Students enjoy the PGSA-sponsored tailgating event outside Gordon Palmer for the Alabama vs. Mississippi State game.

MEET THE NEWSLETTER TEAM:

Morgan Eichorst
Clinical Liaison

Allyson Phillips
Experimental

Beth DiNapoli
Editor

It is our goal to inform the psychology graduate program about departmental activities, training workshops, personal successes, lab projects and much more. We hope that you enjoy the content. Please continue to provide us information and pictures that we can share with everyone.
Outstanding Dissertation by a Graduate Student

My dissertation, *The objectivity demand: Experiences and behaviors of psychologists in capital case evaluations*, was a three-part, mixed-method study examining how cognitive biases among forensic psychologists influence the outcome of death-penalty cases. I received an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant to complete this work. The results indicated bias is an issue worthy of concern in forensic psychology. Thus, it appears important for the field to investigate effective bias management strategies and to teach new practitioners to become aware of and minimize the effects of potential biases in their work.

Outstanding Thesis by a Graduate Student

I am humbled and honored to receive the outstanding thesis award. Titled “Children’s Selective Attention in Contextual Cueing”, my thesis suggested that both younger (5-6 year old) and older (9-10 year old) children were able to demonstrate significant implicit learning of spatial information (contextual cuing effects) as well as adults. Meanwhile, different from older children and adults, younger children’s expression of such learning disappeared if they also needed to selectively attend to some information. Therefore selective attention modulates contextual cueing across different ages.

Jennifer also won the A&S Outstanding Thesis Award!

Outstanding Teaching by a Doctoral Student

I just accepted a new job in Aug as asst. prof of psychology at Stillman where I am able to do what I love and am passionate about: teach! I am currently teaching intro to psych, child psych, educational psych, and history and systems. I am finishing my dissertation too. My teaching experience at UA includes intro to psych, and helping Steve Prentice-Dunn with implementing his idea of teaching recitation sections of a large section of psychology. I taught two recitation sections. I have also taught in human development, teaching intro and senior level writing courses on administrating child care programs, including summer sessions and an online course. I am passionate about teaching and believe in trying to be very interactive, mixing up lectures with activities, class discussion, reflection papers and group work to maximize learning.
Outstanding Research by a Master's Student

The focus of my research is health disparities among older adults. More specifically, my research interests lay in substance abuse related health disparities among older adults. However, I have contributed to a number of health disparities related projects on a variety of topics. Research related to health disparities has important implications both in the research and clinical realms. In particular, health disparities research has implications for treatment, prevention, and public policy for minority older adults. The overarching goals of my health disparities related research is to reduce health disparities among older adults and thus improve the mental health and quality of life of minority older adults.

Outstanding Research by a Dissertation Student

Broadly, my research involves exploring the nature of the stress process in older adults dealing with chronic illness. With the mentorship of great research advisors and the help of many peers, I've employed both quantitative and qualitative research methodology to examine a salient aspect of the stress process - meaning-based coping. Essentially, I'm interested in discovering how people with chronic illness remain resilient in the face of illness-related adversity.

Outstanding Service by a Graduate Student

Looking back over my life, I see the hand of many people helping me at every stage. I know I could not be where I am today if not for these people who have been there with their acts of service to help me. I try to follow their example and serve others as they go through their journey. I have participated in such service both within the psychology department and at the university level. I have also participated in community service activities, such as the Big Brothers and Big Sisters community program. At the University level, I have served in numerous capacities, including serving as a Graduate Student Ambassador and Graduate Student mentor in the Tide Together mentoring program.

Distinguished Teaching Fellowship

Each year the College of Arts & Sciences recognizes two Distinguished Teaching Fellows. The Distinguished Teaching Fellows serve for 3 years on a teaching advisory board to mentor faculty, provide advice on the assessment of teaching, and help improve the college's overall teaching mission. This year, one of our Psychology faculty, Dr. Ansley Gilpin, received this award. She will serve as a Distinguished Teaching Fellow from 2012 to 2015. She is humbled to win this award considering the incredible quality of instructors in the Psychology department and across the college.
Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Alexa Tullett,
Social Psychology

