High Honors for Virginia Blankenship and Her Team of Eight Student Researchers

On February 6th Dr. Virginia Blankenship received the delightful news that she and her co-authors, Christopher Vega, Erica Ramos, Katherine Romero, Kenneth Warren, Kathleen Keenan, Valery Rosenow, Jennifer Vasquez, and Amanda Sullivan, won the 2006 Walter G. Klopfer Award. This award is bestowed annually by the Society for Personality Assessment for an article that makes a distinguished contribution to the literature in personality assessment. The Award is being granted in recognition of their 2006 Journal of Personality Assessment (APA journal) article entitled “Using the multifaceted Rasch model to improve the TAT/PSE measure of need for achievement” (volume 86, pp. 100-114). A more detailed story on this research was presented one year ago in the January/February 2006 issue of the Department of Psychology newsletter. This year’s Walter Klopfer Award was determined by a two step process. Initially, 12 members of the Consulting Editor Board for the Journal of Personality Assessment reviewed all the articles that have been published in the past year and nominated potential award winners. Each of these nominees were then carefully reviewed and rated by the JPA Editor and Associate Editors, with the final results determined by an average of our ratings. According to Dr. Gregory J. Meyer, the journal editor, there were 15 final nominees for the Walter Klopfer Award this year and Dr. Blankenship’s article “stood out above the rest and was clearly the most highly rated.” The Award comes with a $500.00 check and a plaque for each author and will be presented at the annual convention of the Society for Personality Assessment on Friday March 9, 2007.

The Department of Psychology, College of SBS, and NAU are all extremely proud of this stellar accomplishment by Dr. Blankenship and her students. Congratulations!
Dr. William Gibson

The Difference that Matters

NAU Campaign Highlights Bill Gibson

You may have noticed the most recent addition to NAU’s marketing campaign “The Difference that Matters” featuring our one and only Dr. William Gibson. It’s really very fitting that they have chosen Dr. Gibson for their spotlight since he has been an important part of our department for 36 years! With a consistent record of very high teaching evaluations and student praise for his dedication, enthusiasm, and care for student learning, Dr. Gibson has taught hundreds of students in the areas of physiological psychology and statistics over the years and has truly been part of the “difference that matters.” Dr. Gibson has been a past recipient of the SBS Outstanding Teaching Award, has been an advocate for the scientific study of psychology, including involvement in NAU’s Sigma Xi chapter, and has been a mentor for undergraduate and graduate research work. Although he announced his decision to retire at the end of the 2007-2008 academic year, Dr. Gibson’s love of teaching is leading him to become part of the new NAU Liberal Studies First Year Seminar Program, where he will be teaching incoming students about the “Psychology of Consciousness.”

Dr. Gibson came to NAU right after finishing his Ph.D. Since he and his wife Sheryl had gone to the University of Utah, they liked the snow and mountains, and liked to ski and so Flagstaff appealed to them. Dr. Gibson recalls that when he began his undergraduate work at the University of Utah the department was still quite small, and the students and faculty interacted socially, intellectually, and these were the elements of NAU that appealed to him as well. In 1970, when he arrived, NAU had about 9,000 students and the department was supportive and very collegial (like it is now!). It wasn’t long before Dr. Gibson and his family had established roots in the community and at the university and they never felt like leaving. Many of our department’s recent retirees, Drs. Clay Moore, Les Hunt, Wayne Sjoberg, and others all joined NAU about the same time and they were the core faculty that helped build the department and offer courses that covered the basic experimental aspects of psychology. Next year, Dr. Gibson’s 37th year, will be his last as he is planning on retiring. Dr. Gibson has been an ambassador for this department for so many years and it is wonderful to see NAU spotlight his dedication to students to the larger public in their advertising campaign.

Dr. Larry Stevens’ Research Team Travels and Presents at Recent Professional Conferences

In the subspecialty of hypnosis, there are only two organizations recognized by the AMA, the two APAs, and the ACSW as qualified to offer training in hypnosis. Those two organizations are the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH) and the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis (SCEH). These two societies were once one organization, but they split over political differences decades ago. From January 19-23, 2007, these two organizations reunited in Dallas for the first joint meeting since the split, the largest conference of hypnosis practitioners and researchers ever assembled.

