Chair’s Report

As we come to the end of another academic year, we are managing the usual demands of our teaching, research, and outreach activity. Two activities are unusual, however. We continue to be engaged in plans for the renovation and move to Physics/Astronomy. The construction plans have been finalized. Currently, the plan is to secure bids from contractors in the months of March and April and to have a proposal ready for Board of Trustees approval in May. Construction could begin immediately after that approval with a move sometime in the summer of 2004 still likely. While funds allocated for this project are sufficient to handle the major reconstruction needs, some aspects of the project including furnishing the building, a child’s bathroom in the clinic, and needed storage space have not been fully funded or have been eliminated. One relatively superficial item: The stone façade on the outside of the building will identify us as the Physics department. We continue to seek support for these and some other building enhancements.

On a less positive note, like all units at MSU, we are considering options related to the budget cuts that Governor Granholm announced in March. These cuts amount to 10% of the university budget after many years of restrained spending due to MSU’s commitment to keep tuition increases at or below the rate of inflation. The cumulative impact of the long term restrained spending and current budget cuts will likely necessitate large tuition increases and/or the trimming of some programs. When this note reaches you, it is likely that we will have more specific information about the ways in which we will seek to accommodate this reduced funding level. At this time, there is a great deal of uncertainty as to how to deal with the immediate funding reality. However, the trend toward decreased
public support for higher education seems consistent in the state of Michigan and throughout the U.S. When the parents of our students were college students, about 75% of MSU’s revenue came from state funds; today that proportion is less than 50%. It has continued to decrease even when the state revenue situation was relatively positive. This means an ever greater dependence on tuition and the support of alumni and friends of the university. Since we are getting into the private fundraising arena late, we do not have the endowment of private universities, or even most of the Big Ten universities, and we often do not have the expertise associated with success in the generation of private support for our university. At this juncture, the best support we can get is communication from you to our state legislators and the governor supporting our case as the governor and the legislature make difficult decisions related to our state budget. For more information about the budget, how it will affect our students and university, and why we think public funding for higher education is a crucial investment in our economic future, please see the following website: www.budget.msu.edu

Please contact your legislators and urge them to support funding for MSU and Michigan public universities to the fullest extent possible by going to:

A more positive view of our department and situation is presented in the remainder of this newsletter in which we try to highlight developments in Psychology that are particularly relevant to undergraduates. I continue to believe that our undergraduates have multiple opportunities to engage a first class faculty and staff in various teaching, research, and community service activities often unavailable to them at far more expensive institutions. We remain committed to providing and further enhancing these opportunities in spite of budgetary challenges. We hope you will support these efforts as suggested above.

Alumni Notes

Stan Lieberson (91, Ph.D.) lives in Long Beach, CA and is working as an independent computer consultant/programmer. He has also been President of the Board of Directors and the Director of the Program for Torture Victims, a non-profit organization in Los Angeles. He reports that he and his “wonderful fiancée, Cecilia, enjoy Vespa rides along the Pacific Coast Highway.”

Hobie Davies (92, Ph.D.) has taken a position as Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Janiece L. Pompa (83, Ph.D.) is a Clinical Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and is also the Director of the Psychoeducational Clinic at the University of Utah. She also proudly reports that her “wonderful 7 year-old son is a math whiz!”

Carol A. Trufant (77, Ph.D.) received a design patent for her invention entitled, “A surface pattern for an intergroup working model for social conflict resolution applied to a setting or room for adults.” She is currently working and living in Alameda, CA.

Philip S. Fastenau (94, Ph.D.) was recently tenured and promoted to Associate Professor at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). He holds a primary appointment in the Department of Psychology and an adjunct appointment in the Department of Psychiatry at Indiana University School of Medicine. He is also Team Neuropsychologist for the Indianapolis Colts and consults with collegiate teams throughout Indiana. Dr. Fastenau was also awarded the 2002 Bynum Mentor Award for outstanding mentorship of graduate and undergraduate students.

Congratulations to all of our outstanding alumni!

In an attempt to make the Alumni Newsletter more timely and current, we are planning on sending it out over email in the near future. In order for this to work, we need your email address. If you would like to receive future newsletters, please take a moment and send us your email address. The easiest way to do this is to send an email message to 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.
Francoise Bigelow joined the Psychology Department as an Academic Advisor in December 2001. She has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in French Literature and a Master of Education specializing in Student Affairs Administration. Both degrees were earned from the University of Vermont. Her goal as an advisor is to make sure that students are able to reach their full potential and to fully participate in the undergraduate experience through their academics, volunteer and internship opportunities, and research experiences. Francoise believes that all of these activities enrich the lives of the students.

