

Dr. Murray Introduces Himself



I am thrilled to be joining the many accomplished colleagues in the Department of Psychology and the Tulane community more generally. I hail from the west coast of Canada, where I did both my growing up and schooling, so I am excited to learn more about what lies at this opposite corner

of the continent.

Broadly, my work focuses on the implications of disease threat for psychology and behavior. Although disease-avoidant behaviors and adaptations have long been a focus of inquiry within the biological sciences, only recently have they been seriously considered within the psychological sciences. As a social psychologist by training, my early work focused on the effects of perceived disease threat for attitudes, cognition and behavior. This work was theoretically underpinned by a cost/benefit framework: Many otherwise beneficial traits or behaviors have disease specific costs as well. Take nonconformity, for example. While nonconformists tend to enjoy the benefits of greater creative problem solving, failing to conform to many norms has specific costs: taking “creative” approaches to activities like food preparation or hygiene increase the risk of disease transmission. These costs should be more likely to outweigh the benefits when disease threat is higher, which leads to the prediction that conformity should be positively predicted by disease

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Grant Awarded for Trauma-Informed Approaches to Safe Schools



Dr. Stacy Overstreet is Principal Investigator on 2.6 million dollar grant from the National Institute of Justice to examine the effectiveness of trauma-informed approaches to create safe school environ-

ments. With Tulane colleague Dr. Courtney Baker, Overstreet leads a team of community partners from the Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative. [http://tulane.edu/news/releases/tulane-professor-gets-grant-to-study-trauma-in-nola-students.cfm?selval=a&campaign=Tulane%20professor%20gets%20\\$2.6%20million%20to%20study%20trauma%20in%20NOLA%20students](http://tulane.edu/news/releases/tulane-professor-gets-grant-to-study-trauma-in-nola-students.cfm?selval=a&campaign=Tulane%20professor%20gets%20$2.6%20million%20to%20study%20trauma%20in%20NOLA%20students))

Dr. Markant Introduces Herself



Infants and young children rapidly learn new information as they explore their surroundings, despite the fact that as adults we only rarely explicitly direct their attention to the most meaningful information in the environment. My research uses eye tracking,

neuroimaging, and genetic methods to examine the cognitive and neurobiological mechanisms that support this efficient, incidental learning during infants’ and children’s exploration of the visual world. Specifically, my research focuses on the intersection between two cognitive processes, selective attention and memory, during early development. Selective attention involves focusing on relevant information and ignoring distracting

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Undergraduate Awards

Arnold Gerall Prize in Neuroscience

Nicole Moody and Louis Arens

Rosa Cahn Hartman Prize in Psychology

Maryann Thompson and Melanie Moulder

The Anne M. McPherson Memorial Student Award

Camille Hardin, James Fitzpatrick and Laura Perry

The Senior Scholar in Psychology

Stephanie Aaron and Nicole Lentini

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

Max Seidman and Johanna Kester

Aaron Hartman Medal in Psychology

Marcy Cohen and Julia Birt

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award

Johanna Kester

What do doctoral students *do* in “School Psychology Practicum?”

By Dr. Conni Patterson

At minimum, School Psychology doctoral students spend 8 hours a week each semester engaged in service to New Orleans area schools and community agencies, practicing skills associated with their coursework and practicum experiences. Our 20 (current) doctoral students will provide over 5,000 hours of unpaid psychological services to our community this year under the supervision of faculty who are Certified and/or Licensed Psychologists.

School psychology students are providing a range of services (consultation and problem-solving with teachers, families, school administrators; behavioral and academic intervention; psychological assessment; group and individual counseling; and systems change/ capacity building activities) in a number of charter schools in the greater New Orleans area. Additional community partners who collaborate with our program to provide supervised practice opportunities include Children’s Bureau of New Orleans, Project Fleur de Lis, and Children’s Hospital. An increased emphasis on working with young children has also opened options to work with preschool-aged children in several settings. Additionally, our on-campus clinic provides opportunities to engage in comprehensive assessment services and evidence based treatment for children, teens and families with a wide range of concerns.

