In an attempt to make the Alumni Newsletter more timely and current, we will be sending all future newsletters to you via email. We will continue to send newsletters on the same schedule to keep you informed and up-to-date on Psychology Department news and developments. Starting with the Spring Edition, you’ll have to look in your email inbox for the latest information about the staff, faculty, students, and alumni of MSU Psychology.

We don’t want you to miss an issue. To see if we have your correct email address, look at the address label on this newsletter. We have printed the email address we have for you at the top of the address block. If there is nothing there, or if you would prefer a different email address, send your email address to our Newsletter Editor, Julie Detwiler at detwiler@msu.edu.

You can also fill out the back page of the newsletter with your current email address. Don’t be left behind - join us in the 21st century! Send us your email address today.
Two major issues have occupied a great deal of my time since last spring. The first is plans for the renovation of Physics and Astronomy. The Behavioral Neuroscience group has completed their move to Giltner although installation of air conditioning is still being done. The remainder of the department including the Psychological Clinic is scheduled to move in the summer of 2004. For the first time in our history, the department will be almost in the same building (Giltner is next door to the old Physics building). At this time, Physics is completely torn apart; floors and ceilings have been removed and some windows are gone. Some of the new duct work for the heating and air conditioning system has already gone in and a timely completion (May 31, 2004) of the renovation is likely. Interior Design has been meeting with faculty groups to ascertain furnishing needs and determine a plan to physically move us from the four or five sites in which we are now located to Physics.

The other major concern has been the budget reductions that we sustained as a result of the state budget situation. Since we have little discretionary budget (it was about 13%) independent of faculty and staff, a budget cut of 8% is really substantially larger. We did give up 1.5 staff positions and a faculty position the prior year, but most of the reductions came to our graduate assistantship and supplies and services funds. We now have recurring funds for only 15 graduate students and a supplies and services budget that covers about three months of our operation. This year we will manage with the help of faculty released funds, a gift fund, and a lot of reductions. In the future, we will simply have to seek the funds to support our graduate program and our supplies and services budget by other than university means.

We did do the usual things this past year also. We recruited and welcomed four new faculty members whose profiles are provided in part of this newsletter. The number of our undergraduate majors has increased to 1477, of which 103 are Honors majors. We admitted 23 new graduate students and a like number have received their Ph.D. from one of our six graduate programs. This fall our courses are once again fully enrolled. Our faculty received grants totaling over $6 million for an average of just less than $125,000 per faculty member.

I would like to draw your attention to three items. We plan to send this newsletter electronically beginning spring 2004, so please send us your email address as requested on the front page. We do not want to lose contact with anyone. Second, we have introduced a “Direct giving” option on our web page (www.psychology.msu.edu). Obviously we can use support – financial and otherwise. This site makes it easy to provide a financial gift to one of our six interest areas if you like or to a General Psychology fund which will help us with undergraduate educational objectives. Third, we hope you will send us news items about yourself (e.g., important accomplishments, moves, family changes, etc.). We will include these items in future newsletters.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of the MSU Department of Psychology!

Neal Schmitt
Professor and Chair
After an undergraduate degree at the University of Maryland, I earned my graduate degree from The Ohio State University specializing in Industrial and Organizational (I/O) Psychology. Close to graduating from OSU, I accepted a temporary job at MSU. This “temporary” one-year job has turned into 20 years as a faculty member in the psychology department. I do not know exactly what faculty saw in me to justify hiring me, but I am thankful for that decision. The Psychology Department continues to get stronger every year and the I/O Psychology program continues to be rated as the top research program in the country. You really need to visit our Departmental website to see all the interesting things going on at MSU.

My original attraction to the field of I/O Psychology was due to the applied nature of the work and the potential to be at the intersection of scientist/practitioner model. In graduate school, my interests moved to the dynamic aspects of organizational life around learning and development of people at work. Fortunately for me, over the last twenty years, the importance of employee training has increased to the point that it is now seen as a key to competitive advantage – opening up research and professional opportunities.

Since coming to MSU, I have researched transfer issues as people move from a learning environment (often a training program) to the work or job environment. For example, in collaboration with the Air Force, I was involved in a six-year line of research on factors impacting training efficiency and effectiveness – in particular examining what opportunities graduates of various Air Force specialties have to apply the knowledge and skills gained in training on the job. This work led to a number of papers and presentations that attempted to identify key factors in training effectiveness.

After that experience, I became part of a Learning Team for a local web-based service provider. Companies (and educational institutions) have rapidly moved to incorporating computer- and web-based instruction that require the learner to be self-directed. Over the last 5 years, I have investigated the individual difference and situational factors that affect learners in self-directed learning environments. In collaboration with various graduate students in our program, the research has focused on the choices individual learners make, the extent to which the learner places energy into analyzing how well they know the material (metacognition), and subsequent transfer issues.

