Chair’s Column, Stephen T. Tiffany, PhD.

Dear Friends of UB Psychology,

We are pleased to present the 2014/2015 Psychology Newsletter.

Psychology is the science of the mind and behavior. To study mind and behavior, psychology has become the most diverse of all the scientific disciplines. Within our psychology department, we have people doing research ranging from the level of single brain cells and neuroreceptors to studies with direct implications for mental health treatment and public policy - and we cover all of the space in between. In our department, we have people studying the development of substance use disorders, bird song, echolocation in whales, the psychobiology of thirst, romantic relationships, stress and resilience, communication in autism, attitudes and persuasion, children’s social and emotional development, ADHD, cigarette smoking, close relationships, personality and related disorders, sensorimotor interactions in speech and music … I had better stop now, because the range of research in our department is so broad that this list could easily continue for several paragraphs. That is because our department, like any modern department of psychology, is a candy store of research diversity. No other discipline comes close to the range of science that takes place within psychology.

The amazing range of research that we do is reflected in the great variety of journals in which our faculty publish. The professors in many disciplines other than psychology publish their science in only a few journals. Last year (2013), our psychology faculty published over 80 articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals. And these articles appeared in over 60 different journals. The topics that our psychologists cover are so broad that our work ends up in many, many different scientific journals. These publications are noticed by others - in the past 5 years, the publications generated by our faculty have been cited over 31,000 times. Our faculty are also well connected across the University at Buffalo. Many of our faculty have affiliations with other departments or groups on campus including the Research Institute of Addiction, Neuroscience Program, Cognitive Sciences Center, Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior Program, Department of Psychiatry, Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, Center for Hearing and Deafness, and Roswell Park Cancer. Finally, on the theme of diversity, our faculty receive funding from several NIH Institutes (including the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institute of Drug Abuse, National Cancer Institute, National institute of Mental Health, and National Institute of Child health and Human Development) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). It is rare to find a department outside of psychology that receives grant funding from both NIH and NSF.

I believe that it is our diversity along with high quality of the research and the intense commitment of our faculty to training the next generation of psychologists that draws so many students to major in psychology here at the University at Buffalo. We offer something for almost everyone. Perhaps that is why we are the largest single department major on the UB campus. We have 1400 psychology majors on campus and another 500 psychology majors at the Singapore Institute of Management.

Among our graduating class of 493 at UB this past year, we had 237 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, Dr. David Sack, B.A., 1974.

We continue to add excellent people to our faculty. In August of 2013, Dr. Kristin Gainey joined the Clinical Area and Dr. Kenneth DeMarree joined the Social-Personality Area. This past fall (2014), Dr. Christopher McNorgan joined the Cognitive Area and Dr. Matthew Paul joined the Behavioral Neuroscience Area. Also this past fall, 9 new graduate students joined our Ph.D. program and 11 students entered our Masters program. We will be growing further in the near future, as we will be searching for two additional faculty members to join us in the fall of 2015. We have also had some notable promotions: Dr. Michael Poulin was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor. Dr. Larry Hawk, Dr. Peter Pfordresher, and Dr. Jennifer Read were promoted to the rank of Full Professor. Finally, we have had a retirement: Dr. Jan Hastrup retired at the end of 2013.

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 website has information on how you can do that.

Regards,
Steve
Alumni Profile: Dr. David Sack

Dr. David Sack, BA ’74, has had a successful career in clinical, research and administrative psychiatry before becoming the president and CEO of Elements Behavioral Health, a group of treatment centers focusing on addiction and mental health in 2008.

With locations in eight states, Elements is comprised of Promises Treatment Centers, The Ranch, The Sexual Recovery Institute, The Recovery Place, Lucida Treatment Center, Right Step, Journey Healing Center, The Sundance Center and Clarity Way, making it the leading privately owned provider focused on addiction and mental health. From the treatment of emotional trauma, grief or loss, addiction, depression, anxiety, eating disorders or intimacy disorders, Elements assists individuals move toward recovery.