Dr. Larry Stevens and his research team presented a Research Symposium at this momentous gathering entitled “EEG Brainmap and MRI Studies of Clinical Hypnosis: Power Spectral, Normative Database, and Coherence Analyses.” This symposium was comprised of 5 paper presentations. First, Dr. Stevens presented an overview of over three years of research conducted in the NAU Health Psychology Center Psychophysiology Laboratories on “Electrocortical Effects of Clinical Hypnosis.” Then, the results, statistical analyses, and implications of this body of research were presented by NAU graduate Research Assistants working on this project. Mykl Greene presented the EEG spectral and neuroimaging results of this study in “Continuous 19-Channel EEG and Simulated MRI Recordings Throughout a 7-Stage Clinical Hypnosis Trance Process.” Donna Pisano presented an equally innovative, highly sophisticated, and ground-breaking neural synchrony analysis of our EEG data entitled “Effects of Clinical Hypnosis on EEG Coherence: Synchronizing the Brain with Hypnosis.” Next, Dr. Stevens completed the symposium with presentation of “An MRI Movie of Continuous Theta Power Spectral Changes Throughout a 7-Stage Trance Process”, the first time such a movie of electrocortical changes during hypnosis has ever been conducted. There were indeed a lot of “firsts” in this symposium, and all papers were very well received by the audience.
Sara Wyckoff presented a unique, first-time-ever-conducted comparison of EEG effects of hypnosis with a national normative database in “A Quantitative EEG Normative Database Analysis of Clinical Hypnosis” (Sara had just presented these results 1 week before in her Masters Thesis oral defense in Clinical Health Psychology at NAU; congratulations Sara!).

Then Dr. Stevens and Research Assistants traveled to the sunny, and occasionally fog-draped, coast of Northern California, to Monterey, February 15-18, 2007 to the annual conference of the Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback (AAPB) to present a research symposium entitled “EEG Spectral, Coherence, MRI, and Database Analyses: Hypnosis and Pain”. At this large and prestigious applied psychophysiology convention, we presented 6 papers similar to the above plus a new presentation on pain, as follows: “An EEG Study of Clinical Hypnosis”, presented by Dr. Stevens, “Continuous EEG Power Spectral and LORETA Virtual MRI Analyses Throughout a 7-Stage Clinical Hypnosis Trance Process” by Mykl Greene, “A QEEG Normative Database Comparison Across 7 Stages of Hypnotic Trance” by Sara Wyckoff, “Synchronizing the Brain with Hypnosis: Effects of Hypnosis on EEG Coherence” by Donna Pisano, “Power Spectral and LORETA Localization of Pain Analgesia as a Function of Hypnotizability” by Stephanie Lavin, and then Dr. Stevens presented “An MRI Movie of Continuous Theta Power Spectral Changes Throughout a 7-Stage Trance Process” at the conclusion of the symposium. Stephanie Lavin’s presentation was another first for our laboratory, in that her pain study (also her Masters thesis in the Clinical Health Psychology program) compared hypnotic analgesia with distraction and with a resting control condition for a rather large group of participants undergoing a moderate to severe acute pain condition, stratified by gender and hypnotizability level. Analyses of these data revealed not only remarkable and statistically significant differences in pain perception across the conditions but also very striking and significant differences among the conditions in the cortical (brain) manifestation of pain, all modulated by gender and hypnotizability.

Now that these presentations are completed, the team will begin work on writing up these results for publication submission, and start planning for the next round of research projects on hypnosis (ooh!), pain (ouch!), and chocolate (yum!).

NEW FACULTY FOR 2007-2008!

