An introduction is in order. I'm Hill Goldsmith, the new Chair of the Psychology
Department. I'm just transitioning into the Chair's office, which was so ably filled
by Trish Devine for the past five-plus years. Although I've been Chair since only
August, I'm a 23-year veteran of our department at UW. I came here from the
University of Oregon in 1992, and I served a four-year term as Chair back in
1994. My two start dates as Chair were almost exactly 20 years apart, and the
job has changed in important ways.

So, you ask, why would I want to chair our department—your department—a
second time? The reasons are varied and complex, but the main one is that our
excellent department is willing to innovate. You might think that, as scientists, psychology department
faculty members would regularly innovate in how they manage their university homes, that is, their
departments. Unfortunately, when we look across the country, that's not always true. Many faculties
are overly bound by tradition and reluctant to change. As a person who came of age in the 1960s, I've
always been one who values progress over tradition. I like to shake things up a little and find better ways
to do things.

You might also think that, as the #1 rated psychology department in a public university (National
Research Council, 2010), UW Psychology would have little room to improve. But that's not the case.
Let's look at one area of our department that has really improved over the past few years: advising. For
most of the time while we were achieving that #1 national ranking, we only had one professional advisor
for our huge undergraduate student population. Now, we have three advisors, and they are incredibly
active in providing course and degree advice, offering opportunities to learn about careers, facilitating
the activities of undergraduate psychology clubs, helping transfer students fit into UW, leading service
learning courses, and many other activities.

In thinking about other areas of the department where innovation might be welcome, our Introduction
to Psychology course springs to mind. Intro to Psychology is the course that's universally called
“Psych 101,” although here at UW you may remember it's actually numbered Psych 202. The course is
incredibly important. It's not only the first taste of psychology for most of our future majors, but it's also
an entry hurdle for majors in, for example, the College of Business. Moreover, Psych 202 could be the only brush with science that some
students will ever experience. Unfortunately, less prepared students can really struggle with Psych 202, and you can understand why:
old-fashioned classrooms of 400 students with only a single TA,
taught by dedicated and even award-winning instructors who don’t receive much support.

Even before I became Chair, departmental faculty and instructional
staff had begun to tackle the challenges of mounting an effective
Psych 202. (Continued on page 2)
Transitions and Change (continued from page 1)

Using trained peer mentors to help small groups of students, facilitating more coordination among the various Psych 202 instructors, and changing a rigid grading system are three of our initial changes. In a couple of years, I hope to report back to you on our success in improving this venerable course.

Our graduate program has also undergone innovation. Like most responsible departments, we have downsized our Ph.D. program in response to a challenging academic job market. However, we still offer graduate instruction within the shell of a curriculum meant for a program with many more students. We’ve begun to right-size the graduate curriculum while simultaneously encouraging more cross-talk among students specializing in the various subfields of psychology.

Changes in our introductory course and changes in our graduate curriculum are only the bookends of a set of goals that I have to improve our proudest product, the education of our students. The key to my success is that these goals are widely shared in our department, and many other department members are actively contributing ideas and generously doing the hard work of implementing change. When we say, ON WISCONSIN, we mean that UW should never rest on its laurels, and that applies to your Psychology department.

Highlights from Alumni Homecoming Weekend

Joined by Provost Sarah Mangelsdorf and Letters & Science Dean Karl Scholz, we began Alumni Weekend with Professor Seth Pollak, who posed the question, “How is the brain shaped and refined by children’s early social and emotional experiences?” In his talk Professor Pollak discussed new studies on the development of school-aged children and adolescents who have endured very high levels of stress early in their lives. These children are at increased risk for a variety of mental health problems, learning difficulties, as well as long-term physical health problems that may not manifest themselves until much later in development.

Professor Pollak’s presentation focused on new research approaches that allow us to better understand how and why the quality of care that children receive early in life affects their ability to regulate their behavior many years later. He discussed how this type of public health question requires that we understand how life stress “gets under the skin” and influences various neurobiological systems within the developing child. Audience members appreciated the take-home message that understanding the biology of children’s brain development is best done within the social contexts of children’s life experiences.

Friday’s events continued with happy hour on the Terrace, joining the crowd at the Homecoming parade, followed by a fish fry at Brocach’s on the Capitol Square. The fun continued Saturday morning with a tailgate party at Professor Janet Hyde’s house and watching the Badgers’ convincing win over Maryland. We hope to see you next year!
Jenn Sluga (B.A., ’10) was recently honored at the State Capitol as the 2014 Wisconsin Woman Veteran of the Year. Established by the Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs, the award “recognizes women veterans who have compiled a record of exemplary service as a military service member, a veteran, and as an outstanding member of the community.” Sluga’s distinguished service from 2004-10 and her tireless commitment to advocating on behalf of her fellow veterans led to her nomination.

