

ISU Psychology News

Staying in contact with the Alumni, Students, Friends and Faculty of the Department of Psychology of Iowa State University
Winter 2004, Vol. 1, No. 1

News from your department

From the Newsletter Editor (Rick Gibbons)

As many of you may know, Psychology continues to be one of the most popular majors at ISU, just as it is on most campuses. As of this fall semester, we had well over 800 majors, which placed us eighth overall among all departments on campus, and that includes Art & Design and the Greenlee School of Journalism (each counted as a single department). We are the largest department (among 25) in LAS. Last fall we had 49

graduate students on campus and an additional 14 students, most of whom are ABD (all but dissertation) and working in various locations off campus. In spite of this very large number of students, the size of the faculty is currently smaller than it has been in quite a while. Come springtime (when Ron Peters retires—see the article about Ron), we will have 20 FTE (full time equivalent) faculty in the Department. To put that in some perspective: When I came here in the fall of 1980, we had 25 full-time faculty and

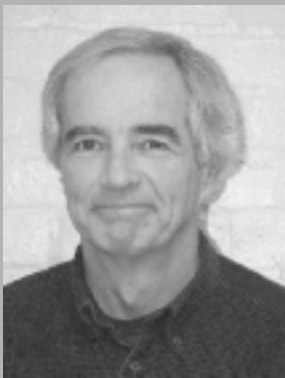
just under 300 majors. So, we are now serving almost 3 times as many majors—and we're doing it with a smaller department! As you might expect, this is due mostly to budget cuts and an inability to replace retirements and resignations. We're working on that, however. This year we are searching for at least two new faculty and maybe three, and we're hoping that will be the case (and the number) for the next several years. One of those positions is in Counseling

Continued on page 9

From the editor

Dear Alumni:

This is the first of what we hope will be an annual, departmental newsletter. We realize you already receive a number of mailings and updates from the university, but we thought (and several of you have said this) that you might be interested in finding out what's going on in the Psychology Department and also what some of your fellow alums are doing. This first letter is kind of a trial-run for



us, and so we are very interested in any feedback you can give us about your reactions—you can teach us and shape our behavior (hopefully with a little positive reinforcement here and there). Our plan is to include a brief article in every issue about what's new in the Department—new professors, new courses that have been developed, interesting career events for faculty and students. We will also include at least one interview with an alumnus or alumna—graduate and undergraduate—in each issue. In this inaugural issue, we will also present you with some information about the graduate and undergraduate programs, including where former students are now, how current students are doing relative to psychology majors on other campuses, and what types of careers our students have chosen, whether in psychology or not.

We have set up a forum for news and

feedback for you that can be reached via the Departmental website [<http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/>]. The goal of that is to provide an avenue of communication for our graduates, with us and with each other. So, if you have information about yourself, your family, or another graduate of the program that you would like to share, we'd love to hear from you. Send us an e-mail or a letter and tell us what kind of career path you have been pursuing since leaving Ames. Many of you are professionals in different fields and have something to say to current undergraduate and graduate students; if so, let us know. Also, as I said, we'd like to find out what you think of the idea of a newsletter and are very interested in knowing what you think it should include. So please do consider sending something to us.

*Rick Gibbons
Professor & Editor*

Notes from the chair

Welcome to the ISU Department of Psychology newsletter! This is something we've been trying to get started since my arrival here in July of 1999. We kept putting it off as we have dealt with budget cuts, changes in the ISU President and Provost, and the Dean of LAS, and faced the challenges of ever-increasing enrollments. As you may be aware, budget cuts continue, and this past semester was the first time in five years that we experienced a (small) decline in enrollments. Nonetheless, we decided to proceed with the newsletter for three main reasons. First, we believe that it is important to keep our friends and alums up to date with Departmental happenings. Second we'd like to hear from our graduates to find out what you are doing and how well your education in Psychology has served you. Third, we'd like to provide a means for our graduates to keep in touch with each other.

In this first "Notes from the Chair" column, I'd like to introduce myself and to give you a brief overview of recent events. I have had the privilege of serving as Department Chair since July, 1999. I was not on the job market in the autumn of 1998, and certainly had no intention to applying for a Chair position. But several very persuasive faculty members—primarily Gary Wells, Brad Bushman, Rick Gibbons, and Meg Gerrard—pestered me into applying. I'm very glad that they did. As it turns out, this Department is made up of an incredibly good group of people—students

(undergraduate and graduate), staff, and faculty.

You may not realize just how unique a group of people this is, but I do, having spent significant amounts of time at a wide variety of universities including Butler University (as an undergraduate), Stanford University (as a graduate student), Rice University (as a faculty member), Ohio State University (as a visiting faculty member) and the University of Missouri-Columbia (as a faculty member). I have never seen a Department of Psychology so filled with people who effectively combine so many wonderful talents, values, interests, and work habits as in this Department. Our undergraduates work hard and perform well above national norms *every year*. A high proportion go to graduate or professional schools. Others use their Psychology degree in a wide range of professions, including mental health services, business, government, and others too numerous to mention. Our graduate students similarly do very well in their chosen professions, some in research institutions, some in professional practice, some in teaching institutions, and some in a wide array of business activities. Though we are consistently and considerably understaffed (by any relevant comparison), our staff do a remarkable job of keeping the department running. And finally, our faculty perform at an amazingly high level. Pound for pound (or more precisely, FTE for FTE), our faculty consistently outproduces our



peers in the Big 12 and the "Peer 11" official comparison universities on measures designed to assess performance in the three "missions" of the university—learning, discovery, and engagement.

