

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2008

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From the Desk of the Department Chair

Dear Psychology majors, graduate students, and alumni:

Because staying in touch with all of you is important to us, we're going to be sending you a Psychology Department newsletter a couple of times a year from now on. In it, you'll find information about what's going on in the Psychology Department, new faculty, and changes to the major. I hope that you'll find it interesting, and that it will motivate you to keep in touch with us. We'd like to hear about what you're up to, and will include a column with news from you in future editions. Email any information that you'd like to have included to Teresa Hill teehill@wfu.edu

Those of you not currently in residence might be surprised by all of the new faces in the department. Lisa Kiang, Wayne Pratt, John Petrocelli, and Dustin Wood have joined us as new faculty, and Debbie Best, Bill Gordon, and Cecilia Solano have returned to us from administrative roles. We'll be highlighting the research of some of the new folks in each edition of the newsletter.

If you have any thoughts about other kinds of information that you would like to see in future editions, please feel free to get in touch with me and let me know. My email address is dagenbac@wfu.edu

Best regards,
Dale Dagenbach
Chair, Psychology Department



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ Fulbright recipient, Parissa Jahromi
- ◆ Meet faculty members Lisa Kiang & Wayne Pratt
- ◆ Faculty achievements and updates
- ◆ Meet the FYGS of '08
- ◆ Alumni News
- ◆ Send us your news!

A Fulbright Scholar from Our Ranks

We recently learned from Dr. Christy Buchanan that former student, Parissa Jahromi, B.A. '06, M.A. '08, is currently on a 10-month overseas appointment sponsored by the Fulbright program.

Parissa is studying at Utrecht University in the Netherlands with Dr. Wim Meeus.

We caught up with Parissa to ask her a few questions about her current research and how her time at Wake Forest prepared her for this stage in her life.

What made you decide to

apply for a Fulbright scholarship?

PJ: I had a couple of friends who got grants, and I thought it was the coolest opportunity to be able to travel and do research! I decided to apply after going to Singapore on a Wake Forest grant (the Richter scholarship) during the summer of 2007.

I loved the experience of traveling and learning about a different culture. After that trip, I made an appointment with Dr. Tom Phillips, the director of

scholarships at WFU, and he helped me navigate through the process of applying for the Fulbright.

What type of research are you currently conducting?

PJ: Dr. Meeus and his research group study adolescent identity development. One project of mine is to understand how they conceptualize and measure "identity," so I am reading their papers and attending research group meetings and presentations.

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Parissa Jahromi Interview continued from page 1



PARISSA JAHROMI AT THE TOP OF THE DOM TOWER IN UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS (LEFT) AND AT PARK GÜELL IN BARCELONA, SPAIN DURING A RECENT TRIP.

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I am also preparing to do some analysis regarding Dutch adolescent’s civic participation and civic attitudes. This preparation includes translating some of the codebooks of a huge research project from Dutch to English, and taking a course in structural equa-

tion modeling.

What advice do you have to other students that may want to apply for a Fulbright (or other research fellowships or study abroad programs)?

PJ: Find something that you are passionate about, dive into the topic and learn everything you can, and then learn how to communicate your passion, skills, and the potential contributions that your research could make in a proposal.

Also, surround yourself with supportive and knowledgeable people! I was lucky to have wonderful mentors and peers in the Wake Forest psychology department who challenged me and helped me to find the questions I want to ask and the vision to try to answer them.

What (if anything) do you think prepared you the most for where you are

now?

PJ: Throughout my education, I have been given a solid foundation in the “basics” such as writing and statistics. Having these tools has empowered me to think critically about the ideas of others and to form and communicate my own opinions.

If you could have done anything differently (in regard to your education) what would it have been?

PJ: I would have tried to be less shy, to speak up more in class, and to ask more questions! I could have taken better advantage of the expertise of those surrounding me.

“FIND SOMETHING THAT YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT, DIVE INTO THE TOPIC AND LEARN EVERYTHING YOU CAN.”
-PARISSA JAHROMI

Catching Up with the Faculty

It has been awhile since our last newsletter and we want to congratulate the following faculty members for the promotions they’ve received in recent years.

