We had a productive summer in the Department of Psychology. I’m particularly pleased that the two new online undergraduate courses we offered during the summer (PSY 290 – Psychology Careers and a new section of PSY 382 – Organizational Psychology Internship) were very well received. They provided new opportunities and increased flexibility for learning experiences for our undergraduates. The department also hosted a training program for faculty and graduate students. Professor Deb Kashy and a graduate student, Rob Ackerman, offered a workshop on Dyadic Data Analysis in July. More than 20 individuals from universities in Canada and throughout the US attended. Dr. Ackerman has completed his Ph.D. and moved on to an assistant professor position at UT Dallas.

This academic year is off to a terrific start. After a budget-induced break for a few years, we are very excited to be hiring new faculty. We are searching for a cognitive and a behavioral neuroscientist. These two positions are associated with the development of a new undergraduate major in Neuroscience at MSU; three additional faculty members will be hired to support this major in the College of Natural Science.

We have also begun a new mentoring program for our junior faculty. Based on their interests and concerns, Dr. Ann Marie Ryan in our Organizational Psychology group has organized a series of workshops on a variety of topics for this academic year, as well as a program designed to help enhance professional networks.

We have hired a new director for our Psychological Clinic, Dr. Patricia Roehling. I am very pleased to welcome her to the department, and believe her experience and vision will provide outstanding direction for the graduate training and patient care we provide. Dr. Roehling is with us one day a week this semester, and will officially begin this position in January.

Finally, I would like to highlight the attention our faculty continue to receive from both the scientific communities in which they work and more public venues. Some examples are provided in this newsletter, which indicate the strength, diversity and visibility of our programs.
MSU Researcher Helps Detroit Tackle Problem of Untested Rape Kits

Professor Rebecca Campbell (Ecological/Community Psychology; below, left) is the independent evaluator of a three-year project funded by the U.S. Department of Justice. Campbell has been given unprecedented access by the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office, Detroit Police Department and Michigan State Police to interview staff at all levels and review policies and procedures related to the 10,559 untested sexual assault kits in Detroit. Assisting Campbell is doctoral student Giannina Fehler-Cabral (below, right).

“If everything goes the way it is supposed to, Detroit will be positioned to be a national leader in being able to help other communities deal with this,” said Campbell, who started her work in April. “It means that the research we do will assist police and prosecutors in bringing criminals to justice.”

The untested sexual assault kits, also known as rape kits, were discovered in a Detroit police property storage facility in August 2009. The kits date back to the 1980s.

The Justice Department awarded Wayne County a $200,000 grant to address the problem in collaboration with MSU’s Campbell. Her research into victims’ experiences with sexual assault over the past 22 years has received numerous awards from organizations such as the American Psychological Association and the International Association of Forensic Nurses.

Dr. Steve Pierce (photo right), associate director of MSU’s Center for Statistical Training and Consulting (and graduate of Ecological/Community Psychology at MSU), also played a role in the project by reviewing the sexual assault kits and offering a statistical analysis of the evidence. From a random study of 400 kits, Pierce estimated that between 577 to 1,811 offenders potentially could be identified if the kits were to be processed.

Untested sexual assault evidence is a problem across the nation, with major cities such as Dallas and Los Angeles also experiencing a backlog of untested sexual assault kits, according to a May report from the National Institute of Justice.

The report discusses the many implications of a rape-kit backlog, such as where the resources to alleviate the problem will come from “as already strapped police departments face demands for follow-up investigations.”

Campbell said one of the issues she will examine is victim notification and its potential effects. For example, should older sexual assault cases be given priority if the statute of limitations is about to expire, even though that may be harmful to the victim? “For a lot of these women, the assault happened 10, 15 years ago, and they’ve moved on with their lives,” Campbell said. “And to have somebody literally show up at their door and tell them they’re digging back into the case? How do you reopen somebody’s life like this?”

Campbell and Fehler-Cabral are observing and documenting every decision Detroit authorities make in their attempt to correct the problem. They will then evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies that are implemented. Ultimately, they will deliver an independent report to the Department of Justice that recommends specific procedures to prevent future backlogs of rape kits.

Intelligence, Not Practice, Makes Perfect

A recent study published by Associate Professor Zach Hambrick (Cognition & Cognitive Neuroscience) was described by MLive.com Thursday, October 06, 2011:

In the paper, Hambrick suggests working memory capacity -- closely related to general intelligence -- may sometimes be the deciding factor between good and great.

