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## THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO Psychology



November 2012



### **The State of the Department**

Stella M. Rowley Professor and Department Chair Susan Levine highlights some of the department's most important news- from new faculty hires to graduate student accomplishments to the Department's national ranking.

**Full Story»**



### **The Future of Psychology**

In a recent interview, John Cacioppo, the Tiffany and Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor, discussed how the field of psychology has changed over his career, and how he thinks psychological research and education will change in coming years. **Full Story»**



### **Woodward Returns**

One of our most exciting recent hires is a well-known friend of the Department. The return of Amanda Woodward, the William S. Gray Professor and an internationally-renowned expert on infant cognition, has already led to several new collaborations. **Full Story»**

### **Graduate Student Awards Named for Eminent Psychologist**

Norman Henry Anderson is a name that's familiar to many psychologists.



Now the man who developed information integration theory is also the benefactor of a program that's helping Chicago graduate students. **Full Story»**



### Alumni Gift Spurs Undergraduate Research

Earl R. Franklin never worked as a psychologist. But during his nearly 40 year career as an attorney and executive, Franklin always wanted to make his mark on the field. And now he's influencing the field, through the Earl R. Franklin Research Fellowships. **Full Story»**



### Undergraduate, Graduate, and Postdoctoral Research

Their projects span a wide range of important topics, and illustrate the collaborative and often interdisciplinary nature of work being carried out in the Department. **Full Story»**



### Support the Department

Gifts from alumni and friends provide vital support to our department, ensuring that our faculty and students can advance their research.



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# THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

## Psychology



November 2012



### **The State of the Department**

Welcome to the inaugural Department of Psychology newsletter, *University of Chicago Psychology News*. Our goal is to keep our alumni and friends informed about developments in the Department.

I am very pleased to report that the Department is thriving.

Students and faculty are the lifeblood of our Department. With respect to faculty, over the past several years we have added five talented junior faculty members to our roster. Katherine Kinzler, the first Neubauer Assistant Professor in the Social Sciences Division, is a developmental psychologist who studies the emergence of social categories, particularly categories defined by language or accent. Kimberly Rios is a social psychologist who studies the factors that lead individuals to voice distinctive rather than conforming opinions. Jasmin Cloutier, another addition to our social psychology program, utilizes behavioral and neuroscience methods to study person perception. Sarah London, a neuroscientist, works on how early experience alters brain and behavioral development using the zebra finch songbird as a model system. Our newest faculty member is Gregory Norman, a neuroscientist whose work focuses on the physiological processes underlying the relationship of social interactions and health outcomes. In addition, we have recruited Amanda Woodward, the William S. Gray Professor of Psychology, back to our Department after a five-year stint at the University of Maryland. Amanda is an internationally recognized scholar who works on infant cognition with a focus on social cognitive development.

We also congratulated several members of our faculty on their promotions during the past year. David Gallo, who studies the neurocognitive processes of human memory, and how normal aging and Alzheimer's disease affect memory processes, was promoted to the rank of associate professor with tenure. Two other faculty members – Sian Beilock and Brian Prendergast – became full professors. Sian works on neurocognitive processes underlying learning, and how learning can break down in pressure situations and Brian works on the mechanisms of biological rhythms and the relation of these rhythms to immune function.

We are continuing to attract a very talented group of graduate students to our department. Their research is appearing in top journals and they are active in presenting their findings at national and international conferences. In its most recent survey, the National Research Council ranked our department among the top doctoral programs in the country. Our undergraduate concentration is also thriving, with increased opportunities to gain research experience through our new Undergraduate Research Initiative Program (URIP), headed by Anne Henly, who joined us as a Senior Lecturer.

A critical measure of our effectiveness as a department is the success of our graduates. I am proud to report that our undergraduates are gaining admission to top graduate programs and our graduate students are being recruited to top post-doctoral fellowship and faculty positions as well as a range of interesting positions outside the academy. Moreover, as their careers move forward, they are becoming leaders in the field of psychology and related disciplines.

A crucial factor in the Department's recent success is the generosity of our alumni and friends. As you'll see in this newsletter, we highlight two alumni, Norman Henry Anderson and Earl R. Franklin, whose gifts have provided important and much appreciated support for student research.

I hope you enjoy our first newsletter. We look forward to your feedback.