In 2005, Dr. Catherine Seta was promoted to Full Professor, and Dr. Janine Jennings was promoted to Associate Professor.

In 2008, Dr. Christy Buchanan was promoted to Full Professor, and Dr. Mike Furr was promoted to Associate Professor.

Other news from the faculty...

Dr. Deborah Best has returned to the department after serving as Dean of the College. In July, 2008, she was conferred with the title of Honorary Fellow of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP) in Bremen, Germany. Dr. Best was honored by the IACCP for her decades of contributions to the field of cross-cultural psychology both through research and academic service. The title of Honorary Fellow is the highest award bestowed by the IACCP.

Dr. Terry Blumenthal has been very busy publishing and presenting research at conferences. Dr. Blumenthal has collaborated not

only with faculty and students at WFU, but also with labs in Germany and Australia. In the past few months his work has been published in the journals *Psychopharmacology*, *Hormones and Behavior*, and *Psychophysiology*.

Dr. Blumenthal also has a paper in press at the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* with Dr. Lisa Kiang and an upcoming book chapter with alumnus Joseph Franklin in the book *Methods in Social Neuroscience*. He attended meetings for both the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (presenting a poster coauthored by alumni Kelly Beth Bowker & Joseph Franklin) the Society for Psychophysiological Research.

Dr. Will Fleeson has been named Kirby Faculty Fellow for 2008-2010. He was also recently elected to be a member-at-large for the Association for Research in Personality. In 2009, Dr.

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IACCP HONORARY FELLOWS DR. DEBORAH BEST AND DR. PETER SMITH WITH PAST PRESIDENT OF IACCP DR. SHALOM SCHWARTZ (CENTER).



New Faculty Faces

Dr. Lisa Kiang and Dr. Wayne Pratt both joined the Wake Forest faculty in 2006. We asked them to tell us a bit about themselves and what they enjoy about Wake Forest.

Prior to arriving at Wake Forest, Dr. Kiang received her Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of Denver and did a two-year postdoc at UCLA. During her time at UCLA she studied issues related to transitions, family processes, and mental health in ethnically, racially, and socio-economically diverse populations.

Dr. Kiang's current research focuses on the relationship between self and identity, social relationships, and culture. Of her research, Dr. Kiang said, "My work incorporates a positive approach to development by identifying protective aspects of ethnic or cultural identity." Her research has focused largely on



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- DR. LISA KIANG

adolescents from Asian, Latin American, and European American backgrounds. She is currently extending her

work to investigate cultural socialization and ethnic understanding in younger children.

Dr. Kiang enjoys discussing developmental and cultural issues in her classes, and recently taught a graduate seminar called "Self and Identity Development." She said she especially enjoys discussing controversial issues like racism and discrimination with her students, and when asked why, she said, "I like to shake things up a bit and encourage all students to think deeply about their own cultural experiences and identity development."

Dr. Pratt earned his PhD in psychology from the University of Utah where his concentration was in cognition and neural sciences where he used single-cell recordings to study foraging behaviors in rats. He then completed a postdoc in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison investigating the effects of different drugs on foraging behaviors and feeding.

Dr. Pratt's research has focused on animal models of cognition and behavior, bridging interests from motivation to learning. He is interested in how naturally-reinforcing stimuli influence learning in the mammalian brain. His current work is investigating the neural mechanisms that lead to overeating of pleasant foods. Dr. Pratt inquired, "For example, why do we 'find room' for pumpkin pie even when

we've already stuffed ourselves on the Thanksgiving turkey?"

Dr. Pratt has taught a number of classes during his time at Wake Forest including Research Methods, Learning Theory, Physiological Psychology, and a seminar on "Ethics in Scientific Research." He said that what he enjoys most about teaching at Wake Forest is



"I ENJOY...DIALOGUE WITH STUDENTS THAT CHALLENGE EVERYONE'S PRECONCEPTIONS, INCLUDING MY OWN."

- DR. WAYNE PRATT

the amount of interest and enthusiasm that his students bring to the classroom. Dr. Pratt added, "I enjoy...dialogue with students that challenge everyone's preconceptions, including my own."