After graduating from UB, Sack earned his medical degree from Rush Medical College and completed his residency in psychiatry at the UCLA-Neuropsychiatric Institute. He was also a senior clinical scientist at the National Institute of Mental Health where he researched affective disorders, seasonal and circadian rhythms and neuroendocrinology.

Remembering his time at UB fondly, he recalls having “unprecedented access to senior faculty” as key to helping him select psychology, and not physics or pre-med, as his educational path. He remembers the department as being “very research oriented, there were things I was interested in and I loved it,” he said. As a student, Sack was involved with Sub-Board I in its earliest days of existence and Ethos magazine, an alternative to the Spectrum newspaper. It is this student experience that Dr. Sack attributes as the foundation for his business acumen today. In his role with Ethos, he had to work with fellow students for advertising, budgeting and the overall management of a publication, all skills he uses in his role as CEO. “It was the first business I ever ran,” he noted.

While his work has shifted from direct patient management, as CEO he “helps to set the culture of the company and is able to provide more mentoring” in this capacity. He remains passionate about his work and those who receive treatment noting, “when you treat addiction, the magnitude of improvement is greater than one sees in other areas of mental health,” Sack said.

Dr. Sack also helps foster the public conversation related to mental health and addictions as a contributor to the Huffington Post and has appeared on popular television programs including, Dateline NBC, The Doctors, Good Morning America and the Early Show. Additionally, his research has been published in more than 60 medical journals.

Most recently, Dr. Sack returned to UB in October to accept the Distinguished Alumni Award from the College of Arts and Sciences. This award recognizes the outstanding contributions by an alumnus in the areas of research or scholarly activity and exceptional career accomplishments.

-Gina Cali-Misterkiewicz, MA ’05
Communications Officer, College of Arts and Sciences
November 2014
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 about 1400 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 in the past two years follow. We look forward to hearing from you and encourage you to stay in touch.

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

2013 Awards and Recognition

2013 SUNY Chancellor Award

The Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence recognizes students who have best demonstrated the integration of academic excellence with accomplishments in the areas of leadership, athletics, community service, creative and performing arts, campus involvement, or career achievement. It is the highest honor bestowed upon a student by the University. Each year, campus presidents establish a selection committee, which reviews exemplary students. Nominees are then forwarded to the Chancellor’s Office and are subject to a second round of review. Finalists are then recommended to the Chancellor to become recipients of the award. Each recipient receives a framed certificate and medallion, which is traditionally worn at commencement.

2013 SUNY Chancellor Award

Jessica J. Walts received a 2013 SUNY Chancellor Award.

Ms. Walts graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in both Dance and Psychology with a minor in Teacher Education. Ms. Walts was a member of UB’s Honors College and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She served as the assistant to the director of the UB Department of Theatre and Dance and dance student representative for the Class of 2013. Ms. Walts served as a regular volunteer for the Out of the Darkness Suicide Prevention Walk and as a dance education specialist for the Bridging Communities through Dance project.

2013 CAS Dean’s Outstanding Psychology Graduating Senior

Carrie S. Fisher received the 2013 Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s award recipient for outstanding Graduating Senior.

Ms. Fisher graduated with a BA degree majoring in Psychology. Ms. Fisher’s Awards and Honors include membership in Tau Sigma’s Academic Honor Society for Transfer Students and inclusion on the Dean’s list in all eight semesters of her undergraduate career. She received the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo Scholarship (2010-2012) and the Grace W. Capen Academic Award, University at Buffalo (May 2012). Ms. Fisher worked as a research assistant in Dr. Leonard Simms’ Personality, Psychopathology, & Psychometrics Laboratory as well as Dr. Julie Bowker’s Child & Adolescent Relationships Laboratory. Under the supervision of Dr. Julie Bowker, Ms. Fisher has completed her Psychology undergraduate honors thesis, entitled “Does Other-Sex Popularity Impact Same-Sex Peer Experiences?”
2013 Exceptional Alumni Award

Dr. Wayne Silverman received his B.A. in Psychology at the University at Buffalo in 1969 and his Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology in 1973. He then spent the next 33 years as a scientist in the Department of Psychology of the New York Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities, serving as department chief from 1987 until he took a position at the Kennedy Krieger Institute (KKI) in 2006. Dr. Silverman is directing a large study of aging among adults with Down syndrome that is funded by the National Institutes of Health. This program involves collaborations among investigators at KKI, the New York State Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities and Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Dr. Silverman is the past president of the Academy on Mental Retardation, a past president of the American Psychological Association’s Division on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and a member of the board of directors of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. He has served on the National Research Council Committee on Disability Determination for Mental Retardation, and is a fellow of the American Psychological Association, the Association for Psychological Science, the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities.

