Farewell from the Chair
Trish Devine

In my last column, I wrote about wishing I was a real Badger. My reflections followed on the heels of our extremely successful Alumni Weekend, which was held in connection with Homecoming in 2013 (we hope you will join us for the 2014 event!). I watched with envy as alumni reminisced about the ways in which their time at the UW and in our department was special. Their spirit, energy, and fondness for being UW Psychology Badgers were contagious. Through their retrospectives, I got to see many aspects of what we do and why what we do in the department and at the university is so important and how Madison itself is so special. Recently, I was treated to two specific experiences that furthered my understanding of why this place is so special and made me wish I had the opportunity to start all over and attend college here. These experiences were with people who had never previously been to Madison or on campus (and become a real Badger!). It was through their eyes I (re)discovered things about the UW and Madison that by now I take for granted but should not. It was through their eyes that I came to understand how exciting it would be to be arriving in September to begin a college career at the UW. From whose eyes was I seeing everything anew – my niece who, as it turns out will be attending the UW in the fall, and my nephew who is now a senior at another school but visited Madison for the very first time this summer.

My niece, who is from Chicago, decided to apply here based on a wide range of factors including the overall quality of the university and the reputation of the university as one that opens doors for those who become alums. Very wise considerations. What was interesting and exciting was to see how her perspective and her desire to attend our university changed once she visited and simply took a campus tour. Our tour guides are terrific and my niece really began to appreciate the wide range of opportunities that are available here both academically and socially. Wisconsin became not just a quality school to apply to but became THE school, the one she had to attend. She waited nervously for the letter regarding acceptance and once she learned she was accepted, she immediately became a Badger – a real Badger whose love and devotion to the place was palpable. She, of course, got UW paraphernalia and her high school graduation party was Badger themed. Her sense of wonder and thought of what would be possible for her college education deepened.

When she visited campus for SOAR and planned her schedule, the idea that UW was the right place for her was solidified. She met friends, worked with advisors, and toured campus more. She enrolled for the FIG (Freshman Interest Group) seminar, part of which would involve taking Intro Psych in Room 105 and meeting with one of the current Psychology faculty members, Shawn Green. She began to envision herself in Room 105 with 399 other students and think about how she would manage the large classroom and how she would connect with faculty and TAs. She talked about ways to make the big place a bit smaller and she reveled in all that the big place has to offer (and, yes, she was one of the lucky ones who got season tickets for the football games). (Continues on p. 2)
Farewell from the Chair (continued from page 1)

The process was fun to watch and participate in. She will arrive in a few short weeks and I feel heartened to know that she made an excellent choice and she will one day be one of the alums returning to Madison with fondness. She is now a Badger.

Whereas my niece’s visits were a bit structured and there were campus-organized activities more than me showing her around, my nephew’s visit was more personal. I pretty much served as the tour guide showing him around campus and town. We did a lot of the iconic Madison things – we spent time on the Terrace (of course!), explored other aspects of campus, walked up and down State Street and round the Capitol, visited the football stadium, and ate at some of Madison’s best eateries.

In the end, I think my nephew was, perhaps, a bit more like my own experience – a bit of envy for what real Badgers experience. He asked a lot of questions about what it is like for students to be at a large university (his school is very small), he inquired about our study abroad programs and opportunities for students in various majors. I could see his mind spinning with the possibilities. As we sat on the Terrace (for a third time during his visit), he texted his mom and told her that he wished he had visited the UW before deciding on what school to attend. He proclaimed that he would have wanted to come here. He texted his younger brother and told him to come out here as soon as possible and see what we have to offer – that it was not too late for his brother to transfer! The reply to one of my nephew’s texts telling his friend about his new favorite city was telling. His friend has two words for him – grad school.

And, so it may not be too late for this particular nephew either. I’d love to have another real Badger in the family!

