SPRING 2018

Research/Teaching Matters

In the Department of Psychology, we are committed to advancing research in psychological science, particularly in the areas of affective, child clinical, and developmental psychology. Our Department is committed to developing the next generation of leaders in psychological science through teaching and mentoring. Faculty from across our Department bring psychology to life on research teams, in classrooms, and through applied experiences. Together, faculty teach and mentor more than 500 majors, hundreds of minors, and graduate students in three programs.

We are delighted to announce that five new faculty will be joining us to advance our research and teaching goals.

In September 2018, we will be joined by:

- Paige Lloyd, Assistant Professor. Graduating from Miami University with a PhD in Social Psychology, her research investigates the determinants and consequences of person perception with an emphasis on implications for social inequality and discrimination. She will contribute to the Affective, Social, and Cognitive graduate program by bringing expertise in intergroup relations, social inequality, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, face and body perception, and interpersonal sensitivity (such as lie detection, pain detection, smile authenticity, emotion recognition).

- Dr. Erika Manczak, Assistant Professor. Dr. Manczak received her PhD in Clinical Psychology from Northwestern University before taking up a postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford University. Her research examines the biological and psychological mechanisms through which important social relationships during childhood and adolescence confer risk for mental and physical health disorders. She will join the Child Clinical graduate program and SEED Center, applying her expertise in developmental psychopathology, biological embedding of social experiences,
depression in parents, children, and adolescents, parent-child relationships, psychoimmunology, and mental and physical health comorbidity.

• Dr. Michelle Rozenman, Assistant Professor. Dr. Rozenman has been an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine since 2016. She received her PhD from the Joint Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology at San Diego State University and University of California, San Diego. Her research centers on understanding processes that underlie anxiety in children and adolescents in order to develop theoretically and practically efficient interventions. Dr. Rozenman will contribute to the Child Clinical graduate program, bring expertise in youth anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder, cognitive and psychophysiological processes underlying anxiety, and intervention development and implementation in health settings.

• Daniel Storage, Teaching Assistant Professor. Finishing his doctorate in developmental psychology from the University of Illinois, he brings experience teaching a variety of introductory and advanced courses in general psychology, child psychology, research methods, statistics. To this teaching role, he will bring his expertise in stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, gender, racial bias, under-representation of women and African Americans in higher education, and improving psychological methods and replicability.

In September 2019, Dr. Jenalee Doom will join us in after she wraps up her postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Michigan Center for Human Growth and Development. She received her PhD from the University of Minnesota in Child Psychology. Dr. Doom’s research focuses on the biological and behavioral mechanisms by which childhood stress, such as maltreatment and poverty, influences mental and physical health across the lifespan. She will contribute to the Developmental graduate program as well as the SEED Research Center, applying her expertise in developmental psychopathology, developmental health psychology, stress physiology, early adversity and trauma, resilience, nutrition, and cardiometabolic health.

Diversity Matters

By Kimberly Chiew, PhD and Maggie O’Reilly Treter
Assistant Professor and Graduate Student

Throughout a tumultuous 2017, issues of gender equity and disparity have been featured front and center in public conversation and the media, cumulating in Time magazine naming the Silence Breakers – those who brought several high-profile cases of sexual harassment into the spotlight – as their Persons of the Year. While recent news events have brought gender issues to the forefront, the work of promoting gender equity and inclusion remains ongoing.

The Gender Issues in Science (GIS) discussion group was formed in Fall 2017 in DU’s Psychology Department. Inspired by similar informal organizations at other institutions including Rutgers University and Duke University, our goal is to create a supportive community for professional development and the promotion of inclusion. As a group, we discuss gender issues in academia, including the benefits, challenges, and skills required of being a woman in science; the experiences and challenges of transgender and non-binary individuals in science; and the contributions that individuals of all genders
can offer towards building a scientific community that is inclusive and welcoming to all. In part, the GIS group is intended as a response to the “leaky pipeline” situation in academia, wherein women earn more than 50% of associate, bachelor, master’s, and doctoral degrees across academic disciplines, but only 32% of full professors are female. Additionally, women face a consistent gap in pay and resources relative to male counterparts. As a group, we aim to respond to this discrepancy by educating ourselves about gender issues in psychology and science more broadly, generating productive dialogue about these issues, and identifying potential actions we can take to promote gender inclusion locally and in the broader scientific community.