The School Psychology program continues to offer a Trauma track for students who are interested in specializing in this area. The urban environment

where many charter school students live increases the demand for professionals who are trained to support improved mental health for youth exposed to trauma, to support school based staff who are teaching those students, and to help schools prepare for the challenges of crises that can arise. Even those students who do not specialize in trauma have opportunities to obtain training and practice in this area.

Julie Markant

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information. During the first year of life infants develop increasing control over selective attention so that they can more easily ignore irrelevant information. My work has shown that this increasing control over attention has implications for learning and memory, as infants show enhanced recognition of images they learn while engaging in controlled selective attention. My work thus suggests that selective attention and memory do not develop independently but rather function as integrated cognitive systems from early infancy onward. This line of work has additionally shown that we may be able to boost learning and memory efficacy among infants and children who may be at risk for learning problems by promoting the engagement of controlled selective attention mechanisms during memory encoding. I am excited to continue to pursue this idea with additional studies examining whether it is possible to train selective attention skills at a young age and, if so, if such training benefits long-term memory encoding. Finally, my neuroimaging work has shown that the link between selective attention and enhanced learning can be attributed to stronger neural representations in brain regions that represent the images that are learned in the context of controlled selective attention. In other words, ignoring distracting information helps you see the meaningful information more clearly, which in turn supports a more distinct memory for that information.

As a developmental cognitive neuroscientist, my goal is to examine brain-behavior relationships within a broader developmental context that considers the multiple influences of biology, environment, and time on developmental trajectories. I am thrilled to have joined an academic community and a department with superb colleagues whose interests map onto these multiple domains. I especially look forward to building collaborations with my colleagues in Developmental Science and Neuroscience as we work towards a more complete understanding of brain and cognitive development.

Graduate Awards

**Murphy Institute’s Center for Ethics and Public Affairs
Graduate Fellowship**
Caroline Tipler

**The C. Chrisman Wilson Memorial Award for Graduate
Student Teaching in Psychology**
Jeff Brown and Stefanie Simon

The Elizabeth Land Parks and Franklin Parks Scholar
Caroline Tipler

Pediatric Psychologist Dr. Jennifer Trapani reflects on her time as a Psychology Major at Tulane

By Jennifer A. Trapani, BA '00



graduate studies at Tulane.

When I reflect upon my career in the field of psychology, I am reminded of how firmly its foundation is rooted in my under-

I knew quite quickly that I had found the field I was interested in pursuing further as I had the unique opportunity to experience small, intimate classes within the department that allowed me to get to know the professors not only as teachers but as passionate masters of psychological studies and research. When approaching then department head, Dr. Jeff Lockman, to express my desire to pursue psychology at a graduate level, he immediately initiated my becoming involved in clinical research, first at Newcomb Nursery School, followed by the opportunity to assist in the biopsychology and animal behavior laboratory of Dr. Gary Dohanich. As an example of the depth and breadth of research of opportunities at Tulane I was also afforded the unique and incredibly influential occasion to extern with Dr. Charley Zeanah and a consortium through Tulane Medical School in the field of infant psychiatry that provided attachment-based intervention to abused and neglected children and their mothers.

The diversity of these experiences at Tulane made me an attractive candidate to move on to complete my doctorate in clinical child psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, a program chosen with the assistance one of a close Tulane adviser and professor, Dr. Margaret Dempsey. My work with Dr. Zeanah facilitated involvement in a unique research study there in infant attachment, which became the basis of my doctoral dissertation. Both connections then led to matching research and clinical interest with the pre-doctoral internship in pediatric psychology at Stanford University Medical Center and Lucille Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford, followed by an appointment as a fellow embedded in their pediatric oncology service.

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.

I have incorporated my experiences across these settings into a private clinical practice in Austin, Texas where I am able share the extensiveness knowledge I have acquired in a close, personal setting with children, adolescents, and their families. It is a position I feel honored to hold not only professionally, but also personally, and every day I have exceptional gratitude for the psychology department at Tulane giving me that foundation from which to launch into this highly rewarding career and the opportunity to apply my education to the bettering of the lives of those overcoming adversity to find their own strong foundations from which to launch.