I’m extremely proud to be a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin – Madison and a member of the Department of Psychology. Our place is special and what we do here is special. We create an environment to facilitate the development of real Badgers who leave us and go into the world and do incredible things. This will be my last column in The Update. Hill Goldsmith is the new Chair of the Department and under his leadership I’m confident that we will continue our tradition of excellence and our commitment to providing students with a first-rate pedagogical experience. What I’ve learned over time is that what the faculty bring to the table is important for the overall educational experience. But what is more important is what our students bring to the table. The students bring a thirst for knowledge and a desire to get involved and become active and dynamic people in their own right. When students are put in the context of our University generally and our department specifically, they become real Badgers – people who make a difference. I’m proud of our current students and our alums. We bask in your reflected glory.

On Wisconsin!

Save The Date - October 24-25!

REMEMBER.
RECONNECT.
RENEW.
Schedule of Events

Friday, October 24:

9:30 - 10:30 am - Tour of Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery
10:45 am - 12:00 pm - Research talk - “Where Do Emotions Come From?: New Answers to the Old Nature vs. Nurture Questions” by Professor Seth Pollak (Brogden Psychology Building)
12:00 - 12:30 pm - Luncheon
12:30 - 1:30 pm - Department update from Chair Hill Goldsmith and new building update from Professor Janet Hyde
1:30 - 5:00 pm - Free time
5:00 - 6:00 pm – Happy hour at the Memorial Union Terrace
6:00 - 7:00 pm - UW Homecoming Parade on State Street
7:00 - 10:00 pm - Fish fry at Brocach’s on the Square

Saturday, October 25:

8:30 - 11:00 am - Badger Brunch at Janet Hyde’s home
11:00 am - 2:00 pm - Badger vs. Maryland football game at Camp Randall

Pricing

Full Weekend Package without a football ticket: $100 * Discount for Recent Graduates (within 3 yrs): $75
Full Weekend Package including ticket to the football game: $200 * Discount for Recent Graduates: $175

Questions? Email psychalumni@psych.wisc.edu

ON WISCONSIN!

It’s getting close to our second annual Psychology Alumni Homecoming Weekend! It is the perfect opportunity to reconnect with the department, see the developing UW campus, and once again enjoy all your favorite Badger activities! All alumni and friends of the department are welcome.

Coming in From Out of Town?

The official hotel of Alumni Weekend is the Hilton Madison Monona Terrace. To reserve a room, please call Katie Johnson at (866) 403-8838 and use group name “UW Psychology” and group code “UWPSYC.” We have single and double rooms reserved for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night. The roomblock cutoff date is September 23, 2014.
A Message to our New Graduates
Tamar Kelber, B.A., 1991

First and foremost, congratulations. Not just for all you have achieved here, but for your judgment and wisdom in choosing this place and this department to give you a strong foundation for your adult life. Having made the same choice myself, I can tell you from experience that you have armed yourself with unique advantages for the world at large no matter where you go from here.

Obviously, you have a great foundation for future study and careers in psychology and mental health-related fields. But what you may not appreciate now is that you also have a great foundation for everything else. Your education in psychology will help you understand workplace dynamics every day and will help you think critically and constructively about any problem that comes your way. I find myself using my psychology background in my writing, when I am working with experts, and when I am deposing a witness who might not be inclined to give me truthful or complete answers, but also when I am dealing with my three year old, when he won’t stop asking me for a donut, no matter how many times I say no.

And in a way that you may not realize yet, you have found and become a part of a wonderful home. I did not appreciate how special it is until after I had graduated, left Madison and returned for a visit after law school. Growing up in Wisconsin and then coming here, it really never occurred to me that there are people out there who might not be nice (even today, when I hear a car horn, I look to see who it is that is saying hello before I remember that I don’t live in Wisconsin anymore). When I was a student here, I took for granted the kindness, dedication and attention of the professors and graduate students in this department. Only later did I realize that what I had thought of as just my major was actually a rare combination of very smart people who are very dedicated teachers. And with that realization, I gained a much greater appreciation for the education – and the home – that they had provided for me.

My wish for you on this day is that you share in my appreciation for this home, and that it continues as a home for you for years to come.

