The Committee for an Inclusive Community (CIC) is our forum for fostering an inclusive culture within the Department of Psychology (https://psychcic.uoregon.edu). The CIC formed in 2012 and is composed of graduate students and members of the faculty and staff with shared interests in enhancing diversity and inclusion. Our aims are to discuss, nourish, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion; to integrate and strengthen these values in our research, teaching, and mentoring; and to collaborate with other like-minded campus and community groups that support diversity and inclusion. We publish both an annual newsletter (https://psychcic.uoregon.edu/newsletter) and a weekly bulletin highlighting upcoming inclusion-related events; we conduct an annual survey assessing the diversity climate within the department; we host an open conversation among students on the topic of inclusion; and we maintain an active social media presence on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/uopsychcic) and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/uopsych_cic).

Our goal in the current year is to promote the development of a stronger sense of community—a community fully sensitive to the needs, challenges, and aspirations of all its members. More specifically, we are focusing on helping department members develop skills and awareness to become more effective allies to those from underrepresented or marginalized groups (e.g., bystander intervention skills in situations in which individuals are subject to micro- or macroaggression from others). With that in mind, we have contracted with Rehearsals for Life (RFL) to develop workshops over the course of the year for graduate students and members of the faculty and staff in our department. RFL is a joint project of the Graduate School and the Office of the Dean of Students, empowering individuals to step in to defuse disrespectful situations (https://gradschool.uoregon.edu/rehearsals-for-life). RFL uses interactive theater techniques to address our involvement in difficult conversations on issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, disability, religion, or age differences. Their workshops help individuals to learn from each other’s perspectives and to become better prepared to confront challenging situations in their daily lives.

Complementing that focus, we will also be providing funding opportunities to faculty and staff members as well as students who wish to attend workshops or conferences that have a diversity-inclusion theme. The expectation is that those taking advantage of such opportunities will bring back what they have learned for the benefit of the whole community.
Alumni Updates

Cindy Bruns, BS ’94, has been the training director for the APA accredited internship at the Student Medical and Counseling Clinic at Central Washington University for the past eight years. This October, she became the Interim director of counseling at the same clinic.


Janet Hough, BA ’16, is pursuing a master of arts in education with a major in clinical mental health counseling at Seattle University.

Alicia Ibaraki, MS ’12, PhD ’17 completed her internship at the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center in Hawaii and returned to Oregon after accepting a tenure-track assistant professorship in psychological sciences at Western Oregon University.

Cindy H. Liu, MS ’03, PhD ’08, received grants from the National Institute of Mental Health ("Maternal Psychosis and Stress as Risks for Offspring Behavioral Impairment," a four-year study examining perinatal risks and its effects on infants of mothers with psychosis and depression) and the American Psychological Foundation ("Grandparent Caregiving Practices and Obesity in Chinese Immigrant Children," examining grandparent experiences, caregiving, and health outcomes in their grandchildren within both China and the United States). A study she is conducting in Boston’s Chinatown was featured in NPR’s Morning Edition. She was invited to be part of the Ernst Strüngmann Forum, a think tank in Frankfurt in which they work to conceptualize and update the understanding of culture and attachment.

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A Letter from the Department Head

Greetings! Last month, we had our Faculty Research Blitz—an annual event organized by graduate students in which faculty members share with the entire department in ultrashort presentations (nine minutes each) big ideas, new findings, or new directions from their ongoing research. Here are just a few examples:

Mike Wehr explained to us how he identified the precise neural circuitry in mice that detects gaps in the stream of auditory information, which is a critical function for processing music and speech.

Dare Baldwin’s work sheds new light on why we are so good in quickly understanding complex action sequences, namely by automatically picking out and allocating attention to the boundaries between action segments.

Gordon Hall presented important meta-analytic results indicating that “culturally sensitive” therapeutic interventions are much more effective than the culture-blind “textbook” versions.

Mike Posner told us about promising new work in both mice and humans in which he and his colleagues use electrical brain stimulation to grow the myelin sheaths around axons—which in turn has positive effects on attention and stress regulation.

Melynda Casement showed brain imaging results on the negative effects of a mismatch between sleeping routines and circadian rhythms in adolescents.

Nick Allen told us about new research in which he and his group discovered that a particular serotonin-related gene could make people either more or less depressive, depending on the specific types of environmental challenges they faced.

These and all the other excellent presentations made me once again proud of our department and also of our discipline in general. Only in psychology can you find work ranging from interneuronal wiring patterns in mice next to research on how to design culturally sensitive interventions. Clearly, with so much diversity, disciplinary cohesion does not always come easy. However, our research blitz demonstrated that it can be done. In fact, some of the most productive work in our department stems from collaborations across areas and levels of inquiry!