We are pleased to announce FOUR new faculty joining our department beginning in August 2007! We will have more detailed information about each of these outstanding teacher/scholars in our August 2007 newsletter and on our website soon! They are: Dr. Melissa Birkett (University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Biopsychophysiology), Dr. Barbara Brumbach (University of Arizona; Measurement & Statistics), Dr. Meliksah Demir (Wayne State University; Lifespan/Developmental), and Dr. Chad Woodruff (University of New Mexico; Biopsychophysiology). Stay tuned for more information about these wonderful new faculty members!
PSI CHI Arizona Conference Coming! by Derrick Wirtz

The Northern Arizona University chapter of Psi Chi, the national honor society in psychology, in conjunction with the Psychology Club, are just several weeks from hosting the 2nd annual Arizona Psi Chi Undergraduate Research Convention, scheduled to take place on Friday, March 30 and Saturday, March 31, 2007. The convention, initiated last year at Arizona State University, is the only statewide forum in Arizona dedicated entirely to undergraduate research. This year’s convention at NAU promises to be a success with attendees and presenters from all three Arizona state schools.

The convention will be the result of the hard work over the last two semesters of a number of NAU students, including Psi Chi president Stephanie Byng, vice president Sarah Hailer, fundraising chair Alexander Davis, secretary Whitney Carnicom, treasurer Rebecca Sanders, social chair Audra Gentz, as well as Holly Augustine, Jane Berkman, Kevin Raso, and many others. Faculty members Andrew Gardner, Ann Huffman, and Derrick Wirtz have also been active in helping the students with the convention, which is possible due to the generous support of the Department of Psychology, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, the Northern Arizona Psychological Society, the Arizona Clinical Psychology Associates, and the many students who have helped with concessions and fundraising. Registration for the convention is required (see www.nau.edu/~psych for more details).

Below is the most recent program of events. Please note that three NAU faculty will be presenting key talks: Dr. Steven Barger will present his research on mood and health perceptions on Friday evening (7:00 p.m.), Dr. Larry Stevens will be presenting his research on brain/mind research (Saturday, 1pm), and Dr. Andy Walters will be giving a talk on the process of applying to and getting in to graduate school (Saturday, 2:15 pm). NAU projects in BLUE.

2nd Annual Psi Chi Arizona Undergraduate Research Convention

Friday, March 30, 2007
Location: Ballroom in Du Bois, Building #64

5:30-6:00 pm Poster Presentations Session I

6:00-7:00pm Welcome and Dinner
Menu: Italian Buffet w/ vegetarian options

7:00-7:45pm Opening Address
Dr. Steven D. Barger – Northern Arizona University
“If I’m Sad Am I Unhealthy? A Search for Induced Mood Influence on Health Perceptions”

7:45-8:30pm Poster Presentations Session II

Poster Presentations


Burger, B., Sharp, D., Walters, A., (NAU) “Here Comes the Bride, There Goes the Groom: Sexual Infidelity within Marriage”


Carnicom, W., Cluster, W., Powers, K., Funk, S., (NAU) A Comparison of In Class Versus Online Teacher Evaluations


Demars-Rote, M., Walters, A., (NAU) “Yeah, I’d love to hook up with you. Let me text my girlfriend and tell her I’ll be late: How the current technologies of text messaging, chat rooms, and MySpace.com change the nature of cheating.”

Finley, G., Moncher, C., (NAU) “Who is to blame: Me, You, or Us? The Role of Blame in Adjustment to Sexual Assault.”

Gilley, A., Wayment, H., (NAU) Forgiving and Helping A Transgressor: The Role of Gender, Perceived Similarity and Empathy”

Halley, S., (NAU) “Gender and Communication: Perceptions of Masculinity”


Mulgrew, J., Huffman, A., South Mountain Corporation, (NAU) “South Mountain Assessment”

O’Neil, A., (ASU) “Young Children’s Non-Representational Understanding of Knowing: A Test of Perceptual Access Reasoning”

Paredes, G., (ASU) “Predictions of Pain: Pain and Reactivity in Patients with Chronic Pain and a History of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

Pryor, Arandia, Bihl, Cano, Castro, Kwiecien, Rivas, (ASU) “Male Face Symmetry Preference in Normally Ovulating College Age Females”


Rumann, M., Blankenship, V., (NAU) “Alcohol Use or Abstinence, Expectancies, Drinking Contexts, and Negative and Positive experiences”


Sewell, M.I., McNielly, M.E., Dutton, E.C. (NAU) Are Crib Cards Helpful? A Laboratory Study
Sharp, D., Burger, B., Walters, A., (NAU) “Perceptions of Infidelity: Does Cheating Experience Affect One’s Attitude Toward Extra-dyadic Involvement?”