Susan C. Levine  
Stella M. Rowley Professor and Chair



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## THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO Psychology



November 2012



### **The Future of Psychology**

Few psychologists are better suited than John T. Cacioppo to comment on changes in our field. Widely-regarded as a leader by his peers, Cacioppo, the Tiffany & Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor in Psychology, started integrating neuroscience tools, such as event-related brain potentials, lesion studies, (and, more recently, functional magnetic resonance imaging), into his research more than 25 years ago. The pioneering work of Cacioppo, and his collaborator, Gary Berntson, in exploring how social forces affect neural and neuroendocrine mechanisms, helped establish a new field in psychology — social neuroscience. Last month, we sat down with Cacioppo to hear his thoughts on how psychological research has changed over his career, and how he expects the field to evolve in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Here are some highlights.

***Some have suggested that that the definition of psychology is up for grabs, but you've described the current era as a "golden age" for psychology, and an era of rising opportunities and influence. What's caused the change?***

One major change over the past few decades is that psychology has emerged as one of the hub sciences. This has contributed to the increasing prevalence of interdisciplinary teams in psychological science, and has also increased the societal relevance of the field. Serious psychological research is not only expounded in scientific journals but also in the popular media, best-selling books, boardrooms, courtrooms, and government corridors.

Because psychology has become a hub science, there are more and more opportunities to work with scientists in other fields. The result is that more and more psychological scientists are taking faculty and research positions in non-psychology departments, and more psychology departments are hiring non-psychologists. The same is true for other hub sciences, including physics and chemistry. These are not threats to our coherence or identity as a discipline, but

rather these are natural developments for a scientific discipline that has transitioned from being a balkanized and insular discipline to an integrative and interdisciplinary discipline.

### ***How has the increase in interdisciplinary, collaborative science changed the field of psychology?***

Traditionally, *individuals* have advanced scientific knowledge; the reward structure reflects this tradition. Graduate students and junior faculty are admonished to establish their independence, to show their genius while avoiding any attributional ambiguity by collaborating with others. When a candidate for tenure fails to heed this advice and publishes instead as a member of a scientific team, external letter writers, faculty review committees, and university administrators are inclined to raise questions about the candidate's contributions and scientific merit. The emphasis on the solitary production of knowledge does not stop with tenure, either. Individual contributions are paramount in the determination of raises and in the selection of recipients for scientific awards ranging from early-career awards to the Nobel Prize.

But as psychology has become a hub science, as the complexity of psychological questions has increased—questions that often exceeded the expertise of individual investigators—multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research has become more necessary to ensure the necessary scientific expertise is represented in the research enterprise. Advances in mathematical tools for dealing with large and complex data structures have also helped the psychological sciences connect with other disciplines. Finally, the development of new and powerful methods and measurement tools (e.g., functional magnetic resonance imaging, biomarkers, genetics, high performance computing platforms, cross-cultural population-based surveys) have promoted productive interdisciplinary research across the neurosciences, cognitive sciences, behavioral sciences, and social sciences.

Comprehensive understandings of the mind and behavior are requiring that researchers use a combination of perspectives. Consequently, many of the most exciting advances in psychology today are emerging at the intersections – across traditional training areas within psychology and across disciplines. Cognitive neuroscience, behavioral genetics, positive psychology, social neuroscience, and health psychology are illustrative. The centrifugal forces that not long ago threatened to splinter the discipline appear to be receding in the face of new centripetal force fueled by the search for more comprehensive theories.

Administrators at every level are beginning to realize the need to change the reward structure in science. For instance, we encourage our assistant professors to be leaders of interdisciplinary teams of scientists should they so choose and the Nobel Prize now includes teams of scientists among its candidates for recognition.

***Although psychological research has gone through a revolution, you've said that the teaching of psychology has lagged behind. How do we educate students to meet the changes in the field?***

Traditionally, psychology was viewed as consisting of numerous distinct and insulated fields of study. Introductory psychology courses, undergraduate curricula, graduate training programs, and even the organization of psychology departments reflected these divisions. A lot has changed in the past 35 years—including some revolutionary changes in psychological science. Unfortunately, how students and the public understand psychology has not changed nearly as much, and how we conceptualize the content of our introductory psychology courses and formulate our undergraduate curricula has not changed much either.

As I mentioned, psychology has emerged as a hub discipline, which influences the work of scientists in many other fields. These findings have implications for how we teach our courses.