The learning system is but one system within a series of systems within a complex organization. Interest in learning systems has broadened over the last 10 to 15 years to include understanding other organizational systems and issues of organizational change and development. I work with organizations interested in transforming the way they do business and transforming the way people are treated within the organization – with a special emphasis on creating supportive learning environments within work settings. This includes work for almost 14 years now with a small manufacturing plant that has transformed itself into a total quality, team based learning organization. What a learning journey that has been for me!

A key assumption of my work on organizational change is that those affected by the change need to be involved in that change process. Without this involvement, most change efforts are doomed to failure. As the facilitator of a change process, I ensure that employees are involved in all stages of this effort.

Another cornerstone of my work is a framework of continual learning and improvement. Work with a number of organizations attempting to set up effective learning cycles (data knowledge action) and the challenges to doing so has led to a book that is currently in press entitled “Valuable Disconnects for Learning: Integrating Bold Visions and Harsh Realities for Sustaining Organizational Learning” (with Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld).

For the last 5 years, I have been putting thoughts, assumptions, and theoretical frameworks into action by working with police departments interested in transforming their agencies from traditional policing to a community policing orientation. Some of these efforts are documented in a recent book called “The Move to Community Policing” edited by Merry Morash and me. We are also currently creating a case study of the Jackson Police Department’s four-year move to community policing.

So, life is good here at MSU. I have been able to pursue my dream of doing research at the intersection of science and practice. I hope to continue the journey around learning, development, and organizational transformation for many years to come.
New Faculty

Christine L. Larson
Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2003
Clinical Interest Group

In my research I am attempting to delineate specific mechanisms of emotion and emotion regulation that can distinguish individual differences in trait patterns of affective style and which are disrupted in depression and anxiety. As such, at the broadest level my research interests focus on the distinction between “normal” and “abnormal” emotional experience. I am interested in understanding the mechanisms underlying this distinction in the hope of linking phenomenological and functional neuroanatomical aspects of emotional experience and vulnerability to mood disturbance. What primarily interests me is the fact that all humans tend to experience the same emotions, but beyond this there are very large individual differences in the quality of experience, when we experience certain emotions, the time course, the intensity, and our capacity to regulate emotions. For example, since virtually everyone experiences sadness or fear at some point, why is it that in some people these emotions take on a pathological significance and more specifically what are the mechanisms that cause this pathology to persist and become disordered?

Within this broad framework I have become particularly interested in understanding differences in the time course of affective responses. In recent work I have begun to examine the timing of both the onset and the recovery function, or return to baseline, of affective reactions. Initial studies have shown that a tendency to have sustained responses to negatively-valenced pictures is associated with higher reports of depressive symptoms and with relative right-frontal brain EEG activation, a pattern that has been linked previously with depression. In other work, I have examined the neural substrates mediating the rapid, automatic response specific phobics (spider phobics, in this case) have when confronted with stimuli related to their phobia. The data from this study demonstrated that the amygdala, a structure deep in the brain that has been linked to fear, responds more rapidly when phobics view pictures of spiders compared to other negative, but nonphobia-related pictures. In the future I hope to continue working toward a better understanding of the neural substrates underlying healthy and abnormal emotional processes.

Brent Donnellan
Ph.D., University of California, Davis, 2001
Social Personality Interest Group

I am a developmental psychologist with a strong interest in personality development. My research interests are broadly concerned with two related themes: 1) how individual differences affect the development of social outcomes such as romantic relationships and antisocial behavior; and 2) how individual differences in personality and self-esteem develop across the life span. I use longitudinal data to address these questions and often collaborate with researchers at other institutions and in other disciplines.

Specifically, some of my recent projects have examined the relation between broad personality traits and romantic relationships, the relation between global self-esteem and antisocial behavior, and the development of self-esteem in young adulthood. Currently, I am developing a project that explores how adolescent romantic relationships serve as a context for social/personality development. I am very excited to join the Social/Personality Area and look forward to expanding my research here at Michigan State.
New Faculty

Rebecca Campbell

Ph.D., Ecological/Community Psychology, Michigan State University, 1996
Ecological/Community Interest Group