Sarah Handspike has been advising for the Department of Psychology since March of 1999. She attended MSU for her undergraduate and masters degrees. As an advisor for the Department of Psychology she has began many new initiatives for the undergraduate office. Some of these include the Psychology Monthly News On-line, PSYCHFEST, and a credit-based career course for sophomores and juniors. Sarah believes in continuous improvement and works hard to make sure that the students needs are met. Sarah is very student-focused and believes that preparation and understanding are the most important tools for student’s success.

Sally Grady has been an advisor in the Psychology Department since September, 1992. She is the adviser to the student groups, Psychology Scholars Association and Psi Chi, and always encourages students to study hard and do well, and to get involved in their education through academics, service learning, research, and job opportunities. She earned her degree from Marygrove College in Detroit, and worked as a social worker in Detroit and Lansing before working at MSU.
Jim Zacks Named First Director of Undergraduate Programs

Last summer, Chairperson Neal Schmitt named Professor Jim Zacks as the department’s first Director of Undergraduate programs. “Since I have been Chair, Jim Zacks has taken an increasingly active role in administrative issues that involve our undergraduate programs” said Schmitt. “He has been one of the directors (along with Larry Messé) of the Honors program, he works frequently with the undergraduate advisors, approves grade changes and other administrative items associated with undergraduate education, chairs the Undergraduate Policy and Curriculum Committee, and has provided data on various issues related to our undergraduate programs in response to administrative demands.”

To reflect the department’s commitment to undergraduate education, Schmitt proposed a reorganization of the department’s administration and created the post of Director of Undergraduate Programs. Given Professor Zacks’s heavy involvement in undergraduate education, he was appointed to this new post. As part of his new responsibilities, Professor Zacks will also assume responsibility for scheduling classes. According to Schmitt, “This appointment will organize us in the same fashion as the College and several other departments in the College.” Congratulations, Jim!

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant Program Expanded

Over the last two years the opportunities for undergraduates to serve as Teaching Assistants has been expanded. Although this program has been around for many years, the numbers of undergraduates involved has risen to nine in the Spring Semester of 2003. This program allows advanced, carefully screened undergraduate Psychology majors to assist professors for one or more semesters. It is an exceptional learning opportunity for the undergraduate student and helps prepare them for graduate school.

Jackie Mezza is one of the students participating in the program this year. She agreed to be interviewed about the experience. Here is some of what she said.

Q. How has the experience of being a TA been for you?
A. This has been a very rewarding experience for me for a few reasons. First of all, I get experience talking in front of a large class, helping them understand some difficult concepts. Second, this is like a refresher course for me on things that I may have forgotten over the past four years. Third, I assisted the professor in planning two different lectures. This experience will help me when I am in graduate school and have to teach a class.

Q. What has been the most surprising (unexpected) part of the experience?
A. I was most surprised by the number of students who come to the exam review sessions. I expected small numbers, but that was not the case. It was a pleasant surprise. On the other hand, I was disappointed that students do not utilize my office hours.

Q. Would you recommend the experience to other qualified undergraduates?
A. Yes, strongly

Q. What are your plans for next year?
A. I plan to pursue a Doctoral degree in clinical psychology at Eastern Michigan University.
Professor Neal Schmitt and Assistant Professor Fred Oswald, both in the industrial/organizational psychology area, have been working with Jürgen Deller, former dean and current professor of Business Psychology at the University of Applied Sciences in Lüneburg, Germany, to establish a student exchange at the undergraduate level. Both Drs. Schmitt and Oswald visited Lüneburg this past June for eight days. During their visit, they learned more about the university and faculty, the studying and living situation for MSU exchange students, the town, and surrounding area. The experience was quite positive, and ideally the exchange program will begin in Fall 2003.

Psychology students will come to the University of Applied Sciences in either fall or spring semester. An array of psychology courses are available (e.g., personality, social, industrial/organizational, and quantitative methods) and would be taught in English. In addition, though most German students, faculty, and townspeople are quite comfortable speaking English, students would enroll in a two-week intensive introductory German language and culture course upon their arrival to the university. In turn, exchange students from the University of Applied Sciences would take courses here in the spring semester and summer sessions.