I am already looking forward to next year’s research blitz. While not widely advertised, these events are open to the public. So, if you want to sit in at next year’s blitz, just drop me a note at mayr@uoregon.edu and I’ll make sure you get an invitation! Until then, I hope that you enjoy this issue of Psychology News, which we use to share developments in our department with you.

As always, we welcome your comments as well as news about significant events or activities in your own lives. Please submit updates at the website (https://psychology.uoregon.edu/2017/10/05/seeking-alumni-updates), contact us by email at newsletter@psych.uoregon.edu, or write to Elliot Berkman, our newsletter editor, at Department of Psychology, 1227 University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403-1227. You can also find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/uopsychology and on Twitter at @UOPsych.

Best wishes for the coming year!

Ulrich Mayr
Department Head
Welcome, Dr. Rob Chavez

Rob Chavez comes to the University of Oregon from Ohio State University, where he completed his postdoctoral training. Prior to that, he completed his PhD in cognitive neuroscience at Dartmouth College and his undergraduate degree at the University of New Mexico. His research focuses on the neuroscience of social perception and self-representation. Using a combination of neuroimaging methods and machine-learning techniques, his work seeks to describe how the human brain builds representations of our sense of self and the social environment and how we use these representations to guide our behavior in the real world. He is currently investigating how information about one’s self-concept is encoded in the brains of our friends and other individuals within our social network. Rob says, “The faculty and students at UO are among the most forward-thinking group of researchers in the country. I could not be more excited to be among such a dynamic group of people who are, in multiple domains, leading the way in the future of psychological science.”

Departmental Grants Update  The psychology faculty have submitted 65 grant applications and secured 13 grant awards since July 2016. Two of our six postdoctoral scholars earned NIH fellowship awards and five PhD students received external dissertation grants. The department has 29 active research awards.

Here are a few highlights from the past year:

Jennifer Pfeifer won a NIH R21 research grant for her work on investigating the relationship between autonomous versus controlled self-regulation and substance abuse in adolescents.

Nick Allen partnered with the University of California at Berkeley to secure a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation award to design and test interventions using the internet and social media among early adolescents in Tanzania.

Elliot Berkman received a new NIH National Cancer Institute R01 research grant for his work using neuroimaging and food-valuation change to potentially inform treatment planning for adults.

Caitlin Fausey won a Grammy Foundation Grants award to conduct research on ambient sound and infant development.

Ulrich Mayr secured National Science Foundation funding for his project, “Hierarchical Control of Sequential Skills: Using EEG to Decode the Underlying Representations.”

Matt Smear received NIH funding for his research, titled “Concentration Change Representation in the Olfactory Bulb.”

Alumni Updates

Continued from page 2


Rachel Logier (Dyer), BS ’07, is a drug store manager and pharmacy technician.

Ellen Peters, MS ’94, PhD ’98, was recently named an Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of Psychology.

Jennifer Miner Weaver, BA ’03, recently received tenure at Boise State University in the Department of Psychology. She is enjoying life with her husband (a fellow Duck) and their three beautiful children.

Share your alumni updates with us!

You can submit updates to our website: https://psychology.uoregon.edu/2017/10/05

via our contact email: newsletter@psych.uoregon.edu

or by writing to:

Elliot Berkman
Newsletter Director
Department of Psychology, 1227 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1227
Social: Sanjay Srivastava

Social media is playing an increasingly important role in modern life. About seven out of every 10 Americans are active users of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. People use social media for a wide range of reasons: keeping up with friends and family, following breaking news, finding jobs, seeking health information, and more.

In online social networks, all of this information comes to us through other people. So a key part of navigating the online world is forming impressions of the people with whom we encounter and interact. How do we decide who is trustworthy? Who is smart? Who means well? Who is being authentic and who is just putting on a show? And how do those impressions affect important decisions we make in the online world and the offline one too?

Ongoing work in my lab and with collaborators in the Department of Computer and Information Science, we are studying how people form impressions online and what they do with them, with a particular focus on Twitter. In a series of experiments, we have found that people form strong and distinct impressions of other people online, drawing on diverse cues including the language that people use, the pictures they share, and the people they are connected to online—and those impressions guide a wide variety of decisions, ranging from who to follow online to who would be a good job candidate or relationship partner.

We are also studying to what extent people’s online personas give accurate information about the “real them.” Is it all just self-presentation? Or can we learn about people’s personalities, mental health states, and more? By better understanding what can be gleaned from social media, we may be able to enable large-scale public health research in the future, and also give people greater control over their personal information.