Schedule of Events: Saturday, March 31, 2007
Location: Fremont and Agassiz in du Bois, Building #64

Session A Undergraduate Research Presentations
10.00 Paredes, G., (ASU) “Predictions of Pain: Pain and Reactivity in Patients with Chronic Pain and a History of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.”
10:15 Hailey, S., (NAU) “Gender and Communication: Perceptions of Masculinity”

Session B Undergraduate Research Presentations
10:00 Carnicom, W., Cluster, W., Powers, K., Funk, S., (NAU) “A Comparison of In Class Versus Online Teacher Evaluations”
10:45 Clemente, C., (U of A) “The Psychiatric Duo of Tryptophan Depletion and Electroencephalographic Asymmetry as They Relate to State Like Changes In POMS scores in Depressed Individuals”

10:45-11:00 Short Break

SESSION A Symposium: “Psychology of Sexuality: Infidelity”
11:00 Sharp, D., Burger, B., Walters, A., (NAU) “Perceptions of Infidelity: Does Cheating Experience Affect One’s Attitude Toward Extra-dyadic Involvement?”

12:00-1:00 pm Lunch Break
Lunches provided by Convention

1:00-2:00 pm Invited Address
Dr. Larry Stevens – Northern Arizona University
“Don’t Just Change Your Mind; Change Your Brain, With Hypnosis: EEG, MRI, and Neural Synchrony Effects of Hypnotic Trance”.

2:00-2:15 Short Break

SESSION A Graduate School Presentation
2:15 – 3:15 Dr. Andrew Walters – Northern Arizona University “Preparation to Graduate School”

SESSION B Undergraduate Research Presentations
3:00 Pryor, Arandia, Bihl, Cano, Castro, Kwiecie, Rivas, (ASU) “Male Face Symmetry Preference in Normally Ovulating College Age Females”

3:15-3:45 Break

3:30-3:45 pm Judges will determine award recipients
3:45-4:00 pm Award Ceremony
Pass the torch to University of Arizona. They will hold the 2008 Psi Chi Convention

OPTIONAL
4:30-5:00 pm Psi Chi Initiation Ceremony in Fremont room

Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Conference
What does social and personality psychology have to do with Elvis Presley? “It depends”, is probably a good social psychological answer...but this year they had much in common as Memphis, Tennessee was the host city for this division’s (APA Division 8) annual conference. Many of the conference attendees had the chance to visit Graceland, the home Elvis Presley purchased for his parents. According to Heidi Wayment, “the home was surprisingly modest by
today’s standards and was like traveling in a time machine to the 60s and 70s.” However, the main attraction for those attending the conference were the presentations and the talks. The conference has grown exponentially in size since its inception 8 years ago and is always a treat for personality and social psychologists to attend. Of the nearly 3,000 attendees, about 60% were graduate students. This year, Derrick Wirtz and Heidi Wayment attended the conference and had the chance to present research and see their former students. Next year, the conference will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which should afford more students from NAU to attend! Below is a description of the research presented by Drs. Wirtz and Wayment with their current and former students.

**Should I Take Another Psychology Class? On-line Reactions, Recall, and Beliefs as Predictors of Students’ Course Choices** by Derrick Wirtz, Christie Scollon, Bryan Gest, Amanda Caldwell, Thomas Birchfield, and Alex Davis

