

PSYCH NEWS NETWORK

Connecting Clarion's Psychology Department with Pennsylvania teachers, guidance counselors and students

WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR

Clarion University Psych News Network shares information about us, our program and our students with guidance counselors, high school psychology instructors and prospective students.

We hope you find this newsletter informative and that you will contact us with questions or teaching tips. Email psychology@clarion.edu or call 814-393-2295.

Donna M. Ashcraft, Ph.D

ALS ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE!

Dr. Potter "won" the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge vote last fall! The Clarion University chapter of Psi Chi, the national honorary in psychology, invited students, faculty and staff to vote for their favorite professor to complete the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge.

Candidates included Drs. Slattery, Potter, Jolley and Haynes, but Dr. Potter was the lucky winner. All donations were sent to the ALS Therapy Development Institute and to Hope for Steve, an organization developed by Clarion Psychology Department alumna Hope Cross Dezember, whose husband, Steve, has ALS.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Motor Neuron Disease and Lou Gehrig's Disease, was depicted in the movie *The Theory of Everything*, which follows physicist Stephen Hawking from his diagnosis, throughout his life. ALS affects the nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord and progressively destroys voluntary muscle movement.

While all charities are deserving of Psi Chi's attention, this one is especially relevant to them because of its close association to the subject matter of physiological psychology, an area that studies the biological basis of behavior including neural mechanisms. Dr. Potter, along with Dr. Vilberg, teach a number of courses in Clarion University's Psychology Department for students interested in such topics, including Brain and Behavior, Physiological Psychology, Human Neuropsychology and Sensation and Perception.

Would you like a faculty member to visit you and your class? Our Dean has graciously provided travel funds to visit local schools. If you are a high school teacher in Western Pennsylvania, let us know if you would like to visit with us!

COURAGEOUS.
confident.
CLARION.



Dr. Randy Potter accepts the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge.

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Lan Griffith

The Clarion University Psychology Department has been very successful in assisting graduates in obtaining acceptance into graduate programs. Our student spotlight is one such success story. Lan Griffith has been accepted into Carlow College's professional counseling program, Slippery Rock University's clinical mental health program and the community agency counseling program at West Virginia University. She hopes to earn a master's degree in counseling or clinical psychology, but ultimately plans to go on for a Ph.D. in counseling psychology so that she can teach at a four-year university while working in private practice.

Part of the reason the Clarion University Psychology Department is so successful at getting students into graduate programs is because we prepare them so well and provide opportunities for conducting research and for applied experiences like internships. Lan is currently interning at Clarion County Children and Youth Services and working on a research project for her Senior Seminar class that replicates Asch's (1951, 1952) classic conformity study under the guise of a visual perception test. Asch's study found that a significant number of people conform even when the circumstances are as trivial as indicating which



Lan Griffith is our Student Spotlight!

line matches the length of a standard line. He also found that as group size increased, level of conformity also increased significantly (at least up to the group size of three).

Lan emigrated from Vietnam and moved to the small town of Amity, PA. She also works at the university's Minority Student Services Office and Writing Center. Her extracurricular activities include Psi Chi, the national honorary in psychology, and the Asian Student Integrated Association (ASIA), where she serves as community chair and mentor. In her spare time she likes to play tennis, quote movies and write short stories.

Are you interested in having your class mentored by Clarion University students?
SOME OF OUR STUDENTS ARE WILLING TO TAKE ON INDIVIDUAL MENTEES.
If your students are interested in this opportunity, let us know!

SOUP FOR THE SOUL

In November, Clarion University's chapter of Psi Chi, the national honorary in psychology, held a soup benefit for Passages, a nonprofit organization that advocates and provides services for victims of sexual violence in Clarion, Clearfield and Jefferson counties. The benefit provided soup, bread, cookies and a drink for only \$5. Food and supplies were donated by local businesses and Clarion University faculty, staff and students. Dozens of lunches were provided on this very cold day when the first of the season's arctic blasts hit the area, but the soup and camaraderie warmed us all, as did the concern for victims of violence. The event allowed Psi Chi to donate \$411 to the thankful organization.



Faculty, staff, and students warm themselves with soup and companionship on an exceptionally cold day to benefit Passages, an organization that serves victims of sexual violence.

TEACHING TIPS: GO TEAM!

