

# Psychology News @Wabash

## Welcome to Our Revamped Newsletter!

The last time the Psychology Department had a newsletter was 2006. In those years, teachers have come and gone, students have graduated, and the field of psychology has made hundreds of new discoveries. As our field and faculty have changed, so will our newsletter. If you like what you see, like us on Facebook to stay up to date on our news and feel free to contact us if you would like your accomplishments to be in the next newsletter!

### *A Message from Dr. Schmitzer-Torbert, Psychology Department Chair:*

Greetings from the Wabash Psychology Department! The 2013-14 year has begun, as more than 20 senior psychology majors have begun to plan their Capstone research projects. In September, the Psychology Department hosted a regional undergraduate neuroscience conference (mGluRs, <http://mglurs.org>) which brought 90 students, faculty and panelists to campus to present undergraduate research projects in neuroscience. And, we have some new faces in the department this fall, while Dr. Karen Gunther and Dr. Preston Bost are both on sabbatical, we have been joined by two new visiting faculty: Dr. Teresa Aubele, who is her second year of a two-year position, and Dr. Ryan Rush, who started a two-year position this fall. In the spring, Dr. Gunther will return to classroom, while Dr. Bost will begin a 2 1/2 year term as Wabash's first Institutional Research officer. While we will miss Dr. Bost's expertise in the classroom, this is a great opportunity for Wabash to make use of the research and quantitative skills of our faculty to help the college gather and use data to improve our education of young men.

To help us better connect with alumni and current students, we have also established a blog (<http://blogs.wabash.edu/psychcorner/>) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/WabashPsych>), and over the summer we established a new fund, the Special Psychology Fund, to help us better support student research projects. We do hope to hear from you, our alumni, about what you value from your time at Wabash, and if you would be interested in helping current students (by giving a presentation, connecting a student with an internship opportunity, or supporting a student research project), please contact us!

## Faculty News

# Congratulations to Dr. Karen Gunther for Receiving Tenure



**Terri Aubele-Futch** is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology, who came to Wabash in the fall of 2012 for a two-year position. This fall, she is teaching Introduction to Psychology, Sensation and Perception, and Research Methods in Behavioral Neuroscience.

Terri's research focuses on the influences of sex hormones, like testosterone and estrogen, on complex behaviors like decision-making as well as reproductive behavior. This summer, with support from Division III, Terri was able to perform research with **Bradley Wise '14** studying the effects of nitric oxide on mating behavior. **Bradley Wise '14** presented his work at the Midwest/Great Lakes Undergraduate Research Symposium in Neuroscience, which was hosted at Wabash College in September. The data from this experiment should contribute to a publication, and Terri hopes to continue it this fall with her Research in Behavioral Neuroscience class.

Terri was just married this summer, and lives off of East Wabash with her new husband, Michael. In their spare time, Terri and Michael enjoy traveling to wineries and breweries in the state of Indiana, catching up on their favorite TV shows, and visiting with friends and family.



**Bobby Horton** came to Wabash in 2001. This fall, he is teaching the all-freshman section of Introductory Psychology, Research Methods and Statistics, and Research in Social Psychology (the 300-level Social Psychology course).

Bobby's research focus is on the origins and consequences of dispositional narcissism, including investigations of the influence of social networking website use and reality TV exposure on narcissism and the links between narcissism and life satisfaction and a sense of purpose in life. His students are also starting to explore the performance and interpersonal consequences of competition, including how different types of individuals react differently to competitive environments.

Bobby lives three miles west of campus with his wife, Naomi, and three children, Marshall, Whitman, and Maesa. The family spends significant time at the Boys and Girls Club soccer fields (all three kids play and Bobby coaches) and at the Crawfordsville High School swimming pool (the two boys swim for the local club with Maesa eager to join them). When they are not running to a sporting event, the family likes to hike with friends on the Sugar Creek Trail and at local state parks.



**Karen Gunther** is a sensory neuroscientist in her 7<sup>th</sup> year at Wabash, who was tenured last fall. Her area of specialization is color vision - how the eyes and brain process light so that we see it as colored. She got into color vision

because she loves science and is a quilter - this allows her to play with colors and learn more about how the brain works, but not to have to make a living as an artist. Karen teaches Sensation and Perception, Research in Sensation and Perception, Cognitive Neuropsychology, Introduction to Neuroscience, plus she rotates through the department's core courses of Introduction to Psychology, Stats and Research Methods, Literature Review, and Capstone. She has also taught Freshman Tutorials on Interdisciplinary Color (team-taught with Stephen Morillo in History) and Science & Pseudoscience.