Sluga graduated from high school a semester early and her military service began at the age of 17. After meeting a military recruiter visiting her high school, she immediately enlisted in the United States Army. Growing up in a small Wisconsin town, Jenn knew she wanted the opportunity to see more of the world, but she was also motivated by a sense of honor in serving her nation.

As a young recruit, Sluga was determined to meet the physical and mental preparation demanded by the military. Her first few weeks of training pushed her physical boundaries and her body suffered greatly. She sought treatment at the sick hall, where she unfortunately fell victim to sexual assault. Though deeply traumatized, Sluga took action with the support of her drill sergeant and fellow service members. Her attacker admitted to over 70 assaults, but Sluga was the only woman willing to appear at the court martial. Along with others speaking out as character witnesses, the perpetrator was dishonorably discharged and incarcerated.

Although given the option to leave the military, Sluga continued to serve, completing basic training, advanced individual training, attending college for one year at UW, followed by deployment in 2006. Throughout her service, Sluga encountered many more women and men who were assaulted and harassed without consequence to the attacker. Sluga became an outspoken advocate for many female and male soldiers.

Sluga returned to UW-Madison in 2008 to pursue a major in Psychology while still serving in the Army National Guard. The transition to civilian life was difficult, and the once-talented student struggled both in the classroom and out. Fortunately, Sluga found the support she needed to overcome her academic struggles, but more important, the psychological trauma from the assault and active service. She saw a counselor regularly and found a safe place in the offices of our Psychology advisors when she encountered unexpected triggers. Sluga explains, "There was nothing more complicated than sitting in a classroom full of students who had to study the symptomology and issues of mental health-related issues when I was actively living it; every lesson turned into a trigger."

After graduation, Sluga earned her master’s degree in counseling psychology and now works as a psychotherapist at the VA Madison Vet Center where she takes comfort in supporting her fellow veterans overcome trauma. Her advocacy has continued through her work as a peer mentor in the Wounded Warrior Project and the youngest elected executive board member to the National Association of Veteran Service Officers. “My journey has not been easy or quick, and as all journeys, it won’t ever be completely over, but at least I am able to now use my experiences to make a difference. I may not have ever made it to the rank that I wanted in the military, but I believe that what I am doing now is just as significant.”

If you would like to learn more about Jenn’s story, please visit: http://wpt.veteranscominghome.org/station_media/vet-vet-jenn/.
At commencement, I had an Ian’s Pizza logo on my cap, enabling my family to pick me out of the thousands of graduates. Later, I traded my graduation cap for a Noogler (New Googler) hat with a propeller on top.

During my first week of work with over 400 Nooglers, I saw a sea of multicolored beanies. Much like college, we Nooglers all have years of exploring and working together ahead of us at Google, so that our unique contributions could be recognized among the crowd of thousands of employees. After three months as a recruiting coordinator – scheduling interviews for candidates and creating memorable interview experiences – I have learned how to leverage my past experiences as a Badger to have a meaningful impact at work.

After my short time at Google, I feel like I belong in this family of passionate people in California. At UW-Madison, the Psychology Department was my happy home base. I received warm support to explore my passions – from an independent study through Americorps with a spunky preschooler, to learning about bystander intervention in Social Psychology, to doing a senior thesis on children’s evaluations of individuals from high and low income backgrounds, to peer advising. The supportive people – whether professors, academic advisors, classmates, or friends – have left a lasting impression on me.

Of all my UW-Madison experiences, my three-and-a-half years of experience in Kristin Shutts’ Social Kids Lab shaped me into an independent thinker who feels confident taking on my own projects at Google. While phone calls used to be from Leah in the Social Kids Lab, they are now from Leah in Google Staffing. I represent Google with the same enthusiasm I had for my research lab. My time making study participants feel welcome has translated to creating an environment where candidates feel comfortable and present themselves at their best. Moreover, in research, I learned to work with kids and results that were not always predictable. Similarly, last-minute changes to time, location, and interviewers happen, but I have had experience adapting to the unexpected.

