



the Cohort

Office of Student Services
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2010-2011 Clinical Psychology Intern of the Year

Cristin Runfola, PhD, recent graduate of PAU, was awarded the 2010-2011 Martin S. Wallach Award for Clinical Psychology Intern of the Year at the UNC School of Medicine. The Wallach Award is given to the intern that displays significant progress toward excellence as a scientist-practitioner. This includes an appreciation of the empirical basis of psychological work, demonstrated strengths in written and oral expression, and high ethical standards. The awardee also displays a thoughtful style, conscientiousness, genuine care, and respect for patients, and advocacy for the needs of underserved populations.

Dr. Runfola was the UNC Eating Disorders Intern. During her internship year, she first-authored chapters and papers in the areas of genetics and epidemiology of eating disorders. She is now a T32 postdoctoral fellow in eating disorders research at UNC-CH, mentored by Cynthia Bulik.

Introducing Byron Bland, Ombuds/Chaplain at PAU



IN PHOTO: Byron Bland

In August, I assumed the newly-created position of Ombuds/Chaplain at PAU. I come to this position after working 36 years at Stanford both as a campus minister and as the Associate Director of the Stanford Center on International Conflict Resolution (SCICN).

As Ombuds, my goal is to help make PAU an institution in which fair treatment and respect is afforded to faculty, staff, and students alike. As chaplain, my responsibility is to foster a climate of moral, ethical, and spiritual exploration and responsibility, and to be a source of personal support for any member of our community facing difficulties. Although I am an ordained Presbyterian minister, my concern for spiritual and ethical growth transcends the boundaries of any particular religious tradition, and includes those who identify themselves with secular humanism rather than a religious faith.

When Dr. Calvin asked me to join PAU, he did so mindful of my past activities, and in the hope that I would help to foster a more compassionate and pro-community environment at PAU, and institution that is already deeply committed to service and diversity. Over the coming months, I hope to meet not only with students and other members of our community who have personal issues, but also those who are concerned with the conflicts and divisions that plague our society and the larger world. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have ideas or concerns that you would like to discuss.

Research & Presentations

Kidney Transplant Research Presented at APA Annual Conference

by Samantha Rafie, Ph.D. Student



IN PHOTO: Michael Schmidt & Samantha Kountz-Edwards

Fifth year Ph.D. student Samantha Rafie presented a poster, *The Emotional and Social Impact of Kidney Transplantation on Adolescent and Young Adult Recipients*, at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association. Second year students, Samantha Kountz-Edwards and Michael Schmidt, collaborated on this presentation.

Given the risk that the kidney graft may be rejected and fail, recipients must adhere to a strict medication regimen, including immunosuppressants. The downside to these medications is the host of negative side effects, such as acne, stretch marks, weight gain, unusual and excessive hair growth, and gum overgrowth. These changes in physical appearance may affect the recipient as developmental issues center around identity, body image, appearance, sexuality, and independence.

Adolescent and young adult kidney transplant recipients experience moderate levels of depression, and minimal anxiety post-transplantation. Perceived social support acted as a buffer against psychosocial distress, and predicted adjustment. Illness uncertainty was the strongest predictor of psychosocial adjustment.

Alzheimer's Research Presented at the Society of Biological Psychiatry Annual Meeting

by Heather Kenna, Ph.D. Student

Ph.D. student Heather Kenna presented a poster entitled, *Altered Default-Mode Network Functional Connectivity in Insulin Resistant Women at Risk for Alzheimer's Disease*, at the 2011 annual meeting of the Society of Biological Psychiatry in San Francisco.

The study, which stemmed from increasing evidence indicating the importance of insulin resistance (e.g., “pre-diabetes”) as a risk factor for pathological brain again, utilized functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to assess insulin resistance in relation to connectivity between the hippocampus and the “default mode network” (i.e., the brain’s resting state network) in a sample of cognitively-normal postmenopausal women (ages 50-65) at genetic risk for Alzheimer’s disease.

Results demonstrated significantly reduced connectivity in insulin resistant women compared to the control group, as well as significantly worse neuropsychological performance. A manuscript summarizing these results is currently under review.

Ms. Kenna also recently published a review and case report in *Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience* on the psychiatric complications of treatment with corticosteroids. This class of drugs is widely and effectively used in medical conditions ranging from asthma to systemic lupus erythematosus, but can result in troubling side-effects, such as psychosis and depression. The article provides a review of all case reports of corticosteroid-induced psychiatric disturbance published since the last review of this kind in 1981 by Lewis and Smith, including data on risk factors and recommendations for intervention and treatment. In addition, the article presents a case illustrating the difficulty that may be experienced in treating corticosteroid-induced depression, particularly when medical stressors continue and the corticosteroid cannot be quickly reduced.