We do face significant challenges, however. As you may know, ISU is now facing its fifth year of budget cuts in a row—an unprecedented challenge to people determined to uphold the tradition of offering a high quality education to our students. We have fared relatively well during this period in that cuts to Psychology have been among the lowest in the university, a reflection of our incredible productivity. Nonetheless, we are stretched too thin, and are having major difficulties in meeting some of our own goals. Our biggest challenge at the moment is that we simply do not have sufficient numbers of faculty and graduate students to meet all of the needs of our undergraduates. The following figure illustrates this problem. It's a complicated figure, so let me walk you through it.

First, undergraduate teaching pressures have increased enormously over the past five years. The total number of fall semester student credit hours (SCH) taught by our faculty has increased from about 11,700 to over 15,000.

Similarly, the number of undergraduate majors has increased from about 500 to over 750. In fact, we had well over 800 majors last fall.

Second, the number of faculty and graduate students available for teaching has dropped. The number of regular faculty has dropped from 24 to 21, whereas the number of graduate students has dropped from 62 to 49.

The result of these trends is more large lecture classes, fewer small enrollment seminar or discussion classes, fewer upper level speciality classes, and fewer opportunities to develop writing, speaking, and data presentation skills. In the past year we conducted internal reviews of both our undergraduate and graduate programs, and are beginning to implement some of the changes needed to further improve learning, discovery, and engagement opportunities for our students. We began the fall 2003 semester with one more faculty member than we had last fall, and hope to add more by fall of 2004. We also desperately need to increase the number of graduate students, but short term prospects for this are bleak.

We face some very difficult challenges ahead. But Psychology Department people at all levels have succeeded well beyond the resources made available, and I am confident that this will continue to characterize our students, staff, and faculty. We know that further cuts are coming our way; whether they will produce serious harm to our Department remains to be seen. I'll keep you posted. In the meantime, please keep us posted on major events in your life.

There is another thing I would like to point out to all of you. First, I would like to publicly thank alum Kentner Fritz (1958) for his continued support of the Department over the past 8 – 10 years.

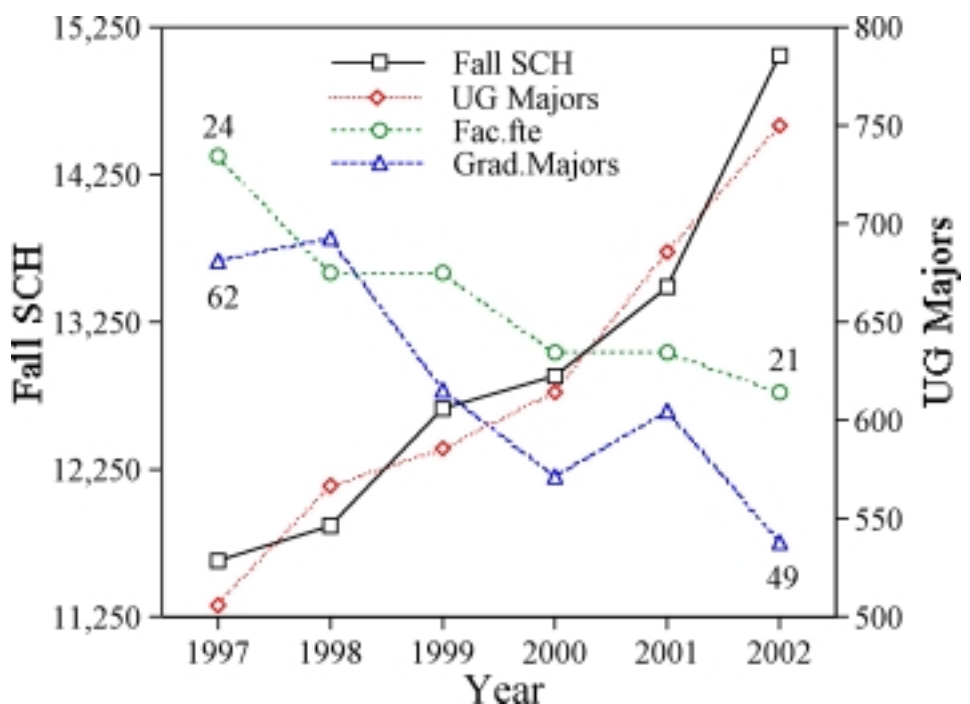
Along with his wife, Linda, Kent has made a number of contributions to the Department, perhaps the most significant one being the Martin F. Fritz Endowed Chair in Psychology that Kent and Linda established with the Psychology Department as the sole beneficiary. The most recent example of his generosity is a gift that will benefit the Department almost immediately. Kent has agreed to fund a Lectureship in Psychology. With his support, we will bring in a senior scholar for a few days this coming spring to give lectures to the Department and the University community and to consult with students and faculty in his/her area of expertise. Better yet, Kent has also agreed to contribute some funds to make this an annual event, by starting a Permanent Lectureship. These kinds of endowed positions are rare, mostly because they require a significant amount of money—a balance of at least \$50,000. Needless to say we are all very appreciative of Kent's commitment to excellence in our Department.

