

Teaching Award Honors Dr. Wilson



In 2013, the Department presented the inaugural C. Chrisman Wilson Memorial Award for Graduate Student Teaching in Psychology.

The Award honors the memory of our colleague Chris Wilson, who died July 25, 2011. Chris was a core member of the faculty for 30 years. A gifted lecturer, Chris taught Abnormal Psychology to nearly every major during. Chris also served as a core member of our APA-accredited doctoral program in School Psychology, which included teaching courses such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Practicum Supervision, as well as serving as Director from 1992-2004. A consummate teacher, he passionately kept his courses engaging and continued to create new offerings.

We presented the inaugural awards to Elin Grissom and Wayne Hawley.

During her doctoral training at Tulane, Elin assisted with lab courses in Psychopharmacology and Behavioral Endocrinology. She also independently taught Neuroanatomy Laboratory and Neuroscience Capstone. Her clarity and quiet patience helped students grapple with challenging material. Elin currently is a post-doctoral fellow in the laboratory of Dr. Jill Daniel.

Wayne also assisted with lab courses in Psychopharmacology and Behavioral Endocrinology. In addition to independently teaching Neuroscience Capstone, Wayne taught the popular Brain and Behavior course. An effective communicator with an easy sense of humor, Wayne established himself as a fine teacher. Wayne currently is a post-doctoral fellow at Syracuse University .

Hands on Psychological Science

By Thomas Hebert



In the Fall 2013, the Department launched a laboratory component to PSYC1000, taught by Dr. Thomas Hebert. Enrolling 7 students, this lab section employed hands-on activities in methods and techniques of

scientific inquiry as they are utilized by Psychologists. In so doing, the lab reinforced theories presented in lecture. After learning how both research and teaching activities with animals must be approved by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), students learned to train rats in a water maze to find a hidden platform. They also observed the effects of steroid hormones on sex behavior in female rats, measured the effects of caffeine on activity in an open-field maze, and assessed the effects of valium on anxiety in an elevated-plus maze. To reinforce an understanding of
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My retirement & yours: A matter of now

By Terry Christenson



After 38 years in the Psychology Dept, what have I learned about human behavior? What strikes me most is the work of the Nobel Laureate, Daniel Kahneman, and what he termed the "boundaries" to our rationality. This refers to the psychological biases that limit our abilities to make the most rational decisions. Let's get practical and

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Undergraduate Awards

Arnold Gerall Prize in Neuroscience
Elizabeth Hargroder

Rosa Cahn Hartman Prize in Psychology
Nicolette Guillou

**The Anne M. McPherson Memorial
Student Award**
Erin Albert

The Senior Scholar in Psychology
Carolyn Kaufman

**The Barbara E. Moely Award for
Psychology in the Public Interest**
Rebeka Cianci

Aaron Hartman Medal in Psychology
Sophia Jeanne Roggeveen

Graduate Awards

Robert E. Flowerree Summer Research Fellowships

David Doyle, Heather Henderson, Emily Shaffer, Caroline Tipler, Tara Van Bommel, Jorge Verlenden

The C. Chrisman Wilson Memorial Award for Graduate Student Teaching in Psychology

Elin Grissom and Wayne Hawley

On retirement... (continued from p. 1)

talk about biases in relation to the performance of your existing (or future) retirement portfolio..

It is not surprising that the average investor has difficulty beating the market. Performance is influenced by market forces and by our own psychology. First, consider cognitive dissonance, that uncomfortable feeling when one is faced with conflicting beliefs. We all want to do well in the market but many of us don't think we have the skill or knowledge to do so. Instead of studying the market, we may ignore our portfolio, and how could one expect fruit from a tree without ever visiting the orchard? Or, we could turn our portfolio over to a "professional" manager, believing that they are expert and can make our portfolio grow. In reality, this manager will charge fees and may or may not be good at their trade. Either way, many investors don't know what they are invested in or how they are doing against a common benchmark, like the S&P 500. Ignorance is not the best strategy for success at any endeavor.