Clinical: Maureen Zalewski

Maureen Zalewski recently started a five-year clinical trial funded by the National Institute of Mental Health to learn how an effective treatment for women with serious mental health issues affects key developmental processes in their preschool aged children. Dialectical behavior therapy is a treatment that improves how individuals are able to regulate difficult and painful emotions, using mindfulness and behavioral skills. This trial measures how much children improve in their ability to label and manage their emotions as a function of change in their mothers’ emotion-regulation abilities. This is one of the first trials to systematically test whether mental health treatment for parents can help prevent the development of mental health issues in their children.

This trial will be informative to Zalewski’s larger goal of raising the standard of psychological care when therapists treat adults who are parents. Currently in the US, child and adult mental health services are not well integrated and the few models that do exist are rarely available in most communities. Zalewski recently published a paper, “Clinical Considerations When Treating Adults Who Are Parents”, which is currently featured on the Society for Clinical Psychology’s blog (https://www.div12.org/clinical-considerations-when-clients-have-children). This paper encourages therapists who treat adult parents to more fully consider how the parenting role intersects with the presentation of symptoms and treatment planning. Specific recommendations are made for how therapists may play a role in preventing mental disorders.

Zalewski is a licensed clinical psychologist in Oregon who supervises clinical psychology doctoral students in dialectical behavior therapy. She runs the Science and Treatment of Affect Regulation Team (START lab).

Developmental: Jennifer Pfeifer

Adolescence is a period of dramatic transitions, including puberty-related changes in hormones, bodies, and brains. It is also a period when many mental illnesses first appear. The Developmental Social Neuroscience Lab, under the leadership of Jennifer Pfeifer, PhD, and in collaboration with the Adolescent Development and Psychopathology Team (Nick Allen, PhD), is investigating how pubertal changes relate to mental health during adolescence. In particular, we are interested in how brain circuits involved in social processing and emotions develop during this period, and whether these changes may play a role in the onset of mental illness in girls.
We are investigating these questions in a five-year federally funded study, “Transitions in Adolescent Girls.” We aim to capture a comprehensive picture of puberty, including self-reporting and parental reporting on physical changes, as well as saliva and hair samples to assess hormone levels. We will use neuroimaging techniques to examine brain structure, function, and connectivity. Finally, mental health will be measured with clinical interviews and questionnaires. Close to 200 nine- to twelve-year-olds will participate in the study (including three lab visits over the course of three years) to track changes over time. Phase one of the project is nearing completion, with more than 150 girls recruited, and follow-up sessions are under way.

At the end of this project, we will have a unique data set that will allow us to examine the relationships among pubertal maturation, changes in brain structure and function, and social and emotional processes. A more refined understanding of these interrelations will not only improve scientific understanding of how mental illness emerges, it will also allow our team to translate this knowledge to build developmentally informed early-intervention programs that support emotional well-being.

Cognitive Neuroscience:
Dasa Zeithamova

Memory is quite remarkable. It allows you to remember specific details of events that happened just once, such as your wedding day or where you parked your car on today’s trip to the supermarket, without confusing them with other similar events. But memory also allows you to link information across experiences, extract similarities, and generate new knowledge, such as what weddings usually look like or what are the best parking spots. How can the brain represent memories so you can both remember specific details and find common themes to generalize future situations?

Several decades ago, we thought we had an answer: multiple memory systems. A brain structure called the hippocampus learns rapidly, allowing us to remember specific events. Generalization was thought to be a product of other memory structures, such as the striatum, that learn slowly and incrementally to extract regularities and disregard idiosyncratic details. It was thought that these systems were in competition: the better you generalize, the worse you remember specific details. But if the hippocampus does not generalize and the striatum needs many, many experiences to learn, how can we sometimes generalize from a handful of experiences?

To understand properties of each memory system, research on specificity has been typically conducted in isolation from that on generalization, making such a question difficult to address. The Brain and Memory Laboratory seeks to bridge this divide and use novel computer-based memory games, computational models of memory, and brain-imaging techniques to simultaneously track specificity and generalization in the brain and behavior.

Our work shows that specificity and generalization can operate independently, or even complement each other—tradeoff is not inevitable. Using brain imaging together with computational models of memory, we show that the anterior portion of the hippocampus, together with the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, supports generalization. Furthermore, it does so by forming memory representations that combine information from several individual experiences, not just by representing each experience separately. We also show that the same mechanism may support seemingly very different forms of generalization, such as rapid statistical learning (e.g., where the overall best parking spots are) and episodic inference (e.g., inferring that two people are a couple after seeing a man walking a dog in the park, then seeing a woman walking that same dog the next day).

Other portions of the hippocampus keep track of specific information, like today’s parking spot or where in the park we met the man with the dog. To make sense of events in our lives, the hippocampus thus represents each experience at multiple levels of resolution—from a single event, to the relationships between and among events to the big picture story of our life. Which level is the most important depends on the situation: specificity may be critical in a courtroom during an eyewitness testimony; generalization may be more important when applying learned facts to novel problems.