In a series of studies, he and Professor Elizabeth Meinz of Southern Illinois University found that people with higher levels of working memory capacity outperformed those with lower levels, even in individuals with extensive experience and knowledge of the task at hand. The studies analyzed complex tasks such as piano sight reading.

“While the specialized knowledge that accumulates through practice is the most important ingredient to reach a very high level of skill, it’s not always sufficient,” said Hambrick. “Working memory capacity can still predict performance in complex domains such as music, chess, science, and maybe even in sports that have a substantial mental component such as golf.”

In the paper, which appears in the research journal Current Directions in Psychological Science, Hambrick notes that popular thinkers Malcolm Gladwell and David Brooks wrote best-selling books arguing that intelligence only goes so far. “A person with a 150 IQ is in theory much smarter than a person with a 120 IQ, but those additional 30 points produce little measurable benefit when it comes to lifetime success,” Brooks writes in *The Social Animal*.

Hambrick’s response: “David Brooks and Malcolm Gladwell are simply wrong. The evidence is quite clear: A high level of intellectual ability puts a person at a measurable advantage -- and the higher the better.”

Research has shown that intelligence has both genetic and environmental origins, Hambrick said, yet “for a very long time we have tried and failed to come up with ways to boost people’s intelligence.”

Hambrick and his fellow researchers continue to study the issue.

“The jury’s still out on whether you can improve your general intelligence,” he said. “We hold out hope that cognitive training of some sort may produce these benefits. But we have yet to find the magic bullet.”
A Link Found Between Fertility and Prejudice?

A study conducted by graduate student Melissa McDonald (below, left) and Assistant Professor Carlos Navarrete (Social/Personality Psychology, below right) was recently highlighted in the Huffington Post (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/06/29/strange-science-menstruat_n_886815.html). This is what the article said:

The study, published in *Psychological Science*, suggests that depending on where they are in their menstrual cycles, women have very different reactions toward strange men. At their most fertile, women are more suspicious of men they see as outside of their social or racial group and who they perceive as being physically threatening. This suggests that prejudice could, at least partially, be influenced by biology.

The study involved asking 252 college-age women -- 224 of whom were white and 28 of whom were black -- to complete a categorization task which allows researchers to measure participants’ associations between Black and White men and traits associated with physicality (e.g. muscular). A smaller pool of women completed the same task, but wore colored t-shirts indicating their membership in a “minimal” group, which was based on their color preferences (red, blue, or yellow). Women then completed the categorization task, but evaluated men who appeared to be a member of their same color group or a different color group.

Results suggested that when they were at their most fertile, women were increasingly biased against men from groups that differed from their own -- whether it was according to race, as in the first experiment, or according to t-shirt color, as in the second. Notably, this was only true of women who associated the out-group men with physicality. What the study suggests is that, in addition to learned biases, there could be something about women’s biology that leads them to protect themselves against men who they believe pose a sexual threat at the time when they are most "at risk" of becoming pregnant. In other words, when women are more likely to conceive a child, they are biologically driven to be more discriminating about whom they are going to mate with. Without necessarily realizing it, they may protect themselves against men who they believe endanger that choice.

Navarrete says that he was expecting to find that women who were at their most fertile were biased against men of a different racial group classified as physically imposing, particularly among white female participants.

"There are deep histories of negative stereotyping of Black men as being, perhaps, sexually coercive," he said. "These stereotypes have been around for centuries, so it wasn't too far of a stretch to think we'd see them here."

But he said the fact that women also showed bias in the colored t-shirt experiment was extremely surprising. It indicates that there doesn't need to be a particularly deep cultural history for the prejudice to exist and to fluctuate according to fertility. The women just need to see the men as different.

Melissa McDonald told Canada’s *Times Colonist* that the study could be useful for understanding why racial prejudice is so persistent. "Although much research in social psychology has highlighted the role of sociocultural learning as a causal force in prejudice, our research suggests that biology may also play a role." But Navarrete cautions that people should not draw any sweeping conclusions from the study. "It's way too soon to try and say what this really means out there in the real world," he told *The Huffington Post*. "It's just an interesting study for its own sake, to try and map out what the predictors of prejudice are, using a biobehavioral approach."
How Your Brain Reacts to Mistakes Depends on Your Mindset

“Whether you think you can or think you can’t—you’re right,” said Henry Ford. A new study, to be published in an upcoming issue of Psychological Science, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science, finds that people who think they can learn from their mistakes have a different brain reaction to mistakes than people who think intelligence is fixed.