When he is not working, Dr. Pratt enjoys spending time with his daughters, gardening when weather permits, and re-decorating his home. He is looking forward to his daughters soon being old enough for family hikes in the nearby Appalachian mountains.

Next time, meet Dr. John Petrocelli and Dr. Dustin Wood.

Catching Up with the Faculty continued...

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Fleeson will be stepping down as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Research in Personality* to begin his tenure as Associate Editor at the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Dr. Bill Gordon returned to the department this semester from his position

as Provost.

Dr. Erik Nofle, a post-doc in the department of psychology, will be presenting work done in collaboration with Dr. Fleeson at the upcoming meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP). The two will be co-chairing a symposium at the conference

called "Second generation questions in adult personality development."

Dr. Cecilia Solano returned to the department this semester from her position as Associate Dean of the Graduate School and Interim Dean of the Graduate School (2007-2008 only).

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WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOU! SEND US YOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE DOING FOR AN UPCOMING DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER. JUST EMAIL TERESA HILL AT [TEEHILL@WFU.EDU](mailto:teehill@wfu.edu).

Current Grad Student News: Meet the FYGS

We just wanted to take a moment to introduce the newest members of our department family, the first year graduate students. As you'll see, the FYGS are coming from a diverse set of schools.

Amanda Bowen joins us from Christopher Newport University in New Port News, VA and is working with Dr. Schirillo.

Brent Furl joins us from Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX and is working with Dr. Jennings.

Elizabeth Glenn joins us from Appalachian State in Boone, NC and is working

with Dr. Pratt.

Lori Gutierrez joined us from Florida State in Tallahassee, FL but has decided to pursue an applied M.A. in counseling elsewhere.

Molly Hensler and Jessica Wortman both join us from Furman University in Greenville, SC and are working with Dr. Wood

Paul Hutman joins us from Butler University in Indianapolis, IN and is working with Dr. Fleeson.

Mallory Nardin, B.A. '06, is no stranger to Wake Forest, and is working with Dr. Best.

Juliette McNamara joins us

from Indiana University in Bloomington, IN and is working with Dr. Buchanan.

Carly Parnitzke joins us from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is working with Dr. Furr.

Christine Raines joins us from just down the road at Duke University and is working with Dr. Seta.

John Statzer joins us from Purdue University, in West Lafayette, IN and is working with Dr. Petrocelli.

Next time we'll spotlight the SYGS.



2008's FIRST YEAR GRADUATE STUDENTS. FRONT ROW: WORTMAN, HENSLE, GUTIERREZ, RAINES, BOWEN, AND STATZER. BACK ROW: FURL, NARDIN, PARNITZKE, MCNAMARA, GLENN, AND HUTMAN.

Alumni Updates

For all of our newsletters, we want to include news from our alumni. For the re-launch of our newsletter, we asked the faculty to report the status of some of the alumni. Here's what we learned.

Heather (Roth) Bailey, M.A. '05, is completing her dissertation at Kent State University in Ohio. She has upcoming publications in the journals *Memory and Cognition* and *Psychology and Ag-*

ing.

Kris Bianchi, M.A. '05, and Tim Fratto, B.A. '01, are both working at a neuropsychological assessment practice. Bianchi is completing clinical training and Fratto is currently a post-doc.

Former Honor's student, Kaitlin Blackstone, B.A. '08, is a research associate in a child clinical neuropsychology laboratory in Washington, D.C. and plans to apply to

PhD programs in Clinical Neuropsychology.

Erika Carlson, M.A. '08, won the 2007-2008 Gordon Melson Award for the Outstanding Masters Student here at Wake Forest. Carlson is currently working on her PhD in the social/personality program at Washington University in St. Louis, MO. Carlson also won the "Best Poster Award" for research that she presented at the 2008 Annual

Meeting of the Association for Research in Personality.

Joseph Franklin, B.A. '05, is currently in the clinical psychology PhD program at UNC-Chapel Hill. Franklin recently won the "Student Research Award" from the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.

Murray McNiel, B.A. '92, M.A. '01, is working as a post-doc at the Durham VA hospital.