Last but certainly not least, I would

like to ask each of you to give some thought to making a donation to the Department to help us through what are obviously extremely difficult (but undoubtedly temporary) times of budget cuts and financial belt-tightening. We're not asking for anything along the lines of what Kent and Linda have done, but even a small donation can help and, I can assure you, will be used wisely and effectively. If you have a cause or certain need in mind or some specific event or activity in the Department that you would like to see flourish (e.g., graduate assistantships, undergraduate scholarships, or maybe you want to join Kent in his support of the Department Lectureship), by all means let us know and we'll make sure your donation—whatever its size—goes to that particular recipient. If this is a bad time for you, then maybe give us some consideration some time in the future.

Sincerely,

Craig A. Anderson
Professor & Chair



about our graduates...

Ken Sufka

Ph.D. Graduate

From Rick Gibbons, Professor

One of the goals of graduate training in the Psychology Department at Iowa State has always been to develop psychologists who are equally comfortable in the classroom and in the lab. Being active researchers definitely improves our teaching. And it works in the other direction, as well: Interacting with students and sharing ideas with them can't help but improve the quality of the research that we do. Most of our graduates get that message from us, but few have personified it as well as **Ken Sufka**.

Ken was born in Mason City, and grew up in Des Moines, where his parents and one of his brothers still live. He became a Cyclone in the fall of 1982, when he enrolled as an undergraduate Psychology major. In so doing, he followed the Sufka family tradition—five of the seven Sufka children have degrees from ISU. Ken received all three of his degrees from Iowa State: a BS, an MS, and then his Ph.D. in 1990. After spending a year as a post-doctoral fellow at Drake, he came back to Ames to further develop his teaching skills and conduct more research in psychopharmacology. That time paid off well for Ken as he landed one of the best academic jobs available that year—a tenure track, assistant professor position at the University of Mississippi. He has been there ever since and is currently an associate professor in both psychology and psychopharmacology.

He climbed up the academic ladder at Ole Miss very rapidly—he was tenured and received an early promotion to associate professor. Along the way, he has garnered a number of awards, including several research grants. He was also the first U of M faculty member to be named to the “Mississippi Top 40 Under 40” list—quite an honor!

Of all the awards he has received, however, the one he says he is proudest of is the Elsie M. Hood Award that he received in 1996 as the top teacher on the entire U of M campus. In fact, he received the Award earlier in his career than anyone else ever at Mississippi—after just four years, while he was still an assistant professor!

Ask him, and Ken will tell you directly why he thinks he has developed into somewhat of a superstar in the classroom. “It’s the training I received at ISU,” he told a group of faculty last summer, when he was back in Ames for a (surprise) retirement dinner for his mentor, psychology faculty member Dick Hughes. “Two people, in particular, really got me excited about teaching; and they also showed me how someone can combine a commitment to research with a real love for teaching. Those two were Ron Peters and Dick Hughes. Ron was the best undergraduate instructor I ever had and maybe the best one I have ever known. It was clear to me—and everyone else that knew him—that he really loves to teach. And



Dick was the best mentor any graduate student could ask for. He spent hours with me in his office, and in the lab, showing me how to become a good scientist. Dick also taught me a lot about how to be an academic—how people can combine teaching and research into a career. He really was a great role model for me.”

In a more recent conversation that I had with Ken, he mentioned that he is the instructor for the Teaching of Psychology graduate class at Mississippi, a course that he modeled after the teaching course he took while in graduate school at ISU. He said the ISU course was very helpful, but he said that most of the principles and techniques that he passes on to his students he learned from Ron and Dick. “Much of what my students learn from me, I learned from Ron and Dick. I guess you could say that my students are Ron and Dick’s ‘grandstudents.’ They probably don’t know it, or appreciate it as much as I do, but my students have benefited a lot from these two, just as I have.”

As an active and enthusiastic alum, Ken continues to support teaching and graduate education at Iowa State. He used some of the money he received with the Hood (top teacher) award and sent it back to the ISU Psychology Department, earmarked for graduate students who want to follow his career path of teaching and research. He has continued to make contributions annually to the Department Fund, and, in the process, he has helped a number of students.

One other skill that Ken picked up while he was in Ames was volleyball. “I had never really played volleyball before graduate school,” he said, but I developed a real interest in it when I joined the Friday-afternoon graduate volleyball group in the department. It was a great way to socialize and end the work week together.”