Collaborators on the study included Jason Moser (Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology, photo right), Hans Schroder (undergraduate thesis student of Dr. Moser’s), Carrie Heeter (MSU Professor of Telecommunication and Media Studies), Psychology graduate student Tim Moran, and Yu-Hao Lee (graduate student in Telecommunication and Media Studies). “One big difference between people who think intelligence is malleable and those who think intelligence is fixed is how they respond to mistakes,” Moser notes. Studies have found that people who think intelligence is malleable say things like, “When the going gets tough, I put in more effort” or “If I make a mistake, I try to learn and figure it out.” On the other hand, people who think that they can’t get smarter will not take opportunities to learn from their mistakes. This can be a problem in school, for example; a student who thinks her intelligence is fixed will think it’s not worth bothering to try harder after she fails a test.

For this study, Moser and his colleagues gave participants a task that is easy to make a mistake on. They were supposed to identify the middle letter of a five-letter series like “MMMMM” or “NNMNN.” Sometimes the middle letter was the same as the other four, and sometimes it was different. “It’s pretty simple, doing the same thing over and over, but the mind can’t help it; it just kind of zones out from time to time,” Moser says. That’s when people make mistakes—and they notice it immediately, and feel stupid.

While doing the task, the participant wore a cap on his or her head that records electrical activity in the brain. When someone makes a mistake, their brain makes two quick signals: an initial response that indicates something has gone awry—Moser calls it the “oh crap’ response”—and a second that indicates the person is consciously aware of the mistake and is trying to right the wrong. Both signals occur within a quarter of a second of the mistake. After the experiment, the researchers found out whether people believed they could learn from their mistakes or not.

People who think they can learn from their mistakes did better after making a mistake – in other words, they successfully bounced back after an error. Their brains also reacted differently, producing a bigger second signal, the one that says “I see that I’ve made a mistake, so I should pay more attention” Moser says.

The research shows that these people are different on a fundamental level, Moser says. “This might help us understand why exactly the two types of individuals show different behaviors after mistakes.” People who think they can learn from their mistakes have brains that are tuned to pay more attention to mistakes, he says. This research could help in training people to believe that they can work harder and learn more, by showing how their brain is reacting to mistakes.

On June 10 and 11, a festschrift in honor of Daniel Ilgen and Neal Schmitt was held at Michigan State University. A festschrift is a tradition of honoring the life’s work of a renowned scholar via a reading of papers in the scholar’s honor. Over 100 former and current students and colleagues of Drs. Ilgen and Schmitt gathered to present papers, share memories, and honor two individuals who have a profound influence on the field of I-O psychology.

Neal and Dan mentored dozens of successful organizational psychologists in their combined 65 years at Michigan State. They’ve played a key role in MSU’s industrial and organizational psychology doctoral program, recognized as a leading program in the field. Their research and applied projects have had major impacts on a wide range of private and public organizations, and the two continue to tackle major challenges including current work on hiring systems for Chicago Public School teachers and the training of Air Force officers.

Neal Schmitt (photo right) came to MSU as an assistant professor of psychology in 1974, rose through the ranks to become a University Distinguished Professor in 1992, and served as department chair from 2000 to 2010. His research on selection, decision making, and performance measurement has been cited more than 5,000 times.

Dan Ilgen (photo below) came to MSU in 1983 from Purdue University, serving as John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Management for nearly 25 years before becoming part-time faculty. Much of Ilgen’s research has been funded by the Navy and Air Force to investigate worker motivation and teamwork.

Both Neal and Dan have had profound impacts on the profession of organizational psychology through their service. Both are former SIOP presidents. Schmitt has also been a president of Division 5 of APA. Both have long records of service in other roles, including serving on National Research Council and Department of Defense committees, and serving on APA and APS committees.

Aside from their broad influence on the profession, former students who attended the festschrift noted the tremendous influence their mentorship has had on their individual careers personally. Current colleagues at MSU noted how their leadership of the organizational program has created an extraordinary level of stability that has contributed to its enduring success.

Although Neal and Dan are officially retiring from their roles as faculty, they continue their high level of research productivity and active mentorship and engagement at Michigan State.