Consider also the familiarity bias, which leads us to feel comfortable with the familiar. For the investor, this might mean placing your retirement money in your company's retirement program. After all, it's a good company, maybe a place where your father worked. Placing all of your eggs in one basket can be very risky, as many Enron retirees found out the hard way.

Then there is the endowment effect, the tendency to overvalue an item because you own it. Say you buy X company for \$10/share. It goes down- to \$9, to \$8, to \$5- and then you start to panic. On the way down, you've been thinking that this stock is certainly worth at least

what I paid for it and probably more, because I am a good investor and know how to pick stocks. Here we interface with the "I am above average" bias. To sell now, at this low price, means admitting failure and I can't do that because I'm a really good investor. This bias might help bolster the ego but it can be devastating to the portfolio. Application of a simple stop loss will help combat this combo of biases.

Let's recognize the bias of pattern seeking. We strive to see causal relationships in order to predict future events. We do so in investing, too. You are watching a stock go up on Monday, and up on Tuesday and up yet again on Wednesday. Surely, you think to yourself, if I buy it on Thursday, I will make a ton of money. Without examining the company's chart for price history as well as volume, this might be called buying high. The profit takers could set in and then you've lost money.

Your brother-in-law has a hot tip. Invest all you've got in company X and you will triple your money in a week-guaranteed. You might think that he's practically family, so he wouldn't lead you astray. But be very careful. Neuroscience is suggesting that our brains may be attuned anticipation, maybe even responding more to it than the actual delivery of what is anticipated. In other words, recognize greed and proceed cautiously.

Maintaining a healthy retirement portfolio requires knowledge of the market and knowledge of oneself and the biases that can lead us astray. Happy investing.

Dr. Christenson is retiring at the end of December 2013.

Faculty Accolades

Promotion to Associate Professor

Lisa Molix

Society for Research in Child Development Award for Distinguished Contributions

Michael Cunningham

Student Organization Advisor of the Year

Beth E. F. Wee

Undergraduate Student Government Faculty Member of the Year

Beth E. F. Wee

Outstanding Faculty Member

Kappa Alpha Theta

Beth E. F. Wee

What I did with my Psychology BS:

Careers in Forensic Psychologyand Business

By Vivian Jones, BS 2012



I graduated from Tulane in May of 2012 with a major in Psychology and minor in Gender and Sexuality Studies. The following August I started my masters program in forensic psychology at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia right on the outskirts of Washington DC.

Tulane very much prepared me for the road in achieving my masters in that I went into this program having a solid foundation on statistical analysis, different psychological assessments, and the cognitive and behavioral psychology of humans as they develop. Although Forensic Psychology is vastly different from the course material in Tulane's curriculum, I have such a vast pool of knowledge to pull from which allows me to be a positive contribution to the forensic psychology community.

This past summer I interned with a retired federal agent, Mr. Kevin Peters, who now runs his own security, and private investigation company. Under his supervision I learned so much about the in-depth process of conducting background investigations for employment, along with how to conduct security assessments of businesses. The knowledge that I attained was amazing, but not as amazing as the stories that Mr. Peters shared about his career as a federal agent. Needless to say, his professional career sparked my interest in working for the federal government in some capacity.

Marymount University is known for its networking events. This past March, I attended a dinner during which I met Deputy Chief Christopher Taylor, who works for the International Affairs Division at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. During the course of this dinner I had the pleasure of learning about his career as an ATF agent. I'm currently interning for him here in the Washington, DC headquarters location. I've been a co-author on the small arms assessment report for the country of Trinidad and Tobago, and I've also had the pleasure of assisting agents in investigating firearm trafficking cases. Next semester I'll continue my internship at ATF but I'll be moving to the Intelligence Research Office.