2014 Awards and Recognition

2014 SUNY Chancellor Award

Taylor Lansing received a 2014 SUNY Chancellor Award.

Ms. Lansing graduated with a double major Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Social Science Interdisciplinary major in Health and Human Services with a concentration in early childhood. Ms. Lansing competed on the women’s swim team (Division 1). Ms. Lansing worked in Dr. Greg Fabiano’s research laboratory and interned at the Buffalo City Court. She was a representative of SAAC (Student-Athlete Advisory Committee) and a student-athlete mentor working to help high-risk athletes maintain their GPA and NCAA eligibility. She was an active member of UB’s bible study group. Ms. Lansing’s leadership can be seen through her role as captain of the “Hope Floats” University at Buffalo Relay for Life Team. She was responsible for organizing a swim meet fundraiser at UB that raised over $9,000 for the American Cancer Society.

2014 CAS Dean’s Outstanding Psychology Graduating Senior

Ethan Guthman received the 2013 Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s award recipient for outstanding Graduating Senior.

Mr. Guthman graduated with a BS degree majoring in Psychology. Mr. Guthman’s Awards and Honors include receipt of the UB Presidential Scholarship, recognition as a University Honors College Scholar, membership in Phi Beta Kappa and Psi Chi, and inclusion on the Dean’s list for each of his semesters at UB. Mr. Guthman completed summer research internships at the University of Alabama-Birmingham and Vanderbilt University. He completed his psychology undergraduate honors thesis, entitled “The functional effects of reinforcement on human error detection” under the supervision of Dr. Larry Hawk.
The Marvin Feldman and Walter Cohen Award

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 rankings by the student’s examination committee, Director of the Honors Program, and advisor.

Rowena Chin is the 2013 Recipient.

I completed my Honors Thesis, entitled “An Event-Related Brain Potential (ERP) Study of the Effects of Perceptual Task Difficulty on Cognitive Control”, under the guidance of Dr. David Shucard. To pursue goal-oriented activities, we often have to attend and respond to relevant information while resisting interference from irrelevant stimuli. However, this may be made more challenging due to perceptual ambiguity that is often present in our rich environment. To gain a better understanding of how people make decisions under such circumstances, my thesis investigated the neural processes underlying cognitive control mechanisms, namely conflict detection and inhibitory control. Currently, I am in the MSc. Cognitive Neuroscience program at University College London. Being in the Honors Program at UB helped me develop valuable skills that continue to serve me well as I embark on a new chapter in my research career. Completing my Honors project encouraged me to think more creatively and to take an active approach in learning. Most importantly, the experience affirmed my passion for research and aided me in my decision to pursue a career in academia. Research can be both daunting and demanding, but incredibly fulfilling. I was honored to be the recipient of the Feldman-Cohen award. The award marked a significant milestone in my undergraduate career at UB and gave me personal validation for my work as a budding scientist. I would like to express immense gratitude to my mentors Drs. David and Janet Shucard, who will always remain as beacons of inspiration. I would also like to thank family, friends, and faculty who have helped and supported me along this arduous, but rewarding journey.