This is an excellent opportunity for undergraduate psychology students seeking an international educational experience. MSU has been actively promoting the development of various international programs and opportunities for its students. Psychology has approved courses for students at foreign universities at which other university departments have international programs, but we have not initiated many of our own programs. We believe this program will be a very positive experience for those students who can participate and hope to expand such programs in the future. For more information on this program, please contact the Undergraduate Advising Office, 155 Baker Hall, 353-0753. You can get more general information on the full range of study abroad programs by going to the Study Abroad fair on September 19th, 12-6pm, MSU Student Union, and by going to the Study Abroad Office website at studyabroad.msu.edu.
The faculty and graduate students of the Psychology Department have received many awards and grants during the past six months. As a new feature of the department’s web page (http://psychology.msu.edu) a randomly chosen news item about these accomplishments is displayed each time the page is opened. Here is a sampling of those items.

**NRSA Award:** David Bailey, a neuroscience graduate student, working with Dr. Juli Wade received word that he will be awarded a three year NRSA Fellowship from NIH beginning this summer.

**NIMH-B-Start:** Professor Aude Oliva has received word that her proposal titled “Perception and Categorization of Real World Scenes” has been funded by NIMH.

**APS Award:** Mercedes Carswell, a graduate student in our Clinical program, was one of three winners in the 2002-2003 American Psychological Society Student Caucus (APSSC) RiSE-UP Research Competition. RiSE-UP stands for “Research on Socially and Economically Underrepresented Populations.” Her proposal was selected by a panel of APSSC peer reviewers “to be of the highest quality and to best exemplify scientific psychological research that advances the interests of underrepresented populations.”

**Early Career Award:** Professor Richard Lucas has received the Early Career Award from the International Society for the Study of Individual Differences.

He has been invited to present at the July meeting of the Society in Graz, Austria, when he is presented with the award.

**UDF Awards:** Data compiled by the MSU Office of Graduate Studies indicates that over the last nine years, Psychology graduate school applicants have received 39 offers of University Distinguished Fellowship awards and that 17 of those awardees have attended graduate school at MSU. Both offers and acceptances are the most for any department at the university.

**Journal Editors:** This year, faculty members in Psychology serve as Editors or Associate Editors of eight major journals in Psychology: Perception and Psychophysics (Dr. Tom Carr), American Journal of Community Psychology (Dr. William Davidson), Journal of Memory and Language (Dr. Fernanda Ferreira), Journal of Applied Psychology (Dr. Steve Kozlowski), Personnel Psychology (Dr. Ann Marie Ryan), Psychology and Aging (Dr. Rose Zacks), Multiencia (Dr. Alex von Eye), and the Biometrical Journal (Dr. Alex von Eye).

**NSF Grant:** Professor Juli Wade received an NSF grant to support her project entitled, “Neuroendocrine regulation of behavioral differences.”

**NIMH Grant:** Kelly Lewis, a clinical graduate student, and her faculty mentor, Professor Cris Sullivan, received a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health for a project entitled, “Promoting African American well-being: A school based rites of passage intervention.”

**Navy Grant:** Professor Erik Altmann received a grant from the Office of Naval Research for a study entitled, “Managing the disruptiveness of interruptions.”

**NIH Grant:** Professor Cynthia Jordan received a grant from the National Institute of Health for her research project entitled, “Androgen targets in a simple behavioral System.”

**IRGP Awards:** Four Psychology faculty have received grants through the MSU Intramural Research Grants Program. Professors Joseph Lonstein, Richard Lucas, Alessandra Passarotti, and Aude Oliva were all successful applicants to this program.

**APA dissertation award:** Cosette Orellana, a graduate student in the Clinical Psychology program, has been awarded the American Psychological Association 2002 Science Directorate Dissertation Research Award. She competed against a record number of applicants from across the nation to win this award.

**Dr. Bert Karon:** On November 16, 2002, at the annual meeting of The United States Chapter of the International Society for the Psychological Treatment of Schizophrenia and Other Psychoses Dr. Bertram P. Karon was honored for his “profound contributions to the psychoanalytic understanding and humane treatment of patients with severe mental illness.”

Congratulations to all of these Psychology winners!
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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