William P. Dunlap Memorial Summer Research Fellowship

Lisa Chinn

Robert E. Flowerree Fellowships

Emiliya Adelson, Max Anderson, Corey Black, Michael Brachfeld, Veronica Coriano, Heather Henderson, Trenesha Hill, Liz McIntyre, Aaron Moss, Jennifer Rious, Lauren Ruelens, Emily Shaffer, Caroline Tipler, Tara Van Bommel, and Amanda Van Camp

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threat. At multiple levels, our work reveals that this is what you see: People more worried about disease tend to conform more; people conform more when you experimentally make disease threat (but not other threats) salient; people in countries and small scale societies with higher local disease threat conform more. We see similar patterns for certain personality traits and other individual differences.

More recently, my work has begun to investigate how physiological markers of disease vulnerability predict these same psychological traits and behaviors. We've found, for example, that people with certain genetic markers of infectious disease vulnerability tend to have more "conformist" and less extraverted personalities. This work is ongoing, and I am excited to further develop collaborations within the SSE as I explore these new questions in more depth. On the whole, this body of work suggests that interventions aimed at improving health have not just physical benefits, but have psychological consequences as well.

Recent Publications

- *Social stigma and sexual minorities' romantic relationship functioning: A meta-analytic review*
- *Long-term consequences of estrogens administered in midlife on female cognitive aging.*
- *Development of early handwriting: Visual-motor control during letter copying.*
- *Listening to voices of youth: Implications for working in diverse communities.*
- *Hurricane exposure and school problems: The mediating role of posttraumatic stress symptoms.*
- *Choline acetyltransferase in the hippocampus is associated with learning strategy preference in adult male rats.*
- *Confronting sexism: Exploring the effect of nonsexist credentials on the costs of target confrontations.*
- *Implications of the behavioral immune system for social behavior and human health in the modern world.*
- *Protein phosphatase-1 inhibitor-2 is a novel memory suppressor.*
- *Promoting psychological well-being in an urban school using the Participatory Culture Specific Intervention Model*
- *The development of selective attention orienting is an agent of change in learning and memory efficacy.*
- *Expectations about re-entering the weekly cycle following disruption by familial death or holiday.*
- *Rapid cortical dynamics associated with auditory spatial attention gradients*
- *Teacher (mis)perceptions of preschoolers' academic skills: Predictors and associations with longitudinal outcomes.*
- *Caregiver insightfulness and young children's violence exposure: Testing a relational model of risk and resilience.*

Did you know?

- That Dr. Ed Golob is PI on a 1.4M National Institutes of Health Grant, focused on attention.
- That Dr. Jeff Lockman's work was highlighted in APA's Psychology: Science in Action.
- That alumna Ayesha Sujan (BS 2012) was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship.
- That 98 students majoring in Psychology and 9 students majoring in Psychology and Early Childhood Education earned their Bachelors degrees in May 2015.
- That Dr. Oscar Barbarin is now chair of the Department of African-American Studies at University of Maryland.
- That PhD alumnus Tony Recasner was co-recipient of the New Orleans Schools Enduring Impact Award.
- That graduates of the first class of 4+1 Masters in Behavioral Health are employed in an array of positions, from Forensic Interviewer with NOLA Children's Advocacy Center to Research Assistant at Boston Children's Hospital to Clinical PhD programs. <http://tulane.edu/sse/psyc/academics/graduate/masters-program.cfm>
- That ten students from the class of 2016 are conducting honor's theses.
- That Dr. Conni Patterson has been named Director of the School Psychology Ph.D. Program.
- That Dr. Courtney Baker was awarded a 140K grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents.
- That Dr. Sarah Gray was named an NIH BIRCWH Scholar, providing 174K for her research activities.
- That Dr. Bonnie Nastasi spoke at the United Nations about her work on long-term recovery from natural disasters.
- That Dr. Jeff Lockman co-chaired the 2015 Society for Research in Child Development biennial meeting.

Keep up with the Tulane Department of Psychology



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