Before you finish packing up your stuff and moving on to your next adventure, I encourage you to take a minute, stop, look around, and try to take in as much of this place and its feeling of home that you can. And when you leave, keep in touch, stay involved, and donate when and how you can. If you worked in a lab, keep up with your professor’s work and take pride in your contributions to it. Come back to visit. And contribute when you can. I know from experience that going on to the mountain of debt that is graduate school and looking for a job in an unstable economy are both overwhelming. But your choice to give back to the department is a wonderful thank you for all that it has given you, no matter what amount you give. And speaking to this room of psychology graduates, I probably don’t need to tell you that the gesture of giving will make you so happy.

So my challenge to you is to start your alumni career now, with a donation to the Psychology Department, perhaps a symbolic donation of twenty dollars and fourteen cents for your graduation year, 2014. If each of you gave that amount, you could throw this party for next year’s graduates with your donations.

Even now, over 20 years after I graduated, coming back here reminds me of what I learned, how I grew in this place, and all it gave me for my adult life. But most of all, it just feels like home. And it is a true privilege to be able to help share this home with those who come after us. I am excited for you to go out into the world and see the many ways that this place has prepared you for it, and then to come back and experience that feeling of home. I know you will do great things, and I can’t wait for you to share them with us.
Healthy individuals are able to flexibly adapt their behavior according to current goals and context. This ability is known as cognitive control. Cognitive control includes brain functions such as selective attention, response inhibition, working memory, and cognitive flexibility. Sadly, for many individuals, deficits in one or more of these functions severely impact everyday life.

Cognitive control is impaired in psychological disorders such as schizophrenia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and addictions. The major focus of my lab is to better understand the neural mechanisms enabling cognitive control, as a first essential step towards treating such disorders.

The prefrontal cortex, at the front of the brain, is vital for cognitive control. Cells in the prefrontal cortex encode attention priorities, behavioral goals, action rules, and more. When the context and goals change, different groups of cells in the prefrontal cortex need to change their activity accordingly. However, such dynamic coordination (or synchronization, to use common jargon) of cells is perturbed in disorders of cognitive control. For example, individuals with schizophrenia show abnormal synchrony between cells in the prefrontal cortex and the rest of the brain. This is thought to perturb information processing in the brain, giving rise to deficits in cognitive control.

The big question is how does the brain flexibly coordinate, or synchronize, the activity of cells that encode the information relevant for current goals? The limited available evidence suggests that a mysterious region deep in the center of the brain, called the thalamus, plays a key role in coordinating cells not only in the prefrontal cortex, but the entire cerebral cortex. Like a switchboard operator, the thalamus makes sure that the appropriate cells in the cerebral cortex communicate with each other about behaviorally relevant information. Not surprisingly, in schizophrenia, for instance, a consistent finding is an abnormal thalamus.

To show how the thalamus controls cells in the cerebral cortex, we first map the connections between brain cells, using magnetic resonance imaging (diffusion MRI). Next, we target electrodes to connected cells, thus allowing us to directly monitor their communication. Finally, we manipulate the activity between cells using precise microstimulation techniques, to influence the flow of information in the brain. Such deep brain stimulation is painless and currently used to treat Parkinson’s disease. This research approach helps us to decode the brain’s activity during effective cognitive control and provide potential targets for the treatment of cognitive control disorders.

**Meet the Faculty: Yuri Saalman**

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**Shout Out!**

We are grateful to Dave Weiner, a member of the Department’s Board of Visitors, for his continued generosity in production of this newsletter.
Henriques Honored for Teaching Excellence

For many, Introduction to Psychology can be an intimidating class, especially for incoming freshmen who are unaccustomed to sharing a classroom with over 350 students. Since 1998, Dr. Jeff Henriques has made the material of Intro Psych come alive with his engaging style and enthusiasm for the material. His dedication and commitment to teaching and learning earned him the 2014 Alliant Energy Underkofler Excellence in Teaching Award, in competition with other faculty and lecturers across the University.

This enthusiasm can be illustrated by describing a few of the creative teaching techniques that Henriques utilizes. For example, he encourages questions by having students practice raising their hands the first day of class; to illustrate how an action potential is generated along the length of a neuron’s axon, he has the class do the wave; and students frequently collect data from roommates in little “experiments” on topics such as cerebral laterality, classical and operant conditioning, and facial feedback. These data are reviewed in class to reinforce the concepts as well as giving some insight into the research process.

