynor retired at the end of 2012.

This past year the Department was engaged in a Comprehensive Program Review - this involved a major examination of all aspects of the Department and included the preparation of a massive self-study document and an on-campus visit by team of experts who probed every aspect of the Department’s operations. The team concluded that the Department is excellent in multiple ways and accomplishes a great deal with very limited resources. As one of our colleagues describes us - we are small but mighty.

Our faculty and graduate students continue to be remarkably productive. This past year, faculty and students published over 120 articles and book chapters, submitted 32 grants, and were awarded nearly $12 million in new or continuing grant funding across 28 total grants. Our people are also involved in many important ways in the science of psychology - presenting hundreds of papers at national and international scientific conferences, collaborating with researchers across the country and the world, serving on multiple grant-review panels, editing journals and books, and doing countless reviews of papers submitted to scientific journals. The Department co-sponsored (along with the Psychology Graduate Student Association) the first annual graduate Behavior and Brain Sciences Symposium that took place in June of 2012. The meeting was extremely successful, with over 30 graduate presenters and approximately 100 attendees.

Our undergraduate program continues to flourish. This past year, we had over 1,500 psychology majors with another 461 students enrolled in our program at the Singapore Institute of Management. Among our graduating class of 514 at UB this past year, we had 221 students earning departmental honors and distinctions. You can read about some of the achievements of our students throughout this newsletter. You can also read about distinguished graduates of our program, including a story about Keith Blakely (BA ’76) CEO of The InVentures Group, an advisory firm dedicated to working with companies by providing the business, strategic, financial, and human resources needed to become successful.

As always, we very much want to hear about you. If you would like to contribute information about yourself, or colleagues of yours who have been affiliated with the Department, please send an e-mail to psych@buffalo.edu. And please visit our website at www.psychology.buffalo.edu for the latest news about the Department. You might also consider making a donation to our department - the web site has information on how you can do that.

Regards,
Steve
Alumni Profile: Keith Blakely, BA ‘76
By: Jaime Jeroszko

UB alum Keith Blakely believes that every moment is valuable. The ambitious 17-year-old was accepted into the University at Buffalo in 1974 and declared that not only was he going to receive his four-year degree in two, but that he was going to earn two degrees. His long-term plan was originally to become a psychiatrist before he was 30, and he did not feel he had any time to waste.

Disregarding his career advisor’s statement that the logistics of this were not possible, Blakely registered for his courses and created a schedule that allowed him to attend as many of them as possible. “I had to be extraordinarily creative,” he recalls. Having no time for social activities, he spent his days zipping in-between the Main Street campus, Ridge Lee, and the newly-built Ellicott Complex in his little Honda Civic—“It was like a roller skate on wheels,” he laughs.

Blakely fondly recalls that his professors at UB were all truly interested in engaging with their students. “I loved all of my professors,” he says. “My classes were very enjoyable and rewarding.” He is also grateful for the scholarships that helped make his education at UB possible.

After visiting some medical schools, Blakely reevaluated his career path and decided to focus instead on a profession as a research scientist. He spent the summer of 1976 working 3-5 hours a day in a microbiology lab on campus while also taking the final classes to complete his degrees. By the end of that summer, he not only had completed his research project and all of his courses, but a few days before graduation, he had also been offered a full-time job at Carborundum Co., a ceramics and advanced materials company, by the director of his microbiology laboratory.

Not even 20 years old, Blakely graduated from the University at Buffalo in 1976 with dual degrees in Biology and Psychology. He married the love-of-his-life the day after graduation, and was eager to begin his doctoral studies and prepare for his new position at Carborundum. Everything seemed to have fallen perfectly into place, until Blakely returned from his honeymoon to find that there was a freeze on hiring.

Blakely was offered a temporary position in Carborundum’s nuclear ceramics area. To his good fortune, the head of the project was impressed with his work. He received promotions and a full-time, salaried position, and within three years he was offered the position of principal engineer—the highest engineering rank you could obtain in the company. At the age of 21, he was a recipient of R&D Magazine’s annual IR-100 Award—a tremendous honor. Blakely did not intend to stay in the field of ceramics for long, but his new position provided him the opportunity to experience working in a wide range of functional areas, including marketing and new product development.

In 1980, at the age of 24, Blakely’s entrepreneurial spirit seized him and he gave his notice to Carborundum. He arranged an initial financing package of over $1M for a brand-new start-up company—Advanced Refractory Technologies, Inc. (ART). ART was a manufacturer of high-performance ceramics, composites, and advanced coatings. “In retrospect, it was a miracle,” he says. “I got the loans, grew the company from 2 to 325 people, and we were selling to some of the largest companies in the world, including GM and Mitsubishi.” In 1987, Blakely received his second IR-100 Award.