Favorite Food: Ethiopian. She orders the veggie plate.
Best Halloween costume: The Microsoft Office paperclip
Favorite place in Tuscaloosa: The Alcove
On a scale of 1-10 (1 being awful), where do you rate yourself at dancing: 2
Last book she started but didn’t finish: Anna Karenina, by Tolstoy
Describe your research in 10 words or less: Okay--how people make sense of the world and other people.
In High School, what subject did you love and which did you hate: I loved English. And hated--we had to take this class called ‘Careers and Civics.’ I hated that. It might be a Canadian thing.
Why Psychology?: I think it’s exciting to be studying something that’s interesting to talk about with anyone. I like doing something that it seems like other people care about.
What is your most memorable graduate school experience: Probably a conference in Berlin that I attended with my lab in my second year. It was memorable because of the bonding that happened within our lab and with our advisor. After that trip, I liked grad school more.

If you weren’t doing this, what might you be doing?: I have no idea. Let’s say I’d be an architect.
Who do you admire?: Anyone who can admit their theory was wrong. Inside or outside academia.

“Use grad school as a time to learn to be a good researcher, instead of trying to prove you are a good researcher.”

Dr. Matt Jarrett
Child Psychology

Favorite Food: Thai or Indian - lately I’ve been digging Mr. Chen’s
Best Halloween costume: He-man (as a kid)
Favorite place in Tuscaloosa: Sokol Park
On a scale of 1-10 (1 being awful), where do you rate yourself at dancing: 6
Last book he started but didn’t finish: Manhood for Amateurs by Michael Chabon
Describe your research in 10 words or less: The study of assessment and treatment of children with ADHD, anxiety, or both.
Why Psychology?: My mom is in social work so I had summer jobs in camps working with kids with special needs. In college, my interest was more in careers that were lucrative. After realizing I wasn’t really interested in those types of careers, I took some psychology classes and became interested. These topics tied back to my work with the kids at camp. I got involved in research and it solidified my interest in clinical work.

“What take time to think about professional development. You spend so much time doing things in graduate school. It’s important to take time to think about what you like and possible career paths.”

What is your most memorable graduate school experience: Friendships. It’s important to pursue that network of friends and those people are still some of my best friends now. Of course, the big milestones—thesis and dissertation defenses—are memorable as well. You don’t get a lot of those rewarding moments throughout graduate school.

If you weren’t doing this, what might you be doing?: Within the field—working in a medical center doing more clinically focused work. Outside the field, well, I was a pretty serious violinist in high school. So maybe something with music performance.
The Allen Lab comprises students of various interests, joined by their passion for older adults, science, and mustaches. Major lab projects focus on topics such as palliative care, family caregiving, religious coping, diversity, social support, and chronic illness. Grant is in the data collection stage of his dissertation studying religious coping, while Lisa is conceptualizing hers. Casey is excited to begin data collection for her dissertation regarding mental health care utilization in a palliative care population. Morgan is in the final stages of data analysis for her thesis, while undergraduate Senior Honors student Kristi is knee-deep in data collection for her project! Fearlessly led by Dr. Becky Allen -- winner of the Best Faculty Mentor Award (as voted by students in the Allen Lab) -- this bunch loves early morning meetings, strong coffee, and the many laughs they share.

The members of the Chronopsychology Lab are broadly interested in examining the role of time (chrono) in relation to various psychological and health outcomes. A current study is examining daily behavioral circadian rhythms (e.g., the time we get up, first go outside, first social interaction, meals, etc.) in association with various outcomes (e.g., sleep and mood). Interestingly, these rhythms differ among age groups. Older adults tend to be more regular in daily patterns of behavior. This increased regularity may serve a protective function to buffer against age-related degradation of systems such as the sleep-wake cycle. The lab is using daily-process research designs and multi-level modeling analyses to examine fluctuations within-individuals that occur over time.