Dr. Henriques constantly works to improve his course by finding ways to make the material more accessible to his students, and he has not hesitated to explore and implement new teaching technologies. Back in 2004, Henriques was one of, if not the first, to use a personal response system, i.e., iClickers in the classroom. He has also been among the first to make use of digital course management systems to supplement his in-class instruction. When Academic Technology (AT) was looking for faculty to experiment with audio podcasting, they asked Henriques if he would create several podcasts so that they could demonstrate the technology to potential adopters. He enthusiastically agreed and was so intrigued by the potential for the technology that he has gone on to create some 90 audio and video podcasts for his students to use as aids in their learning. It is no surprise that Henriques consistently receives excellent ratings from our students.

Student Michael Tan describes Henriques as a dedicated professor, constantly experimenting with his class to determine the most effective way of teaching. “He has group in-class participation activities, an amazing feat given the size of the class. When he taught us about schemas, he read to the class a multitude of words that relate to sleep, such as “tired,” “bed,” “drowsy,” without actually saying the word “sleep.” He then asked the class to raise their hands if they remember certain words. When the professor asked if the students heard the word “sleep,” nearly everyone raised their hands. Professor Henriques then pointed out our blunder by talking about how schemas affect our memory. Seeing a visual and real-life example of schemas was a much better teaching strategy than a professor that reads the definition off of a PowerPoint.”

In addition to a dynamic teaching style, Dr. Henriques makes an extra effort to connect with his students. After exams, he personally sends congratulatory emails to students who have performed at the top of the class or who have made significant improvements in their grades from earlier exams. Instructors of small classes rarely make such an effort, and it is unheard of in large survey courses. He enjoys and cares about both teaching and his students.

Professor Trish Devine reflects on her experiences, “My chair’s office is on the same floor as Dr. Henriques’ office. As such, I have the opportunity to see Dr. Henriques in action as he meets with students during office hours. The atmosphere is welcoming and supportive. In fact, there is often a small group of students sitting around the table in his office asking questions when I walk by his office. In these small group settings, it is immediately evident that he cares about the students and is invested in their development.” Indeed, his commitment and dedication to the students’ development is noticed and felt positively by his students and colleagues alike.
Another year, another impressive collection of Psychology graduates. In particular, four Psychology graduates were recently recognized at the Psychology Undergraduate Graduation Reception for their outstanding mentorship and their dedication to the Department of Psychology.

Two graduates, Jilana Boston and Alex Schurman, received the Brian Hendricks Peer Mentor Award. This award is given to a senior who actively mentored a fellow undergraduate student or students. The award was funded in honor of Bryan Hendricks, who impacted many students through his dedicated teaching, guidance, commitment and mentorship to countless students in the Department.

Jilana (see photo right), a recipient of the The Hilldale Undergraduate/Faculty Research Fellowship, was nominated for the Byian Hendricks award for impacting many of her fellow lab mates with her generous assistance and patience. As a member of the Harackiewicz lab researching human intrinsic motivation, she not only mentored but sought out peers to advise, assist, and motivate them to succeed. Jilana also shared her research with another group of students when she presented her thesis at Stanford University’s Undergraduate Psychology Conference in May. Jilana said of the award “to be honored for this work was thoroughly moving, and I would like to thank all that provided for this award a million times over.”

Alex (left), the director of the Peer Learning Association, was nominated for the Bryan Hendricks award for his dedication to both the Peer Learning Association and to Psychology students. He was integral in improving the facilitation of learning groups for Introductory Psychology students and vastly expanded the Peer Learning Association’s reach by adding high school tutoring and drop-in hours for students. Alex has made a profound impact on the climate of learning in the Department of Psychology. Alex showed his appreciation with this comment “I am honored to be recognized for the Bryan Hendricks Peer Mentor Award. “I hope future students will continue to be inspired by his work and go on to make their own impacts as mentors!”