After 20 years, Blakely sold ART to Tyco International. “Then I retired… for six days,” he jokes.
In 2002, Blakely founded NanoDynamics, Inc., a leader in the commercialization of nanomaterials and nanotechnology-enabled components and systems. He served as CEO for seven years, raised over $60M, and oversaw the development and launch of disruptive products for the energy, environmental, and infrastructure markets. He also established Epik Energy Solutions, LLC, a $10M joint venture with Shell Oil.

Blakely is currently CEO of The InVentures Group, an advisory firm dedicated to working with companies by providing the business, strategic, financial, and human resources needed to become successful. “We bring a broad range of skill sets and some investment capital to young companies that need help with corporate development,” he says, “including branding, marketing, financials, bookkeeping, legal, business, and strategic planning.”

A native of North Tonawanda, NY, Blakely is largely involved with encouraging and expanding the whole entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Buffalo area. “My company helps start-up companies maneuver the shark-infested waters and create viable businesses that can stay here,” he comments. In addition to helping local business owners achieve success, Blakely has also attracted many successful individuals and companies from outside the region.

Blakely has worked closely with UB to keep talent in Western New York. He helped develop the structure of UB’s Office of Science, Technology Transfer and Economic Research (STOR), which connects faculty/student research with the commercialization of new product and process development. Related to STOR, he also established First Wave Technologies, a for-profit organization that helps researchers advance their technologies to a point where they can grow into successful enterprises.

Upon analysis of the companies that he started and the spin-offs and start-ups that were generated from them, Blakely has determined that they employed nearly five times as many employees per million dollars of sales as large companies. He also found that the types of jobs they created were much higher-value positions, including engineering and professional jobs. He feels that entrepreneurs are the individuals who create true, sustainable economic growth.

Blakely comments that his Psychology degree from the University at Buffalo was significant to his success. “If you’re going to be a manager, knowing how people interact and are motivated is critical,” he says. That being said, however, he stresses that you should never feel like you are limited by your degree. “Find what you’re passionate about. Find what you love to do and then find ways to create value for other people pursuing that activity,” he advises. Blakely believes that if you find what you love to do, you’ll never work a day in your life.

Jaime Jeroszko is the Communication Officer for the UB College of Arts and Sciences Office of Development and Alumni Relations.
Undergraduate Studies

Dr. Jim Sawusch, Professor, is the Director of the Undergraduate Program and the Director of the Speech Research Laboratory. His laboratory focuses on understanding the auditory and phonetic processing of speech that maps the sounds of language onto words.

Christa Greenberg is the Coordinator of the Undergraduate Program/Academic Advisor.

Christa and Jim take great pride in the accomplishments of UB’s exceptional psychology undergraduate students. Psychology is one of the most popular majors on campus. We currently have 1331 UB Psychology majors! Our majors take a wide variety of courses, from the basics of behavioral neuroscience to the psychology of self-esteem and interpersonal relationships. They also play a hands-on part in the department’s research endeavors by assisting in faculty laboratories. Just a few of the exciting things that have taken place this year follow. We look forward to hearing from you and encourage you to stay in touch.

http://psychology.buffalo.edu/alumni/update_information

Undergraduate Awards 2011

CAS Dean’s Departmental Award for Outstanding Graduating Senior

Bryan Sims received the 2012 Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Award for Outstanding Graduating Senior. Mr. Sim graduated June 1, 2012 with a BA degree majoring in Psychology with a 3.977 GPA and a 3.97 in his psychology major. He started his studies in our program in Singapore.

Mr. Sim is a member of the Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology and his academic accomplishments earned him a spot on the Dean’s list every semester. He has served as an Undergraduate Teaching Assistant for Dr. Hawk’s PSY 101 classes. Throughout his undergraduate career, Mr. Sim was heavily involved in research, working in Mark Seery’s Social Psychophysiology Lab, Dr. Jennifer Read’s Alcohol Research Lab, and Dr. Lora Park’s Self and Motivation Lab. He also completed a Psychology Senior Honors Thesis entitled “Effects and proposed moderators of perspective taking on system justifying beliefs” as part of the Psychology Department’s Honors Program (supervisor, Dr. Lora Park. In the fall of 2013, Mr. Sim started in the Ph.D. program in social psychology at New York University. There, he will further his interests in peoples’ belief systems and their effects on various aspects of behavior.
In May 2007, The Singapore Institute of Management (SIM), together with the University at Buffalo, launched a new full-time Bachelor of Arts in Psychology degree program. UB and SIM have enjoyed a longstanding relationship, having collaborated in the delivery of a part-time Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) program since 1996, and two other highly successful full-time undergraduate programs in Business Administration and Communication. SIM is well regarded for the excellence of its educational programs and shares UB’s commitment to the highest academic standards. Faculty teaching in our program at SIM are drawn from UB as well as from other U.S. institutions. The extension of SIM’s collaboration with UB in offering a bachelor’s degree in psychology enables more students from Singapore and the surrounding region to benefit from the U.S.-style curriculum. Our new program also offers opportunities for UB students to study psychology at SIM. We are proud to report that 494 students are currently enrolled in the program and 149 students graduated from the SIM program in 2012.