Not only did he enjoy it, turns out he also got pretty good at it. I found out that one of those awards he has received in Mississippi was as a member of a team that won the bronze medal in the Mississippi State Olympics several years ago! Ken welcomes e-mails from any alumni or students who want to hear more about his experiences at Iowa State, and what he is doing at Ole Miss. [pysufka@olemiss.edu].

Tony Stewart

B.S. & M.A. Graduate

From Veronica Dark, Associate Professor

Although Newton High School is in Hawkeye country, the school mascot is a cardinal. That may be one reason why Newton High School athlete (swimming and track) **Tony Stewart** chose Iowa State in 1992. He wanted to go to grad school someday and it seemed to him that graduates of larger schools had a better shot of getting into graduate programs, so Tony only considered larger schools like Iowa, Drake, and Iowa State. Tony admits to being an Iowa fan when he was younger—but that was before he matured.

As far as Tony was concerned, Iowa State had two real plusses going for it. The first was academic. Tony planned to be a psych major. Because his instructor in general psychology in high school stressed that psychology was a science and presented several of the classic experiments in social psychology, Tony looked for a program with a strong social faculty. He decided that with Brad Bushman and Gary Wells on the faculty, Iowa State fit the bill. The second was personal. Tony wanted a school where he had the chance to walk on to the swim team. Trip Hedrick gave him the chance and Tony swam for the Cyclones (he swam middle-distance freestyle and butterfly.) Tony enjoyed swimming, but after two years, he decided that the time commitment—2 hours of swimming each day and 1-1.5 hours of lifting weights three times a week—was detracting from his academic work.

As an undergrad, Tony first lived in Helser Hall. He then moved to a house in east Ames, followed by another house (if you could call it that) on Sunset drive. He graduated with a B.S. in 1996 and then moved to a duplex on Ontario and worked at Ruttle's Bar and Grill for a year. Tony returned to Iowa State in 1997 to work on a general master's degree. He lived in a house

on South Dakota with a group of psych graduate students while he was in graduate school and then completed his Masters degree in 1999.

When asked about his favorite memories at ISU, Tony quickly mentioned two specific events. In 1993, during Johnny Orr's tenure at Hilton, Kansas came in ranked #3 in the country. Hilton was packed and so loud that you couldn't hear a thing. Hilton Magic was at its best and Kansas went home with a loss. Tony also recalled the 1993 VEISHEA "riots." It was a great time. He wasn't involved in the "riots," of course, but... He also reminisced about attending Psych Club and Psi Chi and stopping by to chat with Susan Williams in the advising office. He also said there were other memories that he'd better not share. Overall, he said he really enjoyed his time at ISU—as an undergraduate and as a graduate student—and that it was always a good feeling for him when school started in the fall.

When asked if he would recommend ISU as a school or psychology as a major, Tony's response was a resounding BOTH! He said that ISU is a great school to attend. It provides a solid education with lots of experiences that aren't available at smaller schools. And, the extracurriculars are good: lots of great places to hang out in Campustown, the sports teams are fun to watch (whether they win or lose), and there are always some kind of cultural activities on campus and at the Iowa State Center. Psychology, especially at ISU, offers a broad curriculum, with all kinds of interesting courses. Tony observed that in his work setting, people with business or design degrees tend to just criticize while those with psychology backgrounds try instead to think through the issue. They try to understand WHY things are in a state that can be criticized. The understanding requires being analytical and applying good experimental design to gathering data concerning the problem.

Tony has been working for Sprint since 1999. He found the job on the Human Factors and Ergonomic Society Web Site. He didn't hear back for several weeks after applying, so he followed up and a couple of days later they contacted him for an

interview. Based on this experience, Tony's advice is to be politely assertive in seeking a job.

Tony just moved into a new research-oriented position (manager of Product Usability) at Sprint, where he has been working since 1999. The new position will allow him to make better use of his psychology background. Product Usability is part of the Product Design and Usability Team in Sprint Product Development. The group is concerned with wireless applications, phone interfaces, and web interfaces. The group has a PhD psychologist, several people with master's degrees in statistics and in psychology, and people with bachelor's degrees in human factors, graphic design and industrial design. Basically, the group does usability testing on products to determine whether they are meeting customer expectations. Techniques used by the group include satisfaction surveys, focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and experimental trials.

Tony is married to Teri, who received a degree in international business from the University of Evansville. They were married in September of 2001. Last summer, they traveled to France to watch *le Tour de France*. They enjoy riding bikes, including competing in bike races. And they are landscaping their new home, which is in Overland Park, KS. They've built a garden and have a goldfish pond, which ended up supporting hundreds of tadpoles and tiny frogs during the summer! Another of Tony's leisure activities is reading. He reads both fiction and nonfiction. He had finished the first four Harry Potter books at the time of the interview and had the fifth on order. No doubt he's read that one by now.

Thinking back, Tony is amazed at what he knows about people and how much he is able to apply psychology in the workplace. Tony suggests that those who are trained in other disciplines don't always bring the person into the equation; they treat everyone as the same, which does not work. Individual differences is a consistent theme in psychology, and Tony attributes his past and future success to his appreciation of such differences. And, the appreciation came from his experience as a psych major at ISU!