Google wants even its newest employees to take chances, innovate, and follow their interests. I have always loved talking to people and have the opportunity to start conducting interviews with candidates. My manager has already chatted with me about coming up with a project to improve staffing services. Thanks to my UW-Madison training, I feel equipped to develop a data-driven project. Hats off to a world-class university!
Meet the Faculty: Janet Hyde

I arrived at the University of Wisconsin in 1986. Since then, I have taught literally thousands of undergraduate students in my two courses, Psychology of Women and Human Sexuality. Dozens of students have worked in my lab on adolescent development, and dozens of grad students have taken my Multivariate Statistics course and my graduate seminar on Psychology of Women. We thought that readers might want an update on these activities since you were here as a student.

Today, I still teach Psychology of Women every Fall to about 50-55 students; every Spring I teach Human Sexuality to 350 students. Although some of the content has stayed constant over the years, what strikes me is how so much of the content has changed. Some students took Human Sexuality before Viagra existed, before there was sexting, and before gay marriage was possible! Others took Psychology of Women before we talked of intersectionality, trans, and cisgender.

Those who worked in my lab contributed to the Wisconsin Study of Families and Work, www.wsfw.us. The children in that study were born in 1991-92. We collected data from them when they were adolescents, at ages 11, 13, 15, 18 (after high school graduation), and 20 (most were sophomores in college then). So many journal articles have resulted from that longitudinal project that I can’t begin to summarize all of them here. Let me focus on just one.

For her dissertation, Jenni Petersen (now a faculty member at UW-Whitewater) investigated the relationship between peer sexual harassment victimization and disordered eating in adolescence. She found that, indeed, peer sexual harassment in 5th grade predicted the level of symptoms of disordered eating in 9th grade, and girls reported more of both than boys did. The mechanism behind the relationship appeared to be objectified body consciousness. The peer sexual harassment seemed to lead to increased feelings of objectification for girls and that in turn predicted disordered eating.

Others of you contributed to various meta-analyses that have come from the lab. Right now, we’re in the midst of a huge meta-analysis of studies of gender differences in depression. My most recently published meta-analysis (Psychological Bulletin, 2014) synthesized studies that compared the effects of single-sex schooling with coeducational schooling for student outcomes across grades K-12. The bottom line: despite all the hype, single-sex schooling offers no advantages.

In another recent meta-analysis, Sabra Katz-Wise (then a grad student) and I synthesized all the available research on the victimization of LGB (lesbian, gay, bisexual) individuals. We were actually able to find 386 studies with relevant data. The rates of victimization that they reveal are cause for concern. For example, averaged across studies, 55% of LGBs have been verbally harassed on account of their sexual orientation; 28% have been physically assaulted. I look forward to a society in which this kind of violence does not occur.

My major volunteer job with the Department is that I am Director of Alumni Relations. In that role, I try to help alumni stay connected to the Department, through initiatives such as the newsletter and Psychology Alumni Weekend, held in conjunction with Homecoming. Part of the job is that I am in charge of fundraising for the Department. State of Wisconsin support for the University has declined so sharply that we have to operate more like a private university and rely heavily on our alumni to support our work.

I’d love to hear from you! Email jshyde@wisc.edu.
Graduate Student Spotlight: Jesse Kaye

Why is quitting smoking so stressful? Why do stressful events feel more intense for an alcoholic during early abstinence? How can stress lead to relapse?

These are the questions that I am consistently faced with in my work with clients with substance use disorders. Whether I am leading smoking cessation groups at the Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention or conducting therapy with veterans in the VA Hospital’s addictive disorders treatment program, stress is always a hot topic. Our current treatments for alcohol and drug addiction do not sufficiently target stress mechanisms and still yield too low a probability that an individual will attain long-term recovery.

How can psychological science improve our understanding of the role that stress plays in maintaining addiction and triggering relapse? Can expanding our knowledge of the neurobiological stress mechanisms point the way toward new treatments? As a graduate student in the clinical psychology program, my research with Dr. John Curtin in the Addiction Research Lab aims to address these questions.

Research has shown that many smokers say that one reason they smoke is to reduce stress. Negative emotions such as anxiety and irritability tend to increase shortly after stopping smoking. Does biology line up with this subjective experience? To test this we designed an experiment to examine whether smokers’ physiological response to stressful events actually changes when they are deprived of nicotine. We measured the startle response, which is an automatic defensive reflex that increases when we are anxious or afraid (similar to how you jump if someone yells “boo”), while participants were exposed to either predictable or unpredictable stressful events (mild electric shock). We found that smokers’ physiological responses (i.e., startle) to unpredictable stressors were stronger after 24 hours without nicotine than when they had been smoking as usual.