Two types of measures are commonly used by psychologists to capture subjective experience: momentary (on-line) and retrospective reports. On-line measures assess an individual’s immediate reactions to an ongoing experience, while retrospective reports rely on an individual’s recall of a past event. Although on-line reports are potentially less prone to distortion, recent research suggests that recall measures may be better predictors of choice (Wirtz, Kruger, Scollon, & Dieper, 2003). The present research examines on-line and recalled experience in a naturalistic setting of interest to many psychologists: the classroom. Do students who report positive feelings during class recall the course positively afterward? To the extent that on-line and recalled experiences diverge, which better predicts students’ future course choices? Study 1 tracked an introductory psychology course longitudinally over one semester. Students’ expectations at the start of the semester, experiences during class throughout the semester, and recall at the end of the semester were measured, as well as beliefs about psychology and likelihood of taking future psychology courses. Study 2 followed several introductory psychology courses over a three-week period, measuring students’ reactions immediately following class along with their subsequent recall, beliefs, and desire to take additional psychology courses. Results of both studies suggested that the best predictor of students’ future course choices was not their experience measured during class, but their recall of the course, which was also a product of initial expectations. Interestingly, students’ beliefs about psychology as useful and relevant partially mediated the link between recall and future course selections.

**Can you pick a terrorist from a lineup? The syndrome perspective in perceptions of the perpetrators of mass violence** by Barbara Larsen & Derrick Wirtz

Movies, television and popular media portray the perpetrators of terrorism, genocide and mass violence as monstrous, socially deviant, morally bankrupt, and—most importantly—different from the rest of us in obvious ways. Yet this view of perpetrators as possessing some identifiable set of psychological characteristics, known as the syndrome perspective, has received little scientific support (Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006). Instead, the consensus of research to date is that no set of psychological characteristics adequately captures the heterogeneity present in the perpetrators of such crimes (Horgan, 2005). The current research examines whether the lay public exhibits a syndrome perspective and attempts to identify its psychological underpinnings. Participants were presented with vignettes describing a target low versus high in authoritarianism, adherence to societal norms, and obedience to authority. Next, participants rated the likelihood that the target would participate in acts of mass violence. Despite an absence of scientific evidence linking any of the three characteristics varied across targets to the propensity to commit such crimes, participants judged the target high in each trait as significantly less likely to become a perpetrator, consistent with a syndrome perspective. Further, while participants indicated greater surprise when the target high in each trait committed a hypothetical act of terrorism, they reported feeling safer when they could attribute the act to the target low in each trait, suggesting the belief that perpetrators fit an identifiable profile affords a psychological sense of safety.

**Motivational primacy among the individual, relational, and collective selves by Erin O’Mara, Lowell Gaertner & Heidi A. Wayment**

Research reveals the motivational primacy of the individual self (i.e., self as unique agent) over the collective self (i.e., self as group member), such that threat and enhancement elicit stronger reactions when directed to the individual than collective self (Gaertner, Sedikides, Vevea, & Iuzzini, 2002). The current research examined the positioning of the relational self (i.e., self as dyadic member) along this motivational hierarchy. Borrowing from research indicating a pervasive tendency to avoid threatening information, we examined whether persons are less willing to consider a threatening event as befalling their individual, relational, or collective self. We maximized the salience of a given self by having participants describe (a) themselves as a unique individual, (b) their most important ingroup, or (c) their most important dyadic relationship. Participants read an essay describing the difficulty suffered by a recent graduate of finding meaningful employment and subsequently wrote how that difficulty could befall (a) themselves (i.e., individual self), (b) another member of their most important ingroup (i.e., collective self), or (c) the partner of their most important dyad. Blind judges coded whether participants described how the event could befall the targeted self. Participants were more likely to describe how the negative event could befall the collective self than either their individual or relational self, and participants were equally unlikely to consider how the event could befall the latter two selves. These data suggest that the individual and relational selves share a similarly privileged motivational status above the collective self.

**NAU 2007-2008 Intramural Grant Awards**

Three NAU Psychology faculty will be carrying out summer research with the help of NAU’s Intramural Grant Funding program. Dr. **Ann Huffman** (left) will be working on a project related to work-life stress. Dr. **Lesley Lutes** (middle) will be working on her Get Active NAU program of research on diet, exercise, and lifestyle change, and Dr. **Heidi Wayment** (right) will be working on a collaborative grant with Dr. Bill Wisit (P.L., Health Professions), Dr. Bruce Sullivan (Religious Studies) and Dr. Meghan Warren (Health Professions) on a project examining the psychological and health correlates of Buddhist religious practices. All of the projects will involve undergraduate and/or graduate students.