Ron Peters

Professor

From Meg Gerrard, Professor

Ron Peters can tell you many stories like this one – they are a sign of his contributions to Iowa State in the 40 years that he has been teaching psychology here.

I was hiking in the mountains of Colorado with my brother-in-law and nephews a few years ago. We had biked much of the day without seeing hardly anyone. We approached the summit of the mountain, however, to discover that we were not alone — four other men were there relaxing, and enjoying the view and their accomplishment. You can imagine my surprise when one of the four greeted me with a friendly ‘Hello Dr. Peters.’

There are numerous other examples of former students greeting him warmly in a wide variety of places. This shouldn't surprise us. For one thing, any computation of the number of students Ron has taught at ISU has to start with the approximately 45,000 students who have taken his introductory psychology classes over the years – enough that if you were to bring them back to the campus, they would almost fill Jack Trice Stadium. More important, however, is the high regard students have had for Ron's classes. He has earned six different teaching awards in the last 20 years, a reflection of the fact that his classes are not just extremely informative, but they are also captivating. In fact, when I teach our current graduate students to teach, one of the first assignments of the semester for them is to do what I did when I arrived at ISU — observe Ron Peters in Psychology 101. The graduate students are always in awe of his ability to get students so excited about psychology.

Ron has been at ISU since he earned his Ph.D. at the University of Iowa in 1963. From the beginning, his contributions went well beyond teaching undergraduates. He has



mentored a dozen graduate students, written successful grant proposals for both National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health funds, served on numerous departmental, college and university committees, and served as president of the Faculty Senate. His distinguished service to the university has resulted in a Faculty Citation and an ISU Distinguished Service Award.

When you ask him to reminisce about his career, it is the teaching that he talks about. He recounts the historical events that have disrupted his classes and exams – the scream he heard outside his final examination room on a November afternoon 40 years ago when a student learned that JFK had been shot; the gasp another student let out during class in the fall of 1986 when she heard about the explosion of the Challenger; how he felt on September 11th two years ago after learning about the bombing of the World Trade Center, and realizing that he had to cope with his own emotions while facing two large classes of 101 students that morning.

But mostly, he talks about the fact that when he retires this spring, he will miss the contact with students. He says that students haven't changed much since he began

teaching – some were bored when he first taught, and some are bored today. More important, he finds that most are still interested in learning — they come to class early or stay late to ask questions, and contact him outside of class just to talk about the material. “Students haven't changed much in the last 40 years, but teaching has.” He says that the introduction of media in the classroom (i.e., power point and excellent sound systems), and the ability to interact with students via e-mail has been very helpful, and will continue to play an important role in teaching.

Because Ron is one of ISU's Master Teachers, he is often asked to share his secrets with others. But his secret is very simple – he loves psychology, and he gets a great deal of pleasure from sharing his excitement about psychology with students.

A primer on graduate study in psychology

*From Doug Epperson
Professor and Interim Associate Dean of
the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*

P psychology has a long tradition at Iowa State—longer than most people realize. The first undergraduate course was offered in 1872, well over a century ago! The first listing of psychology as a department was in the 1904 catalog (which means we celebrate our centennial next year). The psychology major began in 1949, and the department's doctoral program was approved in 1964, with the first Ph.D. being granted two years later. In the subsequent 36 years, 123 students have received doctorates in psychology at ISU!

In its earliest days, graduate study in the department focused on industrial-organizational (I/O) psychology and experimental psychology, but the department rapidly expanded its programs of graduate study during its first six years of existence. By 1970, the department offered eleven areas of concentration, including Counseling, Developmental, Educational, General Experimental, Human Factors, Industrial-Organizational, Personality, Psychological Measurement/Program Evaluation, Quantitative, School (M.S.), and Social. Shortly thereafter, the Counseling Psychology program was accredited by the American Psychological Association in 1973, adding to the department's credibility and power to attract highly qualified students.

Following this period of rapid expansion, there was a period of consolidation in the 1980's and early 1990's. During this time, the eleven areas of concentration were distilled into five: Counseling, Experimental, Psychometrics and Applied Individual Differences, School, and Social. An external review in 1996 suggested that even five programs might be too many for a faculty of our size. This and the departure of several faculty members resulted in a formal decision to focus the department's resources in its three strongest,

most stable doctoral programs; Cognitive (a refocused experimental program), Counseling, and Social. A terminal, non-thesis master's degree program in general psychology was also added at that time in response to demand and enrollment pressures. The decision was to strengthen and enhance these programs to facilitate the achievement of national visibility in each area, and then to possibly add a fourth doctoral program in the future if resources permitted. The faculty voted in 1999 to make Developmental Psychology the fourth program should resources become available.

This strategy has been very successful. The counseling program recently ranked third in the nation in a survey of research productivity in the four primary counseling psychology journals, and the social program is widely recognized as one of the strongest applied social programs in the country. Also reflective of increased visibility, faculty members from both programs have received prestigious university and national awards, and several faculty members in the social program have significant external grant support from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. The cognitive program is the newest of the three programs. The area has made three new hires in the past three years and admitted its first large class of students, so we are expecting great things from this program as well. More details on each of the programs and its faculty can be obtained on our web site (www.psychology.iastate.edu).

