I am thrilled to be able to announce the publication of the very first newsletter of the Saint Joseph's Psychology Department. This document is one of many that you will be receiving periodically. Each installment will be the exclusive creation of the faculty of the Psychology Department. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep you, our students, friends, and alumni, current about Departmental activities, initiatives, research projects, and other happenings. We want to keep you informed of all of the goings-on among our active, vibrant, and vital group of scholars.

This newsletter is intended to help build a community among all of those who benefitted from the rich intellectual experience provided by the Psychology Department. You have supported the mission of the Department over the years, with so much of your hard work. The faculty, in turn, nurtured your intellectual and personal growth and gave you the skill sets that you needed to be successful in all manner of endeavors. Together, we have made Psychology one of the most popular majors and departments on the Saint Joseph’s campus. Not content to rest on these past successes, the Psychology faculty look to the future, offering our students an ever-improving immersion in this most exciting of disciplines.

-Donald S. Leimer, Ph.D.

Genevieve Millet (Left) and Laura Bouchard (Right) were chosen as the Psychology Department’s 2009 Summer Scholars.

Eye on Summer Scholars:

The Summer Scholars Program (SSP) was created in order to engage select students in faculty-mentored research, creative writing, fine and performing arts, and other scholarly endeavors during the summer months. The goals of the program are to provide students with an opportunity to engage in research for an extended period of time, foster close professional interaction between students and faculty mentors and to allow students the opportunity to publicly share and present the results of all their hard work. In this issue we delve into the topics of flamingos and multicultural sleep patterns by investigating the research done by Laura Bouchard and Genevieve Millet, the two most recent psychology summer scholars.

Laura Bouchard worked with Dr. Matthew Anderson examining the resting behavior of flamingos this past summer. The main focus of their study was to better understand the flamingo act of unipedal resting, which is the tendency of the birds to stand balanced on one leg for extended lengths of time. Bouchard sought to determine whether this behavior plays a role in thermoregulation. In cold temperatures flamingos may use unipedal resting in an effort to decrease the surface area of their body that is exposed to the elements, therefore decreasing the amount of heat that can escape from the body. If this theory of thermoregulation is indeed correct, as temperature begins to decrease, the length of time the flamingos stand on one leg should increase. Bouchard’s project attempted to examine this, and required hours of observation of captive birds at the Philadelphia Zoo. Continued on page 2...
Psychology Seen & Heard:

- Dr. Matthew Anderson has been featured in BBC Earth News, USA Today's On Deadline, Birdwatch, MSNBC LiveScience
- Dr. Jodi Mindell has been featured in Time, MSN News, San Francisco Chronicle, USA Today, Fox News, Parents, Real Simple, American Baby, Washington Post, Reuters

Recent Publications:


Summer Scholars Continued...

Bouchard arrived at the Zoo around midday everyday, which is a time that the birds were known to be resting, and recorded multiple variables. Each bird was observed twice, once when it was resting in the unipedal stance and once when in the bipedal stance. In each instance, the length of time that the bird held the stance was recorded. Bouchard also measured certain weather variables each day in order to correlate them with the bird’s resting times. Bouchard found that temperature and wind chill are indeed significantly related to the length of time that a flamingo will partake in unipedal resting. As the temperature decreased, the length of time the birds rested on one leg increased, evidencing a thermoregulatory function. Moreover, bipedal resting times were positively correlated with wind speed, perhaps the result of a greater need for balance in windy conditions. Laura put a great deal of effort into her project, and the fascinating results greatly extend previous work done in the Anderson lab.