Also, because of psychology's growing popularity, most students in our introductory psychology classes will major in other disciplines. We are largely ignoring these students to the extent that we teach introductory psychology as a prep course for subsequent psychology courses, because many of our students will *never* take an advanced psychology course. Should we be surprised that these students who have been largely ignored in our classes over the past few decades see little relevance of psychological science and are now sitting on legislatures and school boards arguing to defund psychological science? We have the opportunity in our introductory psychology courses to teach our non- majors as well as our majors what an exciting empirical science we represent. We have the opportunity to show them that there are important differences between what Dr. Phil and Dr. Laura say—whose statements are often based solely on their particular beliefs—and what psychological researchers say—whose statements are based on scientific evidence. Our goal in introductory psychology, therefore, can be to teach our nonmajors as well as our future majors the important impact that psychological science can have on their personal and professional lives as well as to prepare our majors for advanced coursework. Introductory psychology also represents the only course in the undergraduate curriculum in which we can show students how the various fields of study (e.g., cognitive, biopsychology, developmental, social, clinical) fit together to provide a more comprehensive understanding of human behavior.



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## THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO Psychology



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### Woodward Returns

It's always great news when the Department recruits a leading scholar to join our faculty. But it's even better news when that leading scholar happens to be a well-known friend of the Department.

That happened when Amanda Woodward, a pioneer in investigating social cognition in infancy, returned to Hyde Park from the University of Maryland.

After spending the early part of her career at the University of Chicago, Woodward, and her husband, a geophysicist, left Chicago for the University of Maryland in pursuit of an optimal solution to the academic "two body problem." Five years later, in 2010, they were both offered faculty positions at Chicago.

"I'm thrilled to come back to Chicago," said Woodward, the William S. Gray Professor of Psychology, and the Director of the Infant Learning and Development Laboratory. "It feels like coming home. I've always loved the University's rich intellectual environment, and its strong culture of collaborative work."

It was an ideal time to return to the Department, said Woodward, who noted that her research during the past two years has moved in several unexpected directions, because of the collaborations that developed with her colleagues in the Department.

Woodward is collaborating with Professor Katherine Kinzler and graduate student Zoe Liberman to investigate infants' understanding of their social world. In her prior work, Woodward has focused on infants' understanding of the actions of individuals, but, she noted, understanding the social world also requires understanding interactions between people. "Very little is known about this aspect of social cognition in infants," said Woodward. Liberman developed a novel method for testing whether infants can predict whether people will affiliate with each other based on the infant's perception of shared behaviors, such as liking the same foods or speaking

the same language.

In another project, Woodward is collaborating with Professor Susan Goldin-Meadow and graduate student Miriam Novak to investigate when in development children become sensitive to the information conveyed by iconic gestures. Their early findings suggest that by two years of age this ability is emerging, and it becomes robust by age three. Woodward pointed out that it looks as though very young children benefit most from others' gestures when they reproduce the gesture themselves.

Woodward has also started a cross-cultural study in collaboration with post-doctoral fellow Laura Shneidman and Suzanne Gaskins (of Northeastern Illinois University) that investigates infants' learning from social partners. The study is testing Yucatec Mayan babies in Mexico and U.S. babies in similar learning tasks, in an effort to understand how children become culturally attuned social learners.

“We’re so pleased to have Amanda back,” said Susan Levine. “Her scholarly contributions and her dedication to graduate and undergraduate education in psychology enrich the life of the Department in countless ways.”



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### **Graduate Student Awards Named for Eminent Psychologist**

For the past two years, more than 30 of our graduate students have benefited from Norman Henry Anderson's support of the Department of Psychology. The Anderson awards have provided between \$400 and \$1,500 to support student research and travel expenses.

"The Anderson gift has provided amazing support for my research and professional development," said Jasmine DeJesus, a fourth-year PhD student who studies the development of social cognition, with a particular emphasis on how children make decisions about food choices. DeJesus has used Anderson funds to support a variety of research-related expenses, such as payment for actors in stimulus videos and prizes for child participants. "The Anderson grant is helping kickstart a series of studies that I hope will be part of my dissertation."

The namesake of DeJesus's award should be well known to many psychologists. Norman Henry Anderson is an eminent social psychologist, a co-founder of the University of California-San Diego's psychology department, who is perhaps best known for his work in developing Information Integration Theory, which describes how people integrate information from a number of sources in order to make an overall judgment. Anderson is currently at work on his 9<sup>th</sup> book on Information Integration Theory.