Currently, the department has 49 graduate students enrolled in its three doctoral and master's degree programs. These students come from 17 different states and four countries (Canada, China, Russia, and the US). They are an excellent group of students. Many are supported on department or grant-funded assistantships, and like our faculty, many have received university and national awards, including university teaching and research excellence awards,

national dissertation awards, and NSF fellowships. As you know, our Masters and Ph.D. graduates move on to highly successful careers in a variety of settings! Many have taken academic jobs in colleges and universities all over the country. In addition, a number of them are working in applied settings, such as counseling centers, clinics, and private practice. If you're one of them, we would love to hear from you.



Susan Williams receives LAS advising honor

Susan Williams, academic advisor in the Department of Psychology, has been awarded the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' Ruth W. Swenson Award for Outstanding Advising for the 2002-03 academic year.

This award recognizes outstanding performance as an undergraduate academic advisor over an extended period of time.

Williams coordinates a staff of two graduate advisors and has responsibility for more than 800 students. She advises more students than any other full-time advisor on campus.

She says she and the two graduate assistants serve as the first level of advising while the faculty handle the second level.

"We handle the 'technical' details of advising including course requirements, determining the accuracy of academic records, reviewing course selections, and describing various procedures," she said.

Endowed Chair Honors Former Faculty Member

*From Alsatia Mellecker,
Senior Director of
Development
College of Liberal Arts
and Sciences*



The Psychology Department recently received word that an estate gift of more than \$1 million has been pledged which will create the Martin F. Fritz Endowed Chair in Psychology. This gift is being given in honor of Martin Fritz by his son and daughter-in-law, Kent and Linda Fritz.

Martin F. Fritz became an instructor in psychology at ISU in 1927 and was named a full professor in 1946. His research included the effects of diet on intelligence and learning and improved reading ability in college students. In 1956, he was named director of the ISU Counseling Service, a position he held until he stepped down in 1967.

For many years, Martin Fritz conducted a weekly radio program on WOI covering psychological topics for the general public. He was named an emeritus professor in 1968, and returned to teaching undergraduate psychology at ISU. He taught nearly every undergraduate psychology course offered at ISU.

Martin Fritz's accomplishments are many. In 1952 he was elected as the fourth president of the Iowa Psychological Association. He organized and hosted the first meeting of the Big 8 Counseling Center Conference in 1944, an organizational model years ahead of its time. In addition to his commitment to service and teaching, Martin Fritz published or presented research findings in a wide range of areas.

Kent Fritz earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Iowa State in 1958 and went on to earn a Ph.D. from Ohio State University. He taught and did research for many years at Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio and the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Kent Fritz and his wife Linda currently reside in Madison.

Kent and Linda Fritz's generosity demonstrates the tremendous impact gifts received through bequests can have on organizations. If you'd like to find out how you can remember the Department of Psychology in your estate plans, I'd be happy to visit with you. My toll free number is 866-419-6768.

Psychology faculty

Craig Anderson, chair

Cognitive psychology

Veronica Dark, director
Anne Cleary
Eric Cooper
Kenneth Malmberg
Alison Morris

Counseling psychology

Douglas Epperson, director
Carolyn Cutrona
Lisa Larson
Norman Scott
David Vogel
Nathaniel Wade
Mei Fen Wei

Social psychology

Susan Cross, director
Craig Anderson
Carolyn Cutrona
Meg Gerrard
Frederick Gibbons
Stephanie Madon
Gary Wells

Unaffiliated faculty

Doug Bonett
Rhonda Bonett
Douglas Gentile
Kathy Hanisch
Horabail Venkatagiri

Emeritus

Fred Borgen
Ron Peters

*Department of Psychology
W112 Lagomarcino Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-3180
515-294-1742 (voice)
515-294-6424 (fax)
www.psychology.iastate.edu*

News from the department

Continued from page 1

Psychology, and the other position(s) is part of a new initiative on campus that involves Psychology; that position is in the area of Violence and Aggression (there's more information about this in Craig Anderson's *Chair's Column* in this issue). Also, we are interviewing cognitive psychologists as candidates for a position that is part of another new initiative, this one in the area of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI).

Right now, the Social Psychology and Counseling areas each have 7 people, although Doug Epperson is currently serving a one-year term as Interim Associate Dean (see Doug's article in this edition of the *Newsletter*) while LAS looks for a replacement for Dean Rabideau who left this past summer. There are 5 people in the third area, Cognitive. We are hoping to be able to attract some active young developmental psychologists, as well, with an eye toward building a small program in that area. We also have some very promising new faculty in each of our three core areas Nathaniel Wade, David Vogel, and Mei-Fen Wei are recent additions to Counseling, Stephanie Madon joined the social area 4 years ago, and Cognitive has hired Anne Cleary, Ken Malmberg, and Alison Morris in the past few years. Finally, Doug Gentile is a developmental psychologist who is a new hire as part of the Violence and Aggression Program mentioned above (see the article on Doug's research on page 10). In spite of these new faces, we still have a long way (and a lot of interviewing) to go before we get up to our target goal of 30 full-time faculty.