I hope to either be an ATF agent, or Intelligence Analyst in the next few years and it's needless to say, my experience at Tulane prepared me for academic and professional here at Marymount and in Washington, DC.

Where are you now?

Share news about your post-baccalaureate education and career, either by contacting your favorite faculty member or Dr. Ruscher (ruscher@tulane.edu). We'd love to hear from you.

By Ashley Jacobson, BS 2008



Visiting my grandfather as a child, I was always impressed and a bit intimidated by his office where he saw patients as a psychoanalyst. Wanting to learn more about his mysterious job, I knew I would take the first psychology class I could. In middle school, the complex relationships I observed also encouraged me turn to

the study of psychology to find answers (too bad *Mean Girls* did not come out until I was finishing high school).

I declared a major in psychology because I was – and still am – fascinated by the subject matter. While I did not pursue a career in psychology, what I learned at Tulane has provided tremendous value both professionally and academically.

When I graduated from Tulane, I was interested in how brands forge connections with consumers. I was able to leverage my background in psychology to land a position at a global agency specializing in media strategy. Part of my job was to advise clients on how to reach and engage consumers across platforms, and what I learned in psychology helped me present my recommendations persuasively.

Analyzing and interpreting data are important in any job, and the people who do it best can turn numbers into compelling stories that influence decisions. Taking what I learned from writing a thesis in psychology, I could cull through data at work and identify consumer insights that led to successful campaigns for Johnson & Johnson brands. Additionally, I could interpret third party research and ask the right questions when reviewing the results.

Now, as I pursue my MBA at Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, I am leveraging skills developed in Tulane's Department of Psychology. Understanding how people and groups interact within companies is key to implementing change, gaining buy-in for ideas, and leading without authority. These concepts draw on principles from psychology, and the classes related to management and organizations are taught by psychology PhDs. Coming into graduate school, I did not think I would see familiar names like Cialdini and Maslow, but their work is critical to understanding effective management strategies. Additionally, the statistics knowledge I built at Tulane has directly applied to the business analytics projects I have completed in the program.

My psychology background provided me with key analytical skills and a deeper understanding of how people think and make decisions. I have no doubt that the Tulane Psychology program gave me an important advantage that will continue to pay dividends as I move forward in my career.

Lab added to PSYC1000

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neuroanatomy, students held and examined human brains. Concepts in sensation and perception were demonstrated by using two-point thresholds to determine the sensitivity of skin. Later in the semester, students completed personality trait measures relevant to "The Big Five" and discovered how adopting a personality style might influence their subsequent responses. Finally, students observed demonstrations of psychological therapy, including client-centered therapy and group therapy.

The early-on water-maze experiment provided an opportunity for statistical analysis and introduction to writing scientific manuscripts. Student feedback has been positive in that "the lab has really helped with the lecture" and "this is amazing." Students also had an opportunity to bond with each other as one student suggested "we should have a dinner together."

Did you know...

- That 95 students majoring in Psychology and 10 students majoring in Psychology and Early Childhood Education earned their Bachelors degrees in May 2013.
- That the School of Science & Engineering awarded 101 Masters degrees (13 in Psychology) and 56 Doctor of Philosophy degrees (7 in Psychology) in May 2013
- That 16 students currently are conducting senior honors theses in Psychology.
- That Bill Dunlap, who learned Statistics from Tulane Professor Dave Chambliss, earned the B.S. from Tulane 50 years ago in 1963
- That Dave Corey, who learned Statistics from Bill Dunlap, entered graduate school at Tulane 20 years ago in 1993.
- That our Psi Chi chapter will turn 80 in 1934. Psi Chi, the international honor society for Psychology, was founded in 1929.
- That the work of Tulane Psychologists received media attention this year from *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The American Scholar*, and *CBS News*.
- That the Department recently approved a 4+1 Masters track in Behavioral Health Psychology.

Keep up with the Tulane Department of Psychology

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