Although Anderson is closely associated with UCSD, where he is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus, he is a Chicago alumnus (B.S. 1946, M.S. 1949) and he regards his experience at the University and in Hyde Park as life-changing.

After growing up on a hardscrabble farm in north central Minnesota during the Great Depression, Anderson came to the University on a scholarship in 1942. In addition to the scholarship, the University helped support Anderson's studies by arranging for a three-day a week job at Sears. ("Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, 50 cents per hour," Anderson recalls.) As an undergraduate, the Minnesota farm boy found a wide world of intellectual interests. He fondly

recalls hearing Bertrand Russell speak in a Social Sciences class. "It was about his effort to place the Humean insoluble problem of induction on a joint scientific-philosophical base."

Anderson's experience in the College was transformative. In the acknowledgements of his first book, *Foundations of Information Integration Theory*, Anderson wrote: "Above all, I am indebted to the University of Chicago, where, as an undergraduate, I found worlds of which I had never dreamed."

Anderson, who received a BS and MS in physics and math at Chicago, and who became a psychologist later in his career, said that he dedicated his gift to graduate students because "they are the most deserving of students. They face a lot of anxieties about courses, research, post-degree jobs, and supporting themselves in graduate school. The funds I am contributing can help them, especially with travel to scientific meetings, which are invaluable experiences."

Professor Susan Levine, chair of the department, thanks Anderson for his gift, which has opened up great opportunities for our graduate students. "For our graduate students, having research and travel support gives them the ability to explore new ideas. By attending conferences, they have an opportunity to present their findings, learn about what's happening in the field and network with other researchers. We're immensely grateful to Norman Henry Anderson."



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### Alumni Gift Spurs Undergraduate Research

Graduate school in psychology or law school?

During his senior year in the College, Earl Franklin faced a classic dilemma. He was torn. The son of two lawyers, Franklin had always planned to go to law school. But he became fascinated with the social sciences, particularly psychology, and started having second thoughts about his original plan.

Fortunately, one of Franklin's professors was well situated to provide counsel—he had a PhD in psychology *and* a law degree. Professor Fred M. Zimring gave the undecided Franklin a strategy. "You've experienced psychology, and you obviously like it. But you haven't experienced law, so you can't make a fair comparison. Go to law school. If you decide you prefer psychology, you can always come back to it, like I did."

Franklin never came back for a graduate degree in psychology. He graduated from the College in 1965, then went to the University of Pennsylvania Law School. The Canton, Ohio native then moved to Cleveland where he spent close to 40 years in a highly successful legal career. He loved legal work, in part, because he had to be a pretty good amateur psychologist. As an attorney, Franklin said, "your goal is to influence people, and you need to understand what people are thinking and feeling in order to influence them." Of his 36 years in the Law Department of the Eaton Corporation—the last 17 years of which were spent as Senior Vice President and Corporate Secretary—Franklin said: "When you really enjoy your work, it hardly feels like work at all."

Although Franklin was pleased with his career choice, he often looked back.

"What if?" Franklin often wondered. "I always regretted not having a chance to dig deeper in psychology, and leave my mark at the University of Chicago in that field."

Established in 2006, the Earl R. Franklin Research Fellowship is Franklin's way of leaving his

mark. The Franklin Research Fellowships are awarded to students in the Department of Psychology and in the Department of Comparative Human Development. Based strictly on merit, the fellowship provides each Franklin Fellow with up to \$3,000 to pursue research that will lead to a senior honors project during their fourth year.

Franklin Fellowship recipients report that the support they receive from the Earl R. Franklin Research Fellowships has played an important role in shaping their interests and career plans.

Chi-Hyun Kim, a 2011 fellow, who studied the role of visual cues in speech perception, credited the experience with solidifying his research interests and leading to a successful graduate application to the University of Pennsylvania. Katherine Crain, a 2012 fellow who researched the ways information guides food choices, hopes her Franklin Fellowship will lead to a career doing consumer research in the marketing world. And Michael Newman, a 2011 fellow, described his Franklin supported research into the role of video games performance on prosocial behavior, as not only productive, but also one of the most enjoyable and memorable experiences of his time in the College.

Franklin, who retired in 2008 from Eaton, a multi-national Fortune 200 manufacturer of electrical systems and industrial equipment with \$16 billion in annual sales, said he is very pleased with the Franklin Fellowship program. "It's a way of supporting students at an institution that I love, and a way of leaving my mark on a field that I love."