My program of research focuses on violence against women, specifically the community response to rape. Many rape survivors turn to a variety of community agencies for assistance, such as the police, the court system, hospitals, mental health clinics, and rape crisis centers. These community services can be quite helpful for some victims, but for others, quite hurtful. As a result, victims’ well-being may be affected not only by the violence itself, but also by help-seeking interactions post-assault. I have been developing a conceptual framework to explain the occurrence of secondary victimization—the victim-blaming behaviors and practices engaged in by community service providers which further the rape event, resulting in additional distress and trauma for rape survivors. My past research has found that secondary victimization is a common problem for rape victims in their contact with the legal and medical systems. Furthermore, I have found that secondary victimization is associated with increased psychological distress (depression and post-traumatic stress), physical health symptomatology, and higher risk sexual health behaviors. When rape survivors are treated poorly by social system personnel, their recoveries are delayed and their health suffers. In my new research at MSU, I will be concentrating more on the response of the medical system to the needs of rape victims and the long-term health effects of sexual assault. Projects in planning include: 1) an evaluation study of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Programs, which are innovative services designed to respond better to the needs of rape survivors (and thereby reduce the occurrence of secondary victimization); 2) a study of the medical service utilization patterns of women with histories of violence, particularly as it pertains to gynecological health care; and 3) a study of investigating the link between victimization and high-risk sexual behavior, including the risk for HIV. Throughout all of my research projects, my goal is to use both quantitative and qualitative methodologies that will capture the stories and experiences of women from diverse races, ethnicities, and social classes.

Cheryl Kaiser

Ph.D., University of Vermont, 2001
Social/Personality Area

I am a social psychologist who recently joined the Social/Personality Interest Group. I completed my doctoral work at The University of Vermont and spent two years as a postdoctoral fellow in the Psychology Department at The University of California, Santa Barbara. Broadly speaking, my research interests lie at the intersection of intergroup relations, social justice, social identity, and the self.

Although psychologists have studied prejudice for nearly a century, we have turned our attention only recently to the psychological implications of prejudice for its targets. Much of my research addresses prejudice and intergroup relations from the perspective of members of devalued social groups. In one line of work, I am examining the emotional consequences of perceiving prejudice. My research has found that the emotional consequences of perceiving oneself as a target of prejudice depend upon various personal factors (e.g., coping resources, justice beliefs) and cognitive construals (e.g., primary and secondary appraisals of prejudice-related threat). In another line of research I am examining the interpersonal consequences of publicly claiming to be a target of prejudice. In this work, I am finding that discrimination claimants challenge important American cultural ideals, such as the Protestant Work Ethic, and this challenge makes them vulnerable to experiencing negative interpersonal outcomes, such as being rejected. My research has both theoretical and applied implications. At the theoretical level, the research questions I am pursuing have provided new paths of inquiry in the study of prejudice and have also revealed important limitations in existing research and theory. At the applied level, my research has implications for improving intergroup relations and reducing discrimination.
The faculty and graduate students of the Psychology Department have received many awards and grants since our last Newsletter. You may have read about some of these on the department’s web page (http://psychology.msu.edu) where a randomly chosen news item is displayed each time you visit the page. Here is a sampling of these items.

**Faculty book authors honored:**
Five Psychology faculty were recently honored at a reception hosted by the MSU Library for publishing books in 2002. Honored were: Professors Hiram Fitzgerald (Infant Development: Ecological Perspectives), J. Kevin Ford (The Move to Community Policing: Making Change Happen; Training in Organizations: Needs Assessment, Development, and Evaluation, Fourth Edition), Neal Schmitt (Measuring and Analyzing Behavior in Organizations: Advances in Measurement and Data Analysis), Dozier Thornton (Urban Policy Choices for Michigan Leaders), and Alexander Von Eye (Configural Frequency Analysis: Methods, Models, and Applications; New Directions for Youth Development: Pathways to Positive Development Among Diverse Youth).

**APA Award:** Professor Norman Abeles received the first annual ADVANCEMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND AGING award from the American Psychological Association’s Committee on Aging. He is also President-elect of the Division of International Psychology of the APA and will be chair of the gerontology section of the International Association of Applied Psychology when they have their next meeting in Athens in 2006.

**Research Grants and awards:**

**Young Investigator Award:** Professor Joe Lonstein has been selected to receive the David Kucharski Young Investigator Award of the International Society for Developmental Psychobiology at the next meeting of the Society in New Orleans. He will give a special presentation of his work at that conference.

**Career Award:** Professor Juli Wade has received a five year NIH Research Scientist Development Award. Part of the award will pay the salary of a post doc and a colloquium series.

**APA Division 27 Award:** Professor William Davidson has received the 2003 Ethnic Minority Mentoring Award from the Society for Community Research and Action (Division 27 of American Psychological Association).

**Student Award:** Lisa Delano-Wood, a graduate student in Clinical Psychology, is the recipient of this year’s Everett J. Soop Award from the Michigan Society of Gerontology. This monetary award is presented to a student in a Michigan college or university who has demonstrated outstanding performance in his or her program of study and an interest in the field of aging.
Contributors

Thanks to all the contributors who have generously donated to the Psychology Development Fund. Listed below are October, 2002 through April 2003 donors.

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Thanks for your generosity.

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