Psychology Commencement May 2012

On May 13, 2012, the Department of Psychology honored 463 students who earned B.A. and B.S. degrees in Psychology. Students, faculty, family and friends again gathered in Slee Hall to celebrate their accomplishments. We also honored the recipients of this year’s Excellence in Teaching Awards and this year’s Distinguished Alumni Award.

Excellence in Teaching Awards

Dr. James Sawusch received the Excellence in Teaching Faculty Award. Dr. Sawusch is a cognitive psychologist whose research focuses on how listeners map sound onto language. He is also the Director of the Undergraduate Program in Psychology.

Dr. Wendy Quinton received the Excellence in Teaching Adjunct Award. Dr. Quinton is a social psychologist whose research focuses on stigma. She is also the Director of the Honors Program and Co-Director of the Masters Program.

Katelyn Thomas received the Excellence in Teaching Graduate Student Award. Katelyn is an advanced doctoral student in the Clinical Ph.D. program. Ms. Thomas’ research interests include rejection sensitivity, internalizing problems, desired friendships, body image, popularity, and self-disclosure.

Here are some of the comments our graduating students made in honoring these distinguished instructors.
Dr. Sawusch

“Great professor; explains everything well to make sure you got it....Probably the best PSY professor at UB.”

“He is awesome! Not only knew the material, but knew how to teach it. Provided regular examples which made understanding much easier.”

Dr. Quinton

“She is a great teacher who cares about her students. She makes the class fun and interesting and I have learned quite a bit. She wants you to learn and genuinely cares if you do well in her class.”

“Dr. Quinton is am amazing lecturer who turns dull subjects into something gripping and entertaining. She is also admirably fair and always determinedly cheerful. Most important, she genuinely wants the best for all her students and will not flinch from putting in the hours to make it happen.”

Katelyn Thomas

“She is the most interesting, hilarious, personable instructor I have ever had. She is so easy to relate to and is so open to talk about the field of Psychology. It is really obvious that she has a passion for everything she talks about.”

“You can tell that she really loves what she does and it is apparent when she teaches. I love going to her class because I actually learn and she makes it so interesting. I think she deserves to be recognized for her outstanding work.”

Exceptional Alumni Award - Key Note Speaker

Dr. Mara Huber was honored with receipt of the Department of Psychology’s Exceptional Alumni Award. She received her Ph.D. from UB in Cognitive Psychology in 2000. During her graduate training, she studied the development of language and speech perception and she brought tremendous enthusiasm, energy, and creativity to her studies and research. Upon graduation, Dr. Huber took an Assistant Professor position at SUNY Fredonia, where her passion for teaching led her to a commitment to bolstering children’s early educational experiences. Her intellectual interest in early education and strong commitment to civic engagement then shifted her professional goals to providing “cradle-to-career” support to Buffalo youth to prepare them for higher education and successful employment. Since then, Dr. Huber has been a tireless champion of Buffalo youth. In her role as Director of Special Programs and Liaison for Higher Education Partnerships in UB’s Graduate School of Education and later as Special Assistant to the President on Educational Initiatives, Dr. Huber has been instrumental on starting countless programs and initiatives to promote academic achievement, ethics, and civic mindedness for the children of Western NY and Buffalo. A unique blend of intellect, strong appreciation of research and outcome evaluation, humanitarian spirit, and a talent to motivate and inspire community stakeholders has made her successful in these endeavors. Dr. Huber is one of Buffalo’s greatest resources in childhood education. Dr. Huber recently took on a new role at UB as Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.
Dr. Craig Colder is the Director of Graduate Studies. He is a member of the Clinical Training Program, and studies adolescent substance use.

Mary Schnepf is the Coordinator of Graduate Studies and Graduate Admissions. For her incredible contributions to our graduate program, Mary received a highly prestigious SUNY Chancellors Award for Excellence in Classified Service. She was honored at an award ceremony on October 3rd, 2012.