Although he left the field, Franklin never lost his curiosity about psychology; he has continued to read about psychological research, and, he noted, his two children both majored in psychology. One of the great pleasures of the fellowship, he says, is learning about the research of the Franklin Fellows. He gets copies of their papers, and he looks forward to reading and answering correspondence with fellowship winners. "It's great to help young researchers in psychology and to see the questions they're exploring." He also added that it's a source of pride to know the fellowship is a credential, and that "Earl Franklin" is listed on the resume of talented students whatever direction their careers might take.

"We're so grateful for Earl's support," said Susan Levine, Chair of the Psychology Department. "I can't tell you how important it is for our undergraduates to have a chance to devote a summer to research. It's a gift that has greatly enhanced our undergraduate concentration and is really helping to excite talented students about our field."



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### Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Research

**Elizabeth Allen** is a doctoral candidate working with Professor Steven Shevell and Professor Sian Beilock. Elizabeth is interested in how we are able to make sense of the enormous amount of visual information that constantly bombards our eyes. In our day-to-day lives, we seem to be able to process this information- colors, patterns, and objects - automatically and effortlessly. Elizabeth's research, however, reveals that these basic visual abilities actually depend on sophisticated cognitive processes that vary greatly in the population.



**Sayuri Hayakawa** is a doctoral student in Professor Boaz Keysar's Lab. Past research has demonstrated that using a foreign language can be less emotional than using a native tongue. Sayuri's research explores how this greater emotional and psychological distance affects people's decisions. For example, using a foreign language can make people less loss averse, and thus more likely to take advantage of attractive, but risky opportunities. She has received support from the Norman Henry Anderson Fund to present a poster at the annual convention of the Association for Psychological Science.

**Gerardo Ramirez** is a doctoral candidate in cognitive psychology working with Professor Sian Beilock in the Human Performance Lab. Gerardo is interested in understanding how affective and motivational factors interact with cognitive skills, such as working memory, to shape students' interest and achievement in science and math. Gerardo is currently working on a school study examining how children's use of advanced problem solving strategies might actually make them more vulnerable to the deleterious effects of math anxiety.





**Alysson Light** is a doctoral student in Professor Kimberly Rios' Lab. Alysson's research focuses on the role of the self-concept in social behavior. She is particularly interested in the extent to which individuals are either certain and clear, or uncertain and ambivalent in their beliefs about themselves. Her work also examines the features of the social environment that make individuals feel less certain about who they are-- such as experiencing role transitions, or holding different attitudes and beliefs than one's social network-- as well as the consequences of self-uncertainty for self-regulation and goal pursuit. Alysson has received support for this work from the Norman Henry Anderson Fund.

**Dr. Elizabeth Gunderson** is a post-doctoral fellow in Professor Susan Levine's Lab. Her research focuses on the cognitive and socio-emotional factors that affect young children's academic achievement, especially in the domain of mathematics. In a recent study, she found that young children with high levels of spatial skill were better at learning the linear number line - an important spatial representation of number. Children's improvement in number line estimation also predicted their ability to perform approximate arithmetic problems. Thus, one way to improve numerical thinking may be to improve children's spatial skills at a young age. Elizabeth has received an award from the Norman Henry Anderson Fund to present a poster at the Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.



### Undergraduate Research



**Lester Tong** is a fourth-year college student in Professor Jean Decety's Lab. Last summer, Lester was awarded an Earl R. Franklin Research Fellowship to study the autonomic correlates of judgment and behavior in the context of moral violations. Lester is now exploring whether trait differences in empathy and justice sensitivity predict moral judgment and autonomic responses when people observe harmful actions. Lester is also the president of the undergraduate psychology club.

**Anders Hogstrom** is a third-year college student in Professor Howard Nusbaum's Lab. Anders is working on a project that investigates the role of experience and expertise in wisdom. This research focuses on how the practice of various somatic training techniques, such as meditation, might influence cognitive, affective, and social aspects of wisdom.



**Katherine Crain** is a fourth-year college student in Professor Katherine Kinzler's Lab. Last summer, she was awarded an Earl R. Franklin Research Fellowship to examine how social information can influence children's food



choices. By introducing social information, like how popular a food is, she hopes to explore what information can be used to guide children's food selection.



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