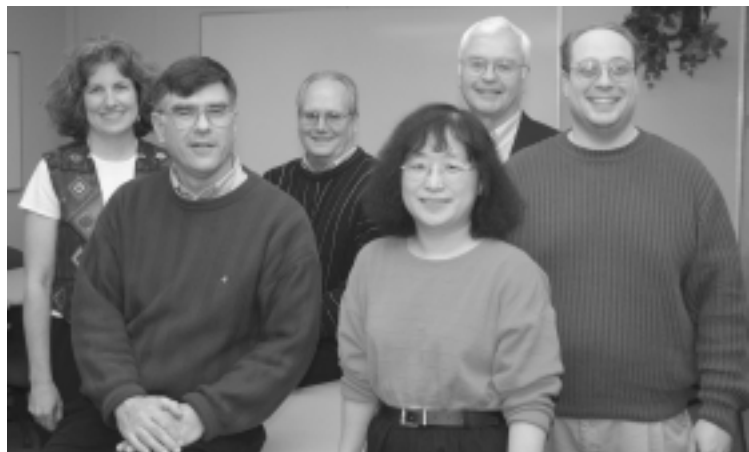
Over the last few years, we have also lost some of our more venerable faculty members to retirement. Former Chair, Dave Edwards retired in 2000, Dick Hughes retired in 2002, Fred Borgen retired this past spring, and Ron Peters will retire in February (see the interview with Ron in this issue of the *Newsletter*). Sadly, we lost two of our longest-term faculty members, Lloyd Avant died in the spring of 2001, and Don Schuster died this past spring. After 23, 13, and 8

years, respectively, at Iowa State, Dan Reschly, Camilla Benbow, and David Lubinski all moved on to Vanderbilt University, where Dan is chair of the Department of Special Education, Camilla is Dean of Education, and David is in the Psychology Department. Most recently, Brad Bushman left us to head off to the University of Michigan; Brad had been at Iowa State since 1990. With all of these comings and goings, that means that come February, Norm Scott will take over the longevity title in the Department (32 years) from Ron Peters (40+ years of distinguished service to ISU and the Department!!).

We still hear from a number of retired faculty with whom many of you are quite familiar: John Bath (who turned 93 in September), Don (Z) Zytowski, Don Charles, Fred Brown, Bob Strahan, Roy Warman, Dick Hughes, and Lee Wolins all still live in the area, along with Dave Edwards. Tom and Kay Hannum live over in Green Hills and still

make it to most of the department parties and picnics. Tom and Kay joined Roy, John, and Don Z along with a large group of current students and faculty in attendance at Fred Borgen's retirement reception in Scheman this past May. Doug Epperson (with considerable help from Kate Spencer and other students) put together a great program for Fred that included good food, great companionship and a lot of reminiscing. True to form, Hannum made sure we stayed on schedule and didn't drag on with things.

So, the department continues to change, with new faces coming constantly, while long-time friends and colleagues leave. We will do our best to keep you posted on who these people are and how their arrivals and departures are altering the face of the department. In the meantime, you can keep us current on the changes in your lives as well.



Counseling program ranked high

The counseling program is ranked third overall in a research productivity study conducted at the University of Akron.

The Diegelman, Uffleman, Wagner, & Diegelman study ranked Iowa State just behind the University of Maryland-College Park and the University of Missouri-Columbia. The study looked at research published in the four major counseling journals from 1996-2000, including the *Journal of Counseling Psychology (JCP)*, the *Journal of Vocational Behavior (JVB)*,

The Counseling Psychologist and the *Journal of Counseling and Development*.

Iowa State ranked third in the individual rankings for both the *JCP* and the *JVB*, the more prestigious publication outlets for empirical research in counseling psychology.

The rankings were determined by placing a value of one point per article published in these four journals. Single article authors were awarded the entire point, whereas articles with multiple authors were assessed using a declining scale.

Media effects with Doug Gentile



Every consultant has a favorite client. For Iowa State developmental psychologist Doug Gentile, that favorite is the National Institute on Media and the Family, which is based in Minneapolis.

"They were trying to designate a rating system for television," said Gentile, who at the time was a research associate at the Minnesota firm of Anderson, Niebur & Associates.

"What got me interested was the ability of one person to make a difference," he continued.

Gentile soon left Anderson, Niebur & Associates to become the director of research for the National Institute on Media and the Family, a position he held for five years before coming to Iowa State as an assistant professor of psychology this fall. He is still affiliated with that organization.

Like he did at his previous position, at Iowa State, Gentile will continue his research on how the media affect children. This can range from media violence in the movies, television, and video games, to the sway that advertising has on children.

"My research is true to the land-grant mission," he said. "It will have influence on others outside of my lab."

Those who Gentile tries to influence are parents, schools and policy makers.

"I have seen that the research I and others are doing in this field has important implications for society and it does make a difference," he said.