A volume containing the conference proceedings will be published. An MSU endowment called the Ilgen–Schmitt Endowed Graduate Fellowship has also been set up in honor of their influence: http://psychology.msu.edu/Alumni/Donate.aspx
The Department of Psychology would like to congratulate the recipients of the Michigan State University Freshman Psychology Kamerschen-Pearson Scholarship. Three $1000 awards were given out for the 2011-2012 academic year. In order to receive the award, students had to be an MSU Psychology freshman earning at least a 3.5 grade point average. Award winners were selected on the basis of academic achievement, leadership skills, and extracurricular activities. This award came about as a result of an endowment established by one of our alumni, Dr. Karen Kamerschen, and her husband, Dr. Robert Pearson. The department is very grateful for their generosity to the students.

**Katie Stebbins**

When Katie came to MSU, she was accepted into the Spartan Marching Band Color Guard where she spent endless hours practicing for the MSU football halftime games. Having learned good study skills in high school, she quickly learned to keep on track and work hard with the time she had remaining. To her surprise, she made the Dean’s List with a high GPA. She also learned how to balance her time, that good things come with time, and that she is capable of more than she thought. Katie hopes to become a psychiatrist and will do whatever it takes to achieve her goal.

**Kaitlyn Osentoski**

Kaitlyn started working at Basketball America for three years while in high school and has continued working there into college. There she is a volleyball coach for 5th and 9th grade students as well as a referee. By coaching, Kaitlyn has learned how much of an impact one individual has on another person’s life. Because Kaitlyn has found she is someone people feel comfortable talking to, she would like to put her skills of good communication to use by helping others by become a psychologist and working with children. Because of her academic achievement, Kaitlyn has been invited to be part of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and is on the Dean’s List.

**Kristin Gregory**

Kristin has been accepted in Towerguard, one of the oldest and most prestigious organizations on campus. It is for the top 5% of freshman that want to work with disabled students on campus. She is also a research assistant in the MSU Autism lab where she volunteers ten hours a week, and volunteers at the first Gymnastics Doctor Autism ever held on campus. During Kristin’s spring break, she went to Dominican Republic and worked in an orphanage through Alternative Spring Break, and she’s helped raise money for the Susan G. Komen breast cancer fund. Kristin has also been nominated to be a part of Leader-shape, a weeklong seminar over the summer for leaders on campus.
Mark Becker (co-PI Laura Bix from MSU’s Packaging Department) received an R21 grant from the NIH - National Cancer Institute, entitled Evaluating Human Processing of Front of Pack Nutritional Labels. 2011-2013; $365,351.

Rebecca Campbell received a grant from the National Institute of Justice (with the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office) for the Sexual Assault Kit Action Research Project. 2011-2013; $1,000,000.

Bill Davidson (with Sean Hankins) received a grant from Ingham County, MI to support the MSU Adolescent Project. 2011-2012; $158,000.

Bill Davidson (with graduate students Christina Campbell, Valerie Anderson, and Ashlee Barnes) received a grant from Ingham County, MI to support the Juvenile Justice Risk Assessment. 2011-2012; $29,000

Kevin Ford (with Shawn J. Riley, Associate Professor, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife) received a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division to fund Formative and summative evaluation of Wildlife Division strategic planning: Measuring performance and effectiveness. 2012 -2016; $314,763.

Brooke Ingersoll was awarded a Pilot Treatment Award from Autism Speaks for a study to examine the effectiveness of using a social-communication intervention with adolescents with autism who are non- or minimally-verbal. It will be conducted in collaboration with the Center for Discovery in Harris, NY, a residential center for individuals with developmental disabilities. 2011-2013; $112,605.

Debby Kashy is working on a collaborative project studying women on probation and parole with Criminal Justice faculty Merry Morash & Jennifer Cobbina, and Communication faculty Sandi Smith. The project is being funded by both the National Science Foundation and the Michigan State University Foundation through the Strategic Partnership grant program.
Recent Faculty Grants (continued)

Steve Kozlowski (with Rose Fernandez (PI, Emergency Medicine), Georgia Chao (Management) and James Grand, Tara Rench, Marina Pearce, and Samantha Baard (Organizational Psychology) received the grant *Improving patient safety through simulation research* from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality 2011-2014; $1,050,000.

Steve Kozlowski also received the grant *The Emergence, assessment, and measurement of Macrocognition: TEAM Macrocog Lab* from the Office of Naval Research. 2011-2012; $108,000.

Rich Lucas and Brent Donnellan were awarded a grant from the National Institute on Aging for their project *Comparing measures of experiential and evaluative well-being*. 2011-2016; $1,971,798.