As part of her sabbatical project, Dr. Donna Ashcraft attended a workshop on Team Based Learning and used that training to revise how she teaches Psychology of Women. Courses taught with a TBL approach require students to prepare prior to class by studying course material. They are then tested on their knowledge of the material, as individuals, and later in teams, through the use of Readiness Assurance Tests. Students receive immediate feedback on their chapter quizzes through the use of Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique answer sheets, which are similar to scratch-off lottery tickets. After content mastery is established, student teams apply their knowledge to relevant questions and problems with the feedback of the instructor as the content expert. Then they reveal and defend their decisions, opinions and answers to the class. Class time is primarily spent working in groups that are maintained throughout

the semester, which eliminates a major problem with most group work: being able to get team members together at the same time outside of class. Another major problem with group work, social loafing, where some students contribute little to group projects while others contribute a lot, is also reduced because teams evaluate their membership through the use of peer evaluations.

TBL, a strategy that has been used in a variety of disciplines including nursing, medicine, law and management, among others, has been shown to help students learn better and improve exam scores (e.g., Zgheib, Simaan & Sabra, 2010; Zimmerman & Timson, 2006). It likewise encourages attendance and improves student preparation, participation and critical thinking. For more information on TBL visit www.teambasedlearning.org.



Students completing application exercises in a Team-Based Learning Psychology of Women class

DO YOU HAVE ANY TEACHING TIPS YOU WANT TO SHARE?

Please contact us!

GET A JOB!

Psychology Department faculty members Drs. Jeanne Slattery and Carie Forden published an article in the fall 2014 Eye on Psi Chi newsletter, in which they discuss employment prospects for psychology majors. While many psychology majors think that they will obtain a post-graduation position in the field of mental health, a bachelor's degree in psychology is actually appropriate for many different types of positions and employment settings. Slattery and Forden note that many of the skills psychology majors learn are transferable and useful to many fields. They cite research that indicates that employers look for the ability to communicate clearly and to work in teams, as well as leadership skills in

potential employees. The ability to think critically, apply academic concepts to real world settings, and to problem solve are also valued employee qualities.

Majoring in psychology provides students with opportunities to develop these skills, but Slattery and Forden also note that it is just as important that job candidates educate potential employers about their abilities because employers might not be familiar with psychology major curriculum or objectives. The entire article can be accessed from: http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.psichi.org/resource/resmgr/eye_pdf/19-1_fall14eye.pdf.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Not everyone follows a straight and clear career path. Case in point, Sean Boileau '96, who still keeps in touch with a number of Clarion psychology faculty after all these years. Sean grew up in York, graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology from Clarion, and moved to Arizona. There he worked as assistant director of residence life in a boarding school serving an international population before he entered the doctoral program in counseling psychology at Arizona State University. He completed his post-doc at the University of California—Berkeley Counseling Center, and is now a clinical psychologist with the Veterans Health Association in San Francisco, a part-time instructor at Antioch University, and a regular columnist with Kraven Magazine.

As a Clarion University graduate and psychologist, he advises students, “Be more open-minded than I was about the path. Don't give in to the temptation to look at graduation as a finish line. It's a starting point. That's when you get to start trying things out to see what works.”

“Whatever your career trajectory, whatever you have in mind, whatever you think you want...



Dr. Sean Boileau graduated from Clarion University in 1996 and is currently a clinical psychologist with the Veterans Health Association in San Francisco.

USEFUL LINKS FOR PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS

The Team Based Learning Collaborative

The Team Based Learning Collaborative website has information on TBL, including information on what it is, how to start teaching using this pedagogy, and how to develop effective readiness assurance tests and application exercises. It also has links to books, workshops, and videos on TBL. It can be found at www.teambasedlearning.org.

Personality Pedagogy

Personality Pedagogy is an online resource for the teachers of personality psychology. It has thousands of links, suggestions for assignments, exercises and activities, case studies, personality scales, lecture notes and slide presentations relevant to the area and can be found at www.personalitypedagogy.arcadia.edu.

push that out of your head. It's not going to happen. What will happen will be a combination of things you never thought about, things you thought you never wanted, and things you never foresaw. The good news is this: the correlation between reality and what we THINK we want, what we THINK will make us happy, and what we THINK it's like to work in a certain environment isn't all that impressive after all.”

THE REQUEST LINE IS OPEN!

We want to tailor this newsletter to your needs. Send us your requests, suggestions, comments and resources! Teaching tips are particularly welcome.

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