The Scognotions focus on psychotherapy, late-life depression, social support, cognition, and mental health and aging. Dr. Scogin and Dr. Lichstein have an NIH funded (R34) exploratory project investigating the feasibility of delivering video conferencing cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) for insomnia and depression to older adults in rural Alabama. They have also received a seed grant from the Center for Mental Health and Aging (CMHA) to deliver the same protocol to older adults with sleep apnea, insomnia, and depression. Andrew and Ernest are collecting data for their dissertation, while Beth is awaiting IRB approval to begin hers. Mike, Adriana and Lisa have taken advantage of Forrest’s PEARL dataset for their thesis projects. The lab also enjoys lab sports and adventures, such as walleyball, canoeing, and bowling.
The Parmelee Lab is currently launching an R01 project that was awarded to Dr. Parmelee earlier this year. This 5-year, multi-site experience sampling method project focuses on older adults suffering from osteoarthritis of the knee(s) and how this affects their everyday functioning. The team is also launching a 4-year intervention to improve job motivation among certified nursing assistants in long-term care. Aside from these projects, the Parmelee lab focuses on a variety of aging interests ranging from quality of care in nursing homes, and staffing roles in long-term care settings, to within-day and between-day pain/affect variability. Karolina Zakoscielna is in the data analysis stage of her thesis, in which she is looking at what affects job satisfaction amongst Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) in long-term care settings. Jordan Williams is working on his first-year project in which he is examining daily variation in perceived health and depression among nursing home residents.

The Kim Aging and Health Disparities (KAHD) Lab conducts research on racial and ethnic disparities in mental health and mental health service use among older adults. The KAHD lab has recently completed several major projects examining (1) the role of geography and race/ethnicity in mental health service use among older adults, (2) racial/ethnic differences in the relation between body mass index and self-rated mental health among older adults, (3) health disparities grants funded by National Institute on Aging, (4) racial/ethnic disparities in diabetes care among older adults, and (5) the effect of culture and language on measurement equivalence of mental health screening tools. Papers generated from these completed projects have been published in premiere journals in the field of gerontology. The KAHD lab students have published a total of 12 peer-reviewed journal articles in 2012. The KAHD lab has a total of 9 presentations at the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) annual meeting in November 2012.

The Crowther Lab is conceptually grounded in life course and ecological perspectives and focuses on four topics concerning diversity and aging: (1) diversity and aging; (2) intergenerational family structures; (3) the role of religion and spiritually in the health outcomes of older adults; and (4) rural mental health.

The Snow Lab has been applying for internships, enjoying a sabbatical, and writing manuscripts. A more detailed update and picture will be included in the next newsletter.
The **Intellectual Disability Lab**'s main research focus is the cognitive development of individuals with intellectual disability. Currently, they are working on a 5-year NIH-funded grant examining the cognitive predictors of language impairment in Down syndrome. The long-term objective of this study is to illuminate the role of implicit learning in producing the language impairments associated with Down syndrome. In addition to this project, Susan Loveall is currently conducting data on her dissertation, which examines the home literacy environment and reading skills of individuals with Down syndrome. Allyson Phillips is developing her dissertation, which will compare various aspects of parenting in parents of children with intellectual disability and parents of typically developing children. Gayle Graham is working on her first-year project, where she is analyzing the types and amount of language intervention individuals with intellectual disability have received.

In **Ed Merrill's Lab** students are progressing through several milestones. Megan is collecting data for her dissertation titled "The Effects of Classification on Teacher and Parent Interpretations of the Cognitive Performance of Children with Intellectual Disability"; Allison is collecting data for her thesis titled "Finding the refrigerator and the oven in the kitchen: Goal oriented search in contextual cueing"; and Zach is working on his "First Year Project". Other projects underway include studies of the development of gender differences in wayfinding and its precursors, the automatic processing of spatial relations, and priming and attention effects in implicit spatial learning.

The **Knowledge In Development (KID) Lab**'s main area of interest is in children's cognitive development, specifically in the development of their executive functions and understanding of fantasy versus reality. Last spring, together with John Lochman, Caroline Boxmeyer, and Jason DeCaro, and their students, our lab wrapped up a year-long intervention study with two local Head Start preschools. This study examined the changes in behavior, thinking, and feelings of children (and their families) as they prepare to make the transition to kindergarten. The experimental classroom received the PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) curriculum in addition to their existing curriculum, and parents received Coping Power parent support and education. Jillian is currently on the job hunt and busy analyzing the data from her dissertation project--Project ImPACT, a parent focused intervention with young children with autism. This project explores the importance of mothers’ scaffolding during children’s play. Melissa defended her thesis last May, which examined children's negative interactions with imaginary companions. She is actively planning her dissertation, which she hopes will involve examining the causal implications between having an imaginary companion and the various cognitive/social/emotional benefits associated with this type of pretend play.
**Children’s Behavior in Triadic Situations:** This study examines how three teens work together as a small group. One challenge that all small groups face is that coordinating three-way interaction is much more difficult than two-way interaction. At times, coalitions form and one partner can feel left out or threatened by the closer relationship of the remaining two. Most of the time these feelings are transient and easily dismissed, but past theorizing has suggested that this is not always the case, particularly when one member of the group has fragile self-esteem or is prone to jealousy. In these instances, social interaction can be difficult, feelings can be hurt easily, and the group must work more diligently to include everyone equally to be successful. These ideas have seldom been tested empirically however, and the personal and activity circumstances that contribute to successful and unsuccessful triadic interaction are poorly understood. This study addresses this gap. This project is funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation and the Institute for Social Science Research. Jeffrey Parker, PhD, is the PI. Research personnel include Blake Nielsen, M.A., Megan Malcolm, Hwaheun Kim, and Kristina McDonald, PhD.