Stephanie Smallets is the 2014 Recipient

I regard my participation in the Psychology Honors Program as the most rewarding experience I had as an undergraduate at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. Over the course of my senior year, I completed a two-study thesis entitled, “Bringing you down versus bringing me up: What underlies malicious and benign envy?” The goal was to investigate what psychological phenomena lead to malicious envy, wherein people try to bring their target of envy down (e.g., verbal derogation), and benign envy, wherein people try to improve themselves to the level of their envy target (e.g., persisting longer at a difficult task). My first study examined differences in self-esteem as antecedents to malicious and benign envy. My second study used psychophysiological measures to test whether contrast and assimilation processes are the underlying mechanisms of the two emotions. I was incredibly honored to receive the Feldman-Cohen Award for outstanding execution and defense of an Honors Thesis. This accolade means a lot to me, particularly because every student in the Psychology Honors Program is a brilliant, dedicated, and talented scientist. I could not have received this award without the help of my advisor, Dr. Mark Seery, the Honors Program director, Dr. Wendy Quinton, and graduate students Lindsey Streamer and Cheryl Kondrak. The Feldman-Cohen Award has set the bar high for me. I am now attending the Organizational Behavior Ph.D. program at the University of Southern California. Receiving this award raises expectations that others have for me and that I have for myself. Most importantly to me, the Feldman-Cohen Award validates that I can produce interesting and meaningful research.
Graduate News

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 Assistant for Academics and Alumni Development.

Our graduate programs are internationally recognized for excellence and continue to be a vibrant part of the academic community at UB. About 80 students are currently enrolled in our graduate training programs.

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.

2013 PH.D. PLACEMENTS

Dara Babinski (Clinical) – Faculty member at Penn State Hershey Medical Center
Kathryn Karch (Clinical) – Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Rochester Medical Center in the Department of Psychiatry
Shannon Lupien (Social) – Assistant Professor at Hilbert College
James Mantell (Cognitive) – Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology at St. Mary’s College of Maryland
Briannon O’Connor (Clinical) – Post Doctoral Fellow at NYR Langone Medical Center
Kelly Radizon (Cognitive) – Postdoctoral Fellow at the University at Buffalo in the Center for Hearing and Deafness.
Peter Vento (BNS) – Postdoctoral Fellow at Medical University of South Carolina
Matthew Wisniewski (Cognitive) – Postdoctoral Research Scientist at Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education
2014 PH.D. PLACEMENTS

Ariana Young (Social) – Assistant Professor of Psychology at California Lutheran University.
Melissa Griffin (Clinical) – Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, Toronto
Hector Vergara-Lopez (Clinical) – Postdoctoral Fellow at Brown University
Katelyn Thomas (Clinical) – Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Rochester Medical Center
Chrystal Vergara-Lopez (Clinical) – Postdoctoral Fellow at Brown University
Jeffrey Wardell (Clinical) – Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, Toronto
Jennifer Wray (Clinical) - Postdoctoral Fellow at the US Department of Veteran’s Affairs in Buffalo, NY.

AWARDS AND CONGRATULATIONS!

William Calabrese - Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award
Paula Fite – 2014 Diane J. Willis Early Career Award, administered by the American Psychological Foundation for APA Division 37 (Society for Child and Family Policy and Practice).
Mary Flaherty - Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award
Melissa Griffin – Department Dissertation Award, College of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Fellowship
Todd Kashdan – 2013 American Psychological Association (APA) Distinguished Scientific Award for Early Career Contribution to Psychology (in the area of individual differences)
Veronica Lamarche – 2014 Robert W. Rice Memorial Award for Early Excellence in Research
Shannon Lupien – Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award
Naomi McKay – American Psychological Association Dissertation Award, College of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Fellowship
Courtney Motschman – 2014 Eleanor Jacobs Scholarship Recipient
Erikson Neilans – College of Arts and Science Dissertation Fellowship, Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award & Department of Psychology Dissertation Award
Matthew Scalco – 2013 Robert W. Rice Memorial Award for Early Excellence in Research
Katelyn Thomas - Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award
Chrystal Vergara-Lopez – College of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Fellowship
Ariana Young – Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award

2013 MA GRADUATES

Adam Booth
Jenna Dellaccio
Kelsey Cullen (AccMA)
Jiabao Gao (AccMA)
David Holfoth
Andrew Jebb
Victoria Kordovski
Sarah Long
William Monopoli
Douglas Nickolai (AccMA)
Christopher Sova