ARTICLE PUBLISHED ON FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SEXUAL RISK

by Kathryn DeLonga, Psy.D. Student

Fifth year Psy.D. Candidate Kathryn DeLonga co-authored an article in *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*, with co-authors from Stanford University School of Medicine and Chicago School of Professional Psychology. The article, “Loneliness, Internalized Homophobia, and Compulsive Internet Use: Factors Associated with Sexual Risk Behavior Among a Sample of Adolescent Males Seeking Services at a Community LGBT Center,” evaluates a modified version of Torres and Gore-Felton’s Loneliness and Sexual Risk Model, which provides a conceptual framework for understanding the interaction between loneliness and sexual risk behavior among men who have sex with men. The current study evaluates this model among a novel population of adolescent gay, bisexual, and questioning males, ages 14-19.

POSTER ON PERCEPTIONS OF WITNESS CREDIBILITY & DEFENDANT GUILT

by Kathlyn Vo, Ph.D. Student

Fourth year Ph.D. student Kathlyn Vo’s recent research proposal entitled, *Do Jurors’ Gender and Age Moderate Differences in Perceptions of Witness Credibility and Defendant Guilt in a Child Sexual Assault Trial?*, was presented at the 2011 APA Convention.

This study explained the potential moderating effects of juror age and gender on their perceptions of adult versus child testimony and perceived defendant guilt. The data from this study came from a larger study that consisted of 201 female and 169 male participants from California.

Results suggested that there was a moderating effect of gender and age on jurors’ perceptions and confidence of defendant guilt, child credibility, but not social worker credibility. Older age resulted in less child witness credibility and defendant guilt. This study confirmed previous findings that men, older men in particular, tend to be more pro-defense and women tend to be more pro-victim.



IN PHOTO: Melissa Weller

WELLER AUTHORS POSTER ON ADULTS LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

by Melissa Weller, Psy.D. Student

Melissa Weller presented a poster at the APA Convention in Washington DC on recent research conducted at the Stanford University School of Medicine through the Stanford Psychology and Biobehavioral Sciences Laboratory. This is an NIMH-funded research project on a group intervention for trauma in HIV-positive adults in the San Francisco Bay Area. The poster, entitled, *Alcohol and Gender: Implications for Adults Living with HIV/AIDS*, focused on data collected on substance use.

Findings suggest that alcohol is associated with more sexual risk behavior, regardless of gender. The poster also presented statistics noting that men with higher alcohol use at baseline reported higher rates of sexual risk behavior, while women’s sexual behavior became riskier over time.

Co-authors include Rudy Patrick, Charles Kamen, Susanne Lee, Rachael Lazar, Fatin Alhadi, Kaitlin Riley, Cheryl Koopman, and Cheryl Gore-Felton.

Community, etc.



IN PHOTO: Viewing of the Film, "Asian American Voices"

APASA COLLABORATES WITH AACI TO HOST FILM, DINNER, & DIALOGUE

by Koyun Chi

Asian Pacific American Psychological Student Association (APASA) collaborated with Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI) over Fall Quarter to host a film screening, dinner, and dialogue called, Community Voices. The film, "Asian American Voices," documents the challenges and successes of 3 Asian American immigrants who have faced many difficulties upon arriving in the US. However, with the support of their community, the 3 individuals have successfully overcome their obstacles and made positive contributions to society.

With 65 people from the community in attendance, the event consisted of personal stories told by two PAU student speakers (Javier Labourt and Robert Klacansky), small and large group discussions, and group action projects. The event was well-received by participants who not only learned about the history and experiences of Asian American immigrants in the Silicon Valley, but also promoted cross-cultural understanding among various racial and ethnic communities.

Neuropsych Student Group

by Jeannie Celestial, Ph.D. Student

In January 2012, the Association of Neuropsychology Students in Training (ANST) launched at Palo Alto University. The ANST at PAU will be a local chapter of the nationwide ANST, which is the student organization for APA Division 40 (Clinical Neuropsychology). Dr. Amy Wisniewski, Director of the Emphasis in Clinical Neuropsychology at PAU, will be the faculty advisor for ANST.

The purpose of ANST at PAU is to provide opportunities for students who are interested in neuropsychology to come together to discuss training issues, share resources, and find support and community. Through ANST's affiliation with Division 40 of the APA, members can learn about current issues affecting the field of clinical neuropsychology.

Please look out for email about the future events of ANST at PAU. Contact Jeannie Celestial, Chapter Representative, at jcelestial@paloalto.edu for more information about how you can participate and get involved with ANST.

The local chapter of ANST wishes to thank Dr. Allen Calvin for his support of this new exciting organization!

www.div40-anst.com