Peg Semrud-Clikeman was awarded a $50,000 DFI for a study of cerebral malaria in Malawi. This award is in conjunction with the College of Medicine (Terrie Taylor) and will allow them to continue a study in Malawi to fund nurses and project managers to assist parents and children in recovery from this terrible disease.

Peg Semrud-Clikeman was also awarded a $40,000 grant from a private foundation to complete a study of the neurological and neuropsychological underpinnings of nonverbal learning disabilities and of Asperger Syndrome.

Cheryl Sisk and Debby Kashy were awarded a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health for the study *Pubertal organization of brain and behavior*. 2011-2013; $760,000.

Recent Faculty Awards

Bill Davidson received the Career Service Award from the Society for Community Research and Action, Division 27 of the American Psychological Association.

Robin Miller is the 2011 winner of the Robert Ingle Award from the American Evaluation Association "in recognition of her longstanding dedication to the profession of evaluation, and the American Evaluation Association itself.”
**Recent Graduate Student Awards**

**Jesse Bledsoe** received the *Joseph Becker Research Award* at the University of Washington School of Medicine in the psychology internship program.

**Catherine Dodson, Elisa Kim** and **Sara McGill** are new graduate students who all received University Fellowships.

**Carmel Martin-Fairey** was selected as a *Neuroscience Scholar* by the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) and the SfN Professional Development Committee and its Diversity in Neuroscience Subcommittee.

**Sarah Reed** was awarded a training scholarship for students interested in public policy by the APA's Public Interest caucus.

**Echo Rivera** won the *Graduate Student Paper Award for Advancing Victim-Centered Knowledge* from the National Center for Victims of Crime.

**Kate Thomas** received the Jerry S. Wiggins *Student Award for Outstanding Interpersonal Research, Honorable Mention.*

**Allison Wainer** received the *Autism Speaks Dennis Weatherstone Memorial Fellowship* ($56,000) for her study "Using an internet-based program to teach a naturalistic intervention to parents of children with ASD." (2011-2013)

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**Recent Graduate Student Publications**


Recent Graduate Student Publications (continued)


A Fond Farewell to Gordon “Gordy” Wood

We are sorry to report that Professor Emeritus Gordy Wood died on May 18, 2011, after a 2 ½ year courageous struggle with brain cancer. Gordy received his PhD in Psychology from Northwestern University in 1966, and upon graduation accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Psychology here at Michigan State University. Gordy continued his tenure at MSU until he retired in 2002.

Gordy conducted research in verbal learning, and was a member of the Cognitive Psychology graduate program. In 1979, the Psychology faculty selected him as Acting Chair of the department and in 1980 this position was changed to Chair. He continued as Chair until the year 2000, serving longer than any other chairperson in the department’s history.

Gordy was a man of many interests and talents; he especially enjoyed reading, golf, gambling and investing. Many Psychology faculty fondly remember poker games with Gordy over the years.

Gordy is survived by his wife of 47 years, Joan (Sitz) Wood; their daughter, Dana Wood, her husband, Andrew Campbell, and their son Aiden. He is also survived by one sister, two brothers, and many nieces and nephews and their families.

Mary K. Karon Humanitarian Award

Mary K. Karon (wife of Bertram P. Karon, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Psychology), who died in February of this year, was honored by the International Society for Ethical Psychology and Psychiatry (ISEPP) by their designating their annual award the Mary K. Karon Humanitarian Award, recognizing her helpful interventions in the lives of a number of people in distress. It was first awarded at their annual meeting October 28 in Los Angeles. ISEPP is a research and educational network focusing on the critical study of the impact of the mental health movement, primarily concerned with encouraging treatments that are effective and discouraging treatments whose negative consequences are greater than their intended benefits. Mary and Bertram Karon have been members of ISEPP from its beginning, approximately 20 years ago.
Higher education faces a fiscal crisis and MSU is no exception. Now, more than ever, we need the financial support of our friends and alumni. If you visit our web page (http://psychology.msu.edu/Alumni/Donate.aspx) you will see a link for Direct Giving. When you click this link, you will be on your way to a secure, encrypted, University Development page that will allow you to make a credit card donation to the Psychology Department at MSU. You can give to the department or to one of the ten new funds to support a specific program group.

Thank you for your generosity.

Congratulations to Dr. Linda Jackson, who was recently appointed the new Faculty Grievance Officer for the University