2014 MA GRADUATES

Nicholas Albino
Michael Baum
Wade Goldstein
Diana Hamilton
Stevie Knight
Carrie Morrison
Kelsie Norek
Neesia Smith (AccMA)
Holly Truong
Faculty Profile: Kenneth DeMarree, Assistant Professor

Social Metacognition Lab

Dr. DeMarree's research focuses on metacognition, or thinking about thinking. In particular, he examines how social factors can influence people's thoughts about their thoughts as well as how thoughts about thoughts can influence social outcomes. Much of this work explores metacognitive factors that increase or decrease people's reliance on their primary thoughts. Primary thoughts, sometimes object level thoughts, are those that occur in direct response to some stimulus (e.g., "this policy sounds helpful" or "that reporter is attractive").

One such factor is confidence. When people are confident of a thought, they are more likely to rely on that thought than if they are doubtful of that thought. However, thought confidence can come from a variety of sources, not all of which are related to the objective validity of the thought.

Dr. DeMarree's research examines a variety of factors that influence thought confidence. These factors include reflecting on personally important values, having power over another person, and being mimicked by another person. More recent work is exploring individual differences in confidence -- some people rely on their own thoughts more than other people do.

Interestingly, the effects of confidence vary depending on the thoughts to which it is attributed. For example, in the context of persuasion, confidence increases persuasion if it is attributed to a person's message-congruent thoughts. However, confidence decreases persuasion if it is attributed to message-incongruent thoughts (e.g., because a message is weak or because people are counterarguing). In addition to responses to persuasive appeals, Dr. DeMarree's research has explored a variety of effects from this perspective. For example, confidence in people's attitudes, activated goals, and personal characteristics predict the impact of each of these thoughts on subsequent judgments and behavior.

Faculty Profile: Paul Meyer, Assistant Professor

Some people are able to take drugs recreationally, without becoming addicted. Other people become addicted and have difficulty remaining abstinent, especially in the presence of people or places they associate with drugs. The overall research goal of Dr. Meyer's laboratory is to understand how drug-associated cues, like a favorite bar, come to control motivated behavior, especially in individuals that are prone to addiction-like behaviors.

His laboratory currently uses animal models to develop an understanding of addiction. In one line of research, Dr. Meyer is studying the role of a candidate gene (Cadherin-13), identified from genetic mapping studies, in controlling how rewarding rats find cocaine to be. In another line of research, Dr. Meyer uses intracranial electrodes to record neural activity within the brain. This allows his lab to determine which specific brain areas are involved in processing drug-related cues and in regulating drug-taking behavior. This has revealed that brain areas that use the neurotransmitter dopamine are responsive to drug cues in certain animals but not others. In a further line of research, Dr. Meyer is trying to understand how attention and susceptibility to impulsive behavior influence vulnerability to drug cues. The ultimate goal of this line of research is to produce behavioral and drug therapies that can reduce susceptibility to addiction-like behavior.
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. Every year, the Psychology Department recognizes outstanding doctoral scholarship with the Psychology Department Dissertation Award. This honor and monetary award of $1000 is given based on excellence in scholarly productivity during doctoral studies, and significance and quality of the doctoral dissertation project.

Erickson Neilans is the most recent recipient of this award. Mr. Neilans has already received many honors in his young career, including the Best Student Paper Award from the International Congress on Acoustics, a Mark Diamond Research Foundation Award, and finalist status in the 2012 Panasci Technology Entrepreneurship Competition.

**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. Courtney Motschman 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. Rowena Chin and Stephanie Smallets (both profiled above) are the most recent recipients 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.

Veronica Lamarche is the most recent recipient of this award. Veronica was honored for her research examining how automatic attention can help people preserve and protect their commitments in romantic relationships (Lamarche, V. M., & Murray, S. L. (2014). Selectively myopic? Self-esteem and attentional bias in response to potential relationship threats. Social Psychology and Personality Science, 5, 786-795).

**PSI CHI National Honor Society for Psychology:**
Provides support for the annual Psychology undergraduate convocation ceremony.