Understanding how the brain remembers specific events, how it organizes bits and pieces of information to form knowledge, and how these functions relate to each other will help enhance memory as well as understand its limitations.
Center for Digital Mental Health

This year sees the establishment of a new research center within the Department of Psychology, the Center for Digital Mental Health (www.c4dmh.net). The Center is headed by Professor Nick Allen and includes members from the UO Departments of Psychology and Computer and Information Sciences, in addition to the College of Education. The Center will conduct research and build digital tools to enhance mental health, especially among underserved groups and young people. The work of the Center will focus on the use of mobile and wearable devices and on social media to unobtrusively track and analyze behavior. The aim of using these data is to detect mental health needs and provide adaptive, personalized interventions exactly when users need them.

Digital technologies are transforming every aspect of modern life, ranging from the way we communicate and consume media to how we work and conduct commerce. However, the impact of digital technology on human health, and mental health in particular, is less clear. Indeed, there is a high level of community concern regarding the health effects of new technologies, particularly how they affect young people.

Despite these concerns, digital technologies have the potential to solve some of the greatest health challenges we face, particularly in mental health. Because mobile technologies primarily collect data on human behavior, often in the context of their social relationships and interpersonal communications, they provide new opportunities for screening, tracking, and intervention, many of which are historically unique. For example, mobile and wearable computing has the potential to transform our prediction of mental health states, and thus our capacity to provide timely and effective intervention to at-risk individuals.

The Center was established because we now stand at a critical juncture in the application of these new technologies and approaches to enhancing mental health. Over time, the Center for Digital Mental Health will establish tools, collaborations, and expertise to solve critical problems—solutions that have the potential to significantly lift the burden associated with mental disorders. These approaches will leverage the latest developments in technology, quantitative analysis, and behavior-change techniques to facilitate innovative, timely interventions and place them into the hands (and pockets) of people who need them.

Honor Roll Pledges, Donations, and Ongoing Endowments

Kenneth Acton ’76
American Psychological Association
Fred Attneave
Laura Berk
Elliot and Natalie Berkman
Ellen Berry ’74
Shawna Bigelow ‘03 and David Pritchard
Suzanne and Stephen Boies, MS ’69, PhD ’71
Kenneth Booze Jr. ’72
Burton Boyd, MS ’56
Brain and Behavior Research Foundation
Tina Buikat ’82
Ashley Byers
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Marie Conley, MS ’15
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Caitlin Fausey
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Melody ’79 and Lann Leslie ’78, JD ’82
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Robert Weiss
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Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital
Sheldon Zach

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Faculty and Graduate Student Awards

Faculty

Jennifer Freyd received the University’s Senate 2017 Wayne T. Westling Award for University Leadership and Service.

Caitlin Fausey received an Ersted Award for Distinguished Teaching.

Elliot Berkman received the 2017 Early Career Award from the Social Personality and Health Network.

Jennifer Pfeifer received a 2017-2018 Fund for Faculty Excellence award.

Graduate Students

Psychology Departmental Awards
- Distinguished Teaching Award: Robbie Ross
- Beverly Fagot Memorial Fellowship: Jessica Kosie
- Gregores Awards: Atsushi Kikumoto, Elizabeth Loi
- Norman D. Sundberg Fellowship: Jessica Flannery, Lauren Kahn

Jennifer Gómez received the Award for Outstanding Dissertation in the Field of Trauma Psychology, Division 56, from the American Psychological Association.

Karlena Ochoa received the People’s Choice Award in the Graduate School’s Three-Minute Thesis Competition.

2016 American Psychological Association Dissertation Research Awards
- Rebecca Calcott
- Ryan Giuliano
- Alex Bies

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships
- Krista DeStasio
- Sarah Horn
- Jonathan Saunders

Michelle Fong received the 2017–18 Betty Foster McCue Scholarship and a 2017–18 UO Dissertation Research Fellowship.

Katherine Hagan and Elizabeth Loi received the 2017 Gary E. Smith Summer Professional Development Award.

Jessica Kosie received the UO Women in Graduate Science Travel Award.

Rita Ludwig received the 2017–18 Sandra Morgen Public Impact Graduate Fellowship.

UO Scholarship Recipients
- Jessica Flannery
- Danielle Cosme

College of Arts and Sciences Scholarship Recipients
- Carolyn M. Stokes Memorial Scholarship: Theresa Cheng
- Miller Family Graduate Award in Technology and Science: Danielle Cosme
- Marthe E. Smith Memorial Science Scholarship: Michelle Fong and Jessica Kosie