Creation of the GIS group has been met with enthusiasm and interest in the department among trainees and faculty alike. As a group, we’ve held productive discussion around important topics including unconscious bias in the workplace and in our own perceptions, as well as potential intervention approaches to combat these biases. Relevant readings intended for both an academic and broad readership are discussed. We are looking forward to discussing additional topics at upcoming meetings, including parenthood and family issues, leadership dynamics, disclosure, and the role of gender identity. In addition to these conversations, we’re excited to be developing programming to build professional skills such as effective communication and negotiation, as well as identifying potential discussion speakers from DU and the broader community and inviting them to share their experiences with us.

While the sources of gender disparity are complex and solutions are not simple, the GIS group is excited to be establishing a space where members of the department community can discuss these issues, gain support from one another, and identify concrete strategies for promoting gender inclusion. We welcome all department members to join us and are passionate about advancing a professional environment where individuals of all genders can thrive in science!


Major Matters

By Kateri McRae and Julia Dmitrieva
Associate Professors

The annual Psychology Department Picnic and Awards ceremony (held this year on May 18) is a festive way to celebrate the impressive accomplishments of our undergraduate and graduate students. The day begins with a picnic that is co-hosted by Psi Chi (the honors society in psychology), the Psychology Club, and the Department of Psychology. The following awards ceremony celebrates many achievements, include recognizing undergraduate students for excellence in academic achievement, research involvement, and departmental citizenship. In addition, a handful of named scholarships and prizes are awarded. Graduate students are recognized for excellent performance in teaching (both as an instructor and teaching assistant) and service to the department, and named awards honor graduate students who have published exceptional research papers in peer-reviewed journals.
The day will culminate with the senior honor students presenting results of their year-long research journey. Each year, a set of dedicated seniors set out to conduct a research project and write a senior honors thesis. The following is the list of this year’s students and their presentations:

- Bryn Babbitt, “Kids and the Empathy Gap”
- Hannah Bibbo, “Commitment Levels in Non-Monosexual Couples”
- Marnier LeBlanc, “Perceived Trust and Morality”
- Michael Mahanna, “Do Spatial Associations of Gender Matter? Thinking about Gender Interferes with Mathematical Reasoning”
- Sophie Marsh, “Teacher-Child Interactions, Learning Behaviors, and Task Performance in Preschool Children”
- Jahla Osborne, “Processing Speed & Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: Understanding the Influence of this Cognitive Skill on Functional Impairment”
- Carlyn Scheu, “Sleep-Related Pathways to Poor Health in Survivors of Intimate Partner Abuse”
- Maddie Schmidt, “Pregnant Women with Histories of Adverse Childhood Experiences, Stress, and Trauma and their Attributions About Their Unborn Child”
- Marie Spence, “Aspirations & Obstacles: Finding Ways to Desist”
- Ali Watson, “The Role of Metacognition in Interoception”

Alumni Matters

By Dana McMakin
Psychology PhD, Class of 2008

As a clinical scientist and cognitive neuroscientist with a dual appointment in a university and hospital setting, I can summarize my career identity as a Jack-of-All-Trades and a Master-of-None. I would have it no other way. The rush of being humbled by how much there is to know, and the subsequent satisfaction I derive from plodding up steep learning curves is what drives me. Beyond the exceptional training I received in DU’s clinical science program, a vital ingredient to my career trajectory and continued enthusiasm for my work was shaped by my mentor.

My mentor (2001-2008) was one of DU’s finest, Dr. Stephen Shirk. Following my recent transition from a medical school to an arts and sciences department, I am now mentoring graduate students for the first time in my career. When I don’t know what to do, I pause and play the game, “What-Would-Stephen-Do?” Every time I play this game, I smile. I smile because the memories I have of Stephen’s mentorship are centered around kindness, displayed by his unwavering enthusiasm, support, availability and good humor.

When I try to emulate Stephen’s kindness with student mentees, I get stuck. Channeling the unconditional kindness of Stephen is not only difficult, but I also fear that I will be perceived as a pushover, or that I will fail to give my students the critical feedback they need to succeed. These fears
are wrong. Because when I pause again and play the “What-Would-Stephen-Do?” game a bit longer, I can see clearly that kindness was the essential vehicle through which Stephen delivered some of the most exacting, brilliant and productive scientific feedback of my career.

By providing such a generously kind environment, Stephen allowed me and my peers to explore new ideas safely, to challenge and be challenged, and to dare to seek new solutions to old problems. My comfort today in working across disciplines and settings is undoubtedly shaped by this early mentoring experience.

We are living in a polarized time when our nation and our world could benefit from more kindness. Perhaps one lesson we can all take from the legacy of Dr. Stephen Shirk, who retires this year, is to view kindness in academics and beyond not as an adversary to critical feedback and progress, but as the social lubricant that can push us all to explore our beliefs more deeply, challenge ourselves and others, and find new pathways for progress.