Other students in our lab have recently found similar effects in heavy marijuana users and alcoholics: that physiological reactivity is heightened during unpredictable stress (vs. predictable stress) in periods of early abstinence. Collectively, these studies suggest that measuring the startle response during unpredictable stress may be a simple, non-invasive laboratory paradigm to examine changes in the brain’s stress system that result from chronic drug and alcohol use.

I was recently awarded a dissertation fellowship from the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to examine the role that the neurotransmitter norepinephrine (a close relative of adrenaline) plays in mediating the exaggerated stress response that alcoholics show during early abstinence. Norepinephrine’s role in mediating multiple behavioral and physiological responses in stress is well documented. A small but growing body of research in rodents suggests that blocking certain norepinephrine receptors (alpha1) may be an effective relapse prevention intervention for stress-related relapse in addiction.

For my dissertation research we will examine if Prazosin, a medication that blocks the norepinephrine alpha1 receptor, reduces physiological measures of stress reactivity in alcoholics in early abstinence and non-alcoholic adults. This type of translational research has the promise to answer important basic scientific questions about the role of the norepinephrine alpha1 receptor in human stress response. If our hypotheses are supported this research also has important treatment implications suggesting that Prazosin could be an effective medication for treating stress-related relapse mechanisms in addiction.
In 2011, I was selected to join the First Wave Hip-Hop and Urban Arts Learning Community here at UW-Madison. I had been mentored and shaped by Tampa, FL’s hip-hop, theatre, and performance art communities, learning the importance of youth-centered spaces that develop a young person’s psychological, emotional, and academic capacities. Consumed with observing and interpreting human behavior, there has likely never been a time when psychology was not my most desired study. However, I took the scenic route in discovering which way I might pursue the field but eventually found my place at the intersection between psychology, art, and education.

First Wave has provided me with tremendous opportunities to grow and showcase my art. In addition to other engagements, I have performed at the London Olympics of 2012 and on Broadway in New York. I was especially fortunate to have traveled with individuals who were phenomenal artists and even greater friends. Among the group was a young man named John Vietnam Nguyên (JVN), one of my cohort brothers. His death would leave a void soon filled by a nonprofit organization called The JVN Project, erected by our cohort. Because I have personally always been enraptured by the effect that artistic expression has on the psyche, where the human mind and spirit are confronted and healed on a page or before an audience, a mix of courses I took in psychology and educational psychology inspired my most cardinal goal for the work I would soon embark upon.

The courses “Mind, Brain & Education,” “Human Development in Adolescence,” and “Child Psychology” allowed me to understand how I might experiment for and document the psychological development promoted in young people by introducing them to things like the euphoria of belonging certainty, self-affirmation, and the boldness to self-disclose through art. Shortly after, I began drafting a workshop series through The JVN Project that would be called \textit{One Life}, responding to the disparities unique to disadvantaged youth in Madison.

These courses, in combination with other life experiences, led me to take up an independent study that would document the journey of \textit{One Life}. This research focused on understanding the impact of hip-hop and “urban” arts on the psychological and academic wellbeing of youth between the ages of 13-19. I am also collaborating with a professor in counseling psychology who has helped me articulate the integration of community service, psychology, and art in my work with \textit{One Life} in my research. With a focus on the techniques used in group therapy, I’ve created a curriculum that provides opportunities for students to grow in literacy with exercises in reading, writing, and comprehension centered in hip-hop pedagogy. We are currently in our second year of the workshop series and have been able to partner with Madison Public Libraries, the Madison Metropolitan School District, and UW’s Department of Curriculum and Instruction to make this year as successful as possible. UW-Madison undergrads are able to receive credit as teaching artists, creating lesson plans based on the curriculum and the series’ themes, and facilitating in the series once a week.

This year we will be hosting the Word Power slam series as a function of \textit{One Life} and taking the winners to the aforementioned international youth poetry competition, Brave New Voices, this summer in Atlanta, GA. Also, as a new student of the Ronald E. McNair Scholars program I’ve had the opportunity to present about \textit{One Life} at national conferences. My goal is to be able to document the process by which thousands of lives are changed every day through these types of organizations as they meet the psychosocial needs of students and encourage learning, just as I experienced not too long ago.
We have a long history of excellence in teaching and research in this department. To maintain this high standard we need support from our alumni and friends. Donations in any amount are greatly appreciated and go directly to supporting our students, faculty, and programs. If you would like, you may designate your gift to one of the following areas (please check one):

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