Switching gears from animal research to human research, Genevieve Millet’s summer research dealt with differences in children’s sleeping patterns between impoverished and high socioeconomic families in Columbia, South America. Millet worked with Dr. Mindell and studied children ages 0 to 36 months by having the parents complete the Brief Infant Sleep Questionnaire. The information for low socioeconomic (SES) families was collected during a visit to a local free-clinic for impoverished families, and the information for the high socioeconomic families was collected over the Internet. Millet’s results were very intriguing in that after controlling for age, gender and birth order, it was found that parents of low SES children reported later bedtimes, longer nightwakings, and less total nighttime sleep. An interesting factor that Millet sheds light on is that parents of low SES children reported significantly fewer concerns about their children’s sleep problems than those parents of high SES status.

Millet’s overall conclusions are that low SES families in Columbia, South America report less overall sleep and more sleep disruption during the night compared to those families who have high SES. On the flip side, even though children of low SES families tended to have more sleep problems, the parents were significantly less likely to report concerns about their children’s sleep problems than the high SES families. Millet believes the reason behind this discrepancy may be related to the differences in parental perceptions. Parents of low SES may view sleep as being a potentially lower priority compared to other concerns for these impoverished families. Millet traveled far and wide in order to present this interesting research to the psychology community and her research is a great multicultural discovery.

Story by Michael Roberts
Faculty Profile:  
Dr. Chris Lawson

The Psychology Department welcomes Dr. Chris Lawson. Dr. Lawson is a developmental psychologist with research interests in the area of early cognitive development. His work explores the development of categorization and reasoning from infancy into the preschool years. He has additional interests in understanding adult reasoning and decision-making.

Dr. Lawson received Bachelor’s degrees in Psychology and Philosophy from Northeastern University in 2000. In 2007 he received his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Additionally, he spent two years as a postdoctoral researcher at Carnegie Mellon University before arriving at SJU.

Alumni Notes:

Adriene Beltz (BS’08, MS’09) is studying developmental psychology at Penn State and will be presenting a poster at the Society for Research on Adolescence’s biennial meeting in Philadelphia in March, 2010.

Kait Clark (BS’08) has co-authored an article entitled, ‘See an object, hear an object file: Object correspondence transcends sensory modality’ that is to appear in Visual Cognition.

Amanda Neuber (BS’04, MS’05) is presently an Adjunct Professor of Psychology and Associate Director of the Honors Program at Temple University.

Edward O’Brien (BS’09) is pursuing a Ph.D. in social psychology at University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

Got News or Suggestions? Contact the editors:

Matthew J. Anderson, Ph.D.  
manda06@sju.edu

Philip Schatz, Ph.D.  
pwatch@sju.edu

Student Assistant Editor: Michael B. Roberts (BS’09, MS expected ’10)

Each Year Saint Joseph’s University recognizes outstanding faculty achievement in the areas of teaching, research, and service through the awarding of faculty merit awards. This year, three psychology department faculty members were awarded such merit awards. Dr. Josephine Shih received a merit award for outstanding teaching. Dr. Matthew Anderson was the recipient of an award for excellence in research. Dr. Judith Chapman was honored with an award for superior service to the university community. Please congratulate these faculty members for these recognitions. Such achievements well represent the excellence of the entire psychology department.

Upcoming Conferences & Events:

• Dr. Janet Hyde (U. Wisconsin-Madison) will deliver this year’s Hyatt Lecture on March 30, 2010. She will speak on gender differences in science and math careers. The Hyatt Lecture is an annual event sponsored by the SJU Psychology Department.

• Feb 9th, 2010: Dr. Skolnick and the Commission on the Status of Women on campus are bringing in Donna Freitas, the author of the book, "Sex and the Soul," for a public lecture and discussion of hook-up culture on Catholic campuses.

• Eastern Psychological Association meeting: March 4-7, 2010 New York, NY

• 5th Annual Psi Chi National Research Day: April 15th 2010 at Temple University

Are you a graduate of the SJU Psychology BS or MS programs? We would love to hear from you and share your news with others in Alumni Notes. Please direct your news and updates to Dr. Matthew Anderson at manda06@sju.edu. Be sure to indicate the year you graduated and which program you were enrolled in.