One of Gentile's studies looks at the physiological affects of violent video games on youth. He says playing such games not only enhances aggressive thoughts and behaviors, but the body's heart rate, adrenaline and blood pressure will also increase.

"We're studying how video games not only affect us behaviorally but physiologically," he said.

Other studies Gentile is researching include video

game violence against women, how advertising affects preschool-age children and the use of Iowa State's virtual reality system to gauge the effect of more realistic video games.

He recently completed editing a book, *Media Violence and Children: A Complete Guide for Parents and Professionals*, which was published in November by Greenwood Publishing. In the book, Gentile presents a broad range of approaches and findings to confirm that media violence has profoundly negative effects on children.

He says that parents are the ultimate influence on the impact of the media on their children.

"It's as simple as parents monitoring what their kids watch and play on television," he said.

Gentile's research has generated interest from the general mass media - he fields interview requests virtually everyday.

He also makes frequent presentations to parent organizations. The responses he receives from those parents are more than encouraging.

"I would say half of those parents are going home and doing something different with their kids. That's powerfully motivating for me," he said.

"That's what gets me excited about coming to the office every day."

Gentile admits that media violence isn't the only factor that determines aggressive behavior in individuals, including children.

"Poverty, abuse, drugs, gang influence, the neighborhood you live in - it all has an impact," he said. "But media violence is the easiest to control."



Pictured from the left, Carolyn Cutrona, professor; David Vogel, assistant professor; Douglas Bonett, professor

David Vogel and conflict management

Maybe it was the \$60. Or maybe the couples that responded to an e-mail message from David Vogel, assistant professor of psychology, wanted some free counseling.

Whatever it was, Vogel and his research team looking at physiological effects of marital conflict, had no problems whatsoever in getting enough married couples to conduct the study.

"We had a huge response from our electronic inquiry," Vogel said. "We could have run a much larger test if we had the funding.

"The people who are participating in the project seemed really interested in it," Vogel continued.

Vogel, who is the lead researcher on the project, is teaming up with psychology colleagues Douglas Bonett, Carolyn Cutrona, and Ronald Werner-Wilson of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. The group has been awarded a one-year \$73,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health and also received additional funding for the project from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in the form of a Faculty Development Grant.

Much of the study is based on the

assumption that a pattern develops in many relationships and marriages where one partner withdraws from conflict and the other demands answers.

"One will ask for changes," Vogel said, "and the other avoids talking about the issue altogether. This is a particularly destructive behavior and there are a number of theories as to why a couple could get into this pattern."

The theory Vogel and his research group is exploring centers around the physiological effects of this marital conflict. Couples participating in the project will be interviewed on a variety of topics that tend to be sources of conflict in relationships.

Results from previous studies show that women are typically the "demanders" in a relationship when "women's" issues are discussed in a marriage.

"When a couple discusses issues like housework and childcare, issues typically come from the wife's standpoint; the women are more demanding because they want a change," Vogel said. "It flips when it is a subject that tends to be male-oriented."

Physiological reactions vary depending upon the sex of the individual. Vogel says women's physiological responses may not

fluctuate as much as men's do when discussions are held between the spouses. Men however may become overall more emotionally aroused during the discussions.

Vogel says awareness of these results could lead to better marriage counseling and possibly reducing spousal abuse

"Physiological responses are related to violent behavior in couples," he said. "We could look at possible ways to help couples deal with this and other issues."

Vogel is surprised that he is undertaking the survey at all. This is his first external grant, one he says he almost didn't apply for.

"I don't think it would have gone through without this new program," he said.

The program he's talking about is the Mentored Summer Grant Writing Program; a program designed as a follow-up to generic grant-writing workshops, it offers individual mentoring while faculty develop their first grant proposal.

Vogel participated in the program during the summer of 2003 and he was mentored by Cutrona.

"This program encouraged me to apply for the grant in the first place," Vogel said. "It made all the difference from submitting a decent proposal to selecting a winning one."

The mentor must have a successful track record in obtaining grants and must be a scholar in the area in which the young faculty member is working.

"David's proposal had both scientific merit and applications for helping couples in the future," she said. "I suspect that working with this grant writing program helped David cut off at least one year in the review cycle."

ISU Psychology News
Iowa State University
Department of Psychology
W 112 Lagomarcino Hall
Ames, IA 50011-3180

ISU Psychology News

Craig Anderson, chair
Editor: **Rick Gibbons**, professor
Design and some editorial content:
Dave Gieseke, College of Liberal
Arts and Sciences

The ISU Psychology News is published once a year for the alumni, friends, and faculty of the Department of Psychology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Iowa State University.

Please address all correspondence to the editor: www.psychology.iastate.edu/alumni

FAX: 515-294-6424
Mailing Address:
ISU Psychology News
Iowa State University
Department of Psychology
W 112 Lagomarcino Hall
Ames, IA 50011-3180

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, sex, marital status, disability or status as a U.S. Vietnam Era Veteran. Any persons having inquiries concerning this may contact the Director of Affirmative Action, 318 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-7612.