Our graduate programs are internationally recognized for excellence and continue to be a vibrant part of the academic community at UB. We currently have 69 doctoral students and 28 masters students.

We offer general MA degrees and Ph.D. degrees in four areas of psychology – behavioral neuroscience, clinical, cognitive, and social psychology. Our goal in graduate training is to give our students the skills to assume positions in academic institutions or professional practice and to make new contributions to bodies of knowledge through independent research.

Please contact Mary Schnepf (mschnepf@buffalo.edu) for more information about the M.A. and Ph.D. programs.

Graduate Training in the Program Areas

Our training programs represent wide-ranging faculty and student interests.

Research in behavioral neuroscience examines neural mechanisms and the psychobiology of cognitive filtering and attention, sexual, maternal, and social behavior, addiction, feeding, emotion, analgesia, and learning and memory.

Faculty and students in the clinical program research topics such as alcohol and substance use and abuse, mood disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, developmental psychopathology, social development, and temperament, personality pathology, and assessment.

Research in the cognitive program examines issues as diverse as animal cognition, attention, auditory perception, categorization, eye movements and cognition, learning and memory, metacognition, motor control, and music.

Members of the social-personality program study close relationships, self-concept and self-esteem, stress and coping, and psychophysiology.

We are very proud that our graduate students are recognized as among the very best in the nation. Here are some recent highlights of their accomplishments:

Stefanie Acevedo (MA 2012), Ph.D. student in music theory, Yale University.

Rebecca Ashare (2011 Ph.D.), Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania.
Joshua Clapp (Ph.D. 2012), Assistant Professor of Psychology, University of Wyoming.
Angela Detschner (MA 2012), Ph.D. student in counseling psychology, UB.
Casey Feeney (MA 2012), Research assistant, UB Pharmacology and Toxicology Department.
Stephanie Godleski (Ph.D. 2012), Postdoctoral Fellow, Research Institute on Addictions.
Katie Hart (2012 Ph.D.), Postdoctoral Fellow, Florida International University.
Caroline McGoldrick (MA 2012). Senior Research Counselor, Occupations, Inc.
Jennifer Merrill (2012, Ph.D.), Research Fellow, Brown University, Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies.
Margaret Sibly (2012 Ph.D.), Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Florida International University/Herbert Werthiem College of Medicine.
Sarah Spencer (2012 Ph.D.), Postdoctoral Fellow, John Hopkins Hospital; Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.
Jordan Troisi (2012 Ph.D.), Visiting Assistant Professor, Widener University.
Elisa Truco (2012, Ph.D.), Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Michigan, Psychiatry and Alcohol Research Center.
Kathryn Walker (2012 Ph.D.), Health Psychology Fellow, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto.
Jilynn Werth (MA 2012), Hillside Family of Agencies.
Paula Yanes (2012 Ph.D.), Postdoctoral position/Senior technician, New York State Psychiatric Institute, Columbia University.
Hongoak Yun (2012 Ph.D.), Instructor, Konkuk University, Seoul, South Korea.

The following Clinical Ph.D. students are matched for internships:
Dara Babinski, University of Florida Health Science Center
Melissa Griffin, Charleston Consortium Internship, Charleston, SC
Kathryn Karch, University of Rochester Medical Center
Krissy Kent, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Columbus, OH
Briannon O-Connor, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital.
Jessica Rhodes, Western Psychiatric Institute & Clinic, Pittsburgh, PA
Monica Rudick, Pacific University School of Professional Psychology, Hillsboro, OR
Katelyn Thomas, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY
Jeffrey Wardell, Center for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto, ON
Jennifer Wray, Charleston Consortium Internship, Charleston, SC
Department Endowments and Awards

The teaching and research missions of the department are supported in part through the generous contributions of department alumni and friends. Charitable donations to any of the funds listed below can be made by visiting the Department’s website at www.psychology.buffalo.edu and clicking on Support the Department at the bottom of the page. If you wish to donate to the Feldman-Cohen fund, click on the corresponding link. If you wish to donate to one of our other funds, click on Psychology Department Resource Fund Donation Form and indicate the designated fund under Special Instructions. You will receive a thank you letter from the Chair confirming your donation.

Bugelski Fellowship Fund: Provides support for the dissertation research of advanced graduate students. Jeffrey Wardell, Matthew Wisniewski and Peter Vento are the most recent recipients of this research award.

Charles Meyer Psychology Fund: Provides support for graduate students to travel to conferences and present their research through posters and talks.

Dr. Donahue Tremaine Memorial Lecture Fund: Provides support for a lecture series on Learning Theory.

Eleanor Jacobs Scholarship Fund: Provides tuition scholarships to support the training of female graduate students. Lisa Germeroth is the most recent recipient of this award.