**Clinical Child Labs**

The Salekin lab is involved in studying the etiology and intervention of callous-unemotional traits in youth in correctional facilities. The lab is also interested in the study of developmental maturity in adolescents and amenability to treatment. The studies currently going on in the lab include examining motivation in juvenile delinquents and the emotional processes of psychopathy. Senior lab member, Kim Sokolowski, is developing her dissertation investigating improving comprehension of Miranda Rights among juveniles. Liz Adams recently conducted a study examining the ability of callous youth to recognize emotional expression in others on a multimorph emotional expression task. Xinying Ang is currently completing an in-depth study on the emotional processing of psychopathic individuals. Emily MacDougall is looking at the developmental maturity of adolescent offenders that includes the use of a physiological measurement of maturity. Natalie Harrison is developing her thesis proposal investigating cortisol variability among juvenile delinquents with callous and unemotional traits who either have extensive or minimal conviction histories.

The McDonald Lab | Dr. Kristina McDonald and Chris O’Brien

A more detailed update and picture of the McDonald Lab will be included in the next newsletter.

The ADHD and Anxiety Program studies the assessment and treatment of children with ADHD and childhood anxiety disorders. Research projects include evaluating a computerized working memory training program for Children with ADHD and anxiety, ADHD symptoms and functioning in undergraduates, neuropsychological changes in response to medication treatment, and neurophysiology of children with and without ADHD.
Announcements and Reminders

**WHAT:** UA SAFE ZONE TRAINING  
**WHO:** ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS, FACULTY, & STAFF  
**WHEN:** NOV. 30TH, 9AM-12PM  
**WHERE:** GORDON PALMER 351

**WHAT:** CLINICAL WORKSHOP SERIES  
**WHO:** ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS, FACULTY, & STAFF  
**WHEN:** DEC. 7TH, 12PM-3PM  
**WHERE:** GORDON PALMER 351

The Lochman Lab has many exciting new and ongoing projects. For her dissertation, Sara Stromeyer developed new measures, conducted a pilot study, and is currently busy collecting in-home data, to examine social-cognitive biases of aggressive children and parents. Alberto Jimenez is working on coding archival physiological data for his dissertation, to examine the relationships among parental involvement, temperamental traits, and emotional regulation. Meghann Kelly and Casey Dillon are rapidly coding and scoring an abundance of sociometric data for their thesis projects. Meghann will be looking at children with an inflated self-view and aggressive subtypes, while Casey is examining how children’s problem-solving is related to positive outcomes. Cameron Powe is conceptualizing her thesis, which will examine parental protective factors and deficits in children's implicit learning. Finally, Megan Crisler (an adopted lab member) is exploring how emotion regulation differs between typically developing and ASD toddlers. She has created an observational measure and is currently collecting and analyzing data.

Furthermore, following completion of the most recent Coping Power intervention trial, staff and students are busy coding videos of intervention sessions, as well as managing longitudinal follow-up data. Through the Center for the Prevention of Youth Behavior Problems, interdisciplinary faculty, staff, and students and colleagues at other institutions are collaborating on a number of publications. The Center has just received a new grant from NIDA to develop and examine the feasibility of an Internet component (including ‘Captain Judgment’ videos) to create a hybrid and more efficient version of Coping Power.

During this Thanksgiving season, on behalf of all the students, the PGSA would like to extend its thanks and appreciation to all faculty. We appreciate your mentorship. We would also like to thank the staff. We recognize the hard work you all put in and we appreciate you all. Students, please share your thanks and appreciation with your faculty and staff when you see them. They work very hard to help us achieve our goals.
 Recent Student Publications


**Student Poster Awards**