Crystal Hanson and Nate Kohlenberg have received the Excellence in Outstanding Service to the Department Award, which is given to two students who demonstrate a profound commitment to the Department of Psychology through their service and time.

Crystal (right), a Psychology Club Board member, was a large part of the Psychology Department during her time at UW Madison. She worked with Psychology Club and as an Introductory Psychology Peer Facilitator for the Peer Learning Association. Her experience teaching other students within the Department grew as she became an Undergraduate Teaching Fellow for Child Psychology. She also applied her knowledge performing research with the Psychology Research Experience Program in the Niedenthal Emotion laboratory. Upon receiving the award Crystal said “I am incredibly grateful for the award and for everything the Department has done for me the last four years. I’ve had so many opportunities to get involved and so much support and encouragement from the faculty and staff. These experiences have shaped and defined my undergraduate experience.”

Nate (left), the president of Psi Chi, was an enormous force within the Psychology Department in his four years. He previously served as the Psi Chi Brown Bag chair, and implemented the revamped and improved Psi Chi newsletter which now includes student writing excerpts, notes from faculty and community members from the field of Psychology.
Graduate Student Spotlight: Chelsea Mitamura and Maggie Reno

In our second year of graduate school, we enrolled in a course—The Origins and Development of Prejudice—co-taught by our advisors, Professors Trish Devine and Kristin Shutts. This course drew graduate students with broad and diverse interests, and provided a forum for collaboration across area groups within the department. When faced with the task of designing an intervention to reduce prejudice, our collaboration was not necessarily an obvious one. Though our research interests are complementary, they are also quite distinct. Chelsea focuses her research on gender and racial bias in adults. Maggie studies social cognition in quite a different population—young children in the preschool years.

Throughout the course of the semester, however, we began to discern a gap in the literature that we believed could be enriched by both of our areas of expertise. Thus the idea of collaboration became less far-fetched and more advantageous. First, we saw a major inconsistency in the literature, which claimed that though children report rejecting gender-based exclusion and judge such behavior to be immoral, children behave in ways that promote exclusion on the basis of gender. Second, while considerable research has examined the developmental origins of gender-based prejudice, few interventions have successfully reduced such prejudice.

After identifying these issues, we began our collaboration with a series of studies that aim to identify and subsequently reduce gender-based exclusion in preschool-aged children. In a first study, we designed a task that examined whether children exclude others based on gender. Overwhelmingly, young children far prefer to include individuals that match their own gender and exclude other-gender individuals in a variety of activities. In a second study, we instituted an intervention so as to reduce this bias. In this work, children were asked to reflect on their exclusion decisions by rating the feelings of individuals who they included or excluded. Preliminary results are hopeful: merely rating the emotions of included and excluded others prompted young children to behave in more egalitarian and inclusive ways in a subsequent task.

Given these encouraging results, we are currently in the process of designing new projects to test the reach of our intervention. Our work, thus far, has been both illuminating and enjoyable and the resulting project has benefitted from the convergence of two different academic perspectives. We plan to continue this and other cross-lab collaborations in future, so as to facilitate the application of distinct insights to further understand and reduce bias across development.

(Continued, from Page 6)

Nate worked in Professor Joe Newman’s Psychopathology lab where he wrote an honors thesis. Nate graciously accepted the award stating “I am grateful for the world-class education made possible by the University of Wisconsin Psychology Department, through which I connected with exemplary students, staff, and faculty, and had the opportunity to contribute to the department through peer leadership. I am proud to join the ranks of the UW Psychology alumni, and owe so much of my personal and professional growth to the wonderful mentors I have had, whose influence has not only made me a better scientist and critical thinker, but also a better person and community member.”

These outstanding graduates, and many other Psychology graduates showcase the excellence that comes from the University of Wisconsin Department of Psychology, and the awards that honor these students are made possible by donations from faculty, staff, as well as our generous alumni.
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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For more information on how you can help or to donate online, please visit our Department website at http://psych.wisc.edu and click “Make a Donation” or contact Professor Janet Hyde, jshyde@wisc.edu, (608) 262-9522.