Feldman-Cohen Award in Psychology: Provides an award to the undergraduate honors student recognized as conducting the best honors thesis project. Bryan Sim (profiled below) is the most recent recipient of this award.

Robert W. Rice Memorial Fund: Provides an award to the graduate student recognized as publishing the best first-authored research article in the prior year. Jennifer Wray is the most recent recipient of this award for her publication:


PSI CHI National Honor Society for Psychology: Provides support for the annual Psychology undergraduate convocation ceremony.
The Marvin Feldman and Walter Cohen Award
Recipient: Bryan Sim

Each spring, the Department recognizes the most outstanding undergraduate Honors Thesis with the Marvin Feldman and Walter Cohen Award. Named in honor of two of the Department’s most distinguished former faculty, the cash award goes to the undergraduate whose Honors Thesis receives the highest ranking by the student’s examination committee, faculty advisor, and the Director of the Honors Program. Bryan Sim is the 2012 recipient.

I started my Honors Thesis (entitled “Valence of Perspective-Taking Produces Divergent Attitudinal Effects”) during the summer of 2011, under the guidance of Dr. Lora Park. My thesis investigated how focusing on the positive or negative aspects of another person’s life might disrupt the positive effects of trying to take another person’s perspective. Overall, I found that trying to take a homeless person’s perspective increased empathy for the homeless person and dispelled perceptions that world is fair and just. However, focusing on specific positive or negative aspects of the homeless person’s life disrupted these positive effects of perspective-taking.

I graduated in May 2012, and am currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Social Psychology at New York University. I am grateful for being a part of the Psychology Honors Program at UB because it made me a better scientist. For example, while planning my Honors project, I constantly had to think about how a new study could contribute to existing theory, and where it fit into the “bigger picture.” Designing and running my own studies also allowed me to develop my skills in the practical aspects of psychological science, such as preparing protocols for the Institutional Review Board, scheduling participants, and all the other tasks needed to make an experiment actually run.

I love doing research. I find it intrinsically fun and would do it for free. But science is only meaningful because it serves others. Awards and recognition remind me that my research should serve the greater good. I am proud to win the Feldman-Cohen Award and hope to continue doing good science. To that end, I will use the stipend from the award to fund my current research. In the future, I intend to pursue a career in academia. The road ahead is long (and likely filled with many potholes), but I am thankful that my experience at UB has been a great beginning to my journey.
Faculty Profile: Michael Poulin, Assistant Professor

Social Adaptation Lab

Dr. Poulin’s research focuses on determining when providing care and support to others is beneficial versus detrimental to one’s own well being. For example, while it is widely known that being a long-term caregiver for an ill loved one is burdensome, Dr. Poulin’s research reveals that the burden occurs not when caregivers are providing care, per se, but when they are not able to do so.

Recent research from the lab also suggests that providing support to others can actually lessen the physical and mental health effects of stressful life events when individuals hold positive views of those they are helping. The stress-reducing effects of helping, in turn, appear to be accounted for by the function of hormones associated with stress and social behavior (oxytocin and vasopressin). Ongoing work in the Social Adaptation Lab will increase understanding of the links between caregiving and stress and may help caregivers maximize their health and the quality of their social interactions.
Staff and Faculty Honors and Awards

Mary Schnepf received a SUNY Chancellors Award for Excellence in Classified Service and was honored at an award ceremony on October 3rd, 2012.

Peter Pfordresher, Awarded a National Science Foundation Grant BCS-1256964, entitled “Internal models and vocal imitation” ($265,089 direct costs)

Peter Pfordresher, Elected Secretary, Society of Music Perception and Cognition.

www.musicperception.org

Sandra Murray received the Career Trajectory Award from the Society of Experimental Social Psychology. This award celebrates scientific contributions made in the early-to-mid stages of a research career. The award is intended to recognize uniquely creative and influential scholarly productivity at or near the peak of one’s scientific career. She was honored at an awards ceremony at the annual convention of SESP on October 27, 2012.

Faculty in the News

Mark Kristal, On the practice of placenta consumption.

Invited article - The Huffington Post - “Placenta: To eat or not to eat?”

Interview - Omaha World Herald - “Mothers explore benefits of eating their placentas”

LA Times, 5/10/12, “How to parent like a celebrity”: http://www.latimes.com/health/la-he-extreme-mothering-20120512,0,998019.story


Jamie Ostrov, On educational media exposure and relational aggression in preschoolers.

Feb18th 2013 issue of the NY Times

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/18/health/violent-television-affects-childrens-behavior-study-says.html?_r=0