Karen has recently submitted two articles on color vision to the Journal of the Optical Society of America A. She also published in JOSA A with a capstone student, Rob Dalhaus III (W'11): 2012, A tritan *Waldo* would be easier to detect in the periphery than a red/green one: Evidence from visual search. *JOSA A*, 29(2), A298-A305. In addition, she has published a revision of the Sensation & Perception course to use "non-fiction novels" (true books with a story line) instead of a regular textbook - student exam performance was better when they had story lines on which to hang the facts from lecture. She is currently prepping a new course on Health Psychology, with a strong diversity angle.

Karen is married to Nestor Matthews, the Sensation & Perception professor at Denison. She lives in Crawfordsville, he lives in Granville, OH. Karen has two cats, Sushi and Sashimi. She moved to Indiana with two different cats, Hippocampus and Amygdala - unfortunately both have now passed on (Hippocampus just this past summer, at age 20 years - she was older than  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's of our students!).



**Eric Olofson** is a developmental psychologist in his sixth year at Wabash. In addition to teaching the developmental sequence and the other required courses for majors, he teaches a course on fatherhood (Psy 105) and

another on language acquisition, which includes visits to a school for children with autism and to research laboratories (at IU and Purdue).

Although Eric's graduate work at the University of Oregon was on infant cognitive development, his interests have expanded since arriving at Wabash. He is part of a group of researchers that developed a parent report scale for children's theory of mind, his research with **Hung Duong '13** on promoting prosocial behavior in kindergarten classrooms was presented at a conference in 2011, and he recently completed a study on metaphor comprehension in children with autism spectrum disorders. During this past two summers, he has worked with research interns, **Conor Frame '13** and **Andy Walsh '14**, who were supported by a generous contribution from **Jim Holmes '59**.

Eric and his wife Carrie live in Crawfordsville with their two daughters, 4-year-old Soren and 2-year-old Sadie, who give Eric more anecdotes for his child development and fatherhood courses than he could ever hope to use in one lifetime. When he's not immersed in parenthood, he enjoys playing Ultimate Frisbee with students on the mall.



**Ryan Rush** is a new visiting assistant professor in the psychology department at Wabash College. He grew up in a small town near Reading, Pennsylvania (about an hour from Philadelphia), before moving to Malibu, California to pursue his

B.A. in psychology at Pepperdine University. Ryan went on to attend the University of California, Riverside where he earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology. This year Ryan will be teaching courses in Cognition and Psychology and Law at Wabash College.

Ryan's research focuses on human memory in social and forensic contexts. His current projects concentrate on the processes by which people communicate, build, and alter the details of their memory through social interaction and how people make critical decisions using memory (e.g., eyewitness identifications). More specifically Ryan is interested in how discussing a shared experience with another person will alter the details and accuracy of that memory, and what decision processes underlie important decisions like identifying a person from a lineup. He is also interested in issues of social justice and policy reform.

In his limited free time Ryan enjoys traveling both domestically and internationally as much as possible. He also tries to spend as much time outdoors as possible. Ryan enjoys hiking, kayaking, and generally exploring wherever he might find himself. Being new to the state of Indiana and the Midwest he is excited to explore the local state parks, attractions, and metropolitan areas.



**Neil Schmitzer-Torbert** came to Wabash in 2006, and is returning to the classroom from sabbatical this fall, and is the new Chair of the Psychology Department. This fall, he is teaching Research Methods and Statistics, Drugs and Behavior, and a

Freshman Tutorial (*Me, My Self and My Brain*, a course that uses science fiction and current research in neuroscience to explore the foundations of consciousness and personal identity).

Neil's research focuses on memory systems in the brain, and he just completed a 3-year grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse to study the effect of cocaine on habit learning in rats. The grant allowed the department to purchase a new cryostat and other lab equipment, supported nine summer research internships, and provided funds for students to present their work at national research meetings. The most recent summer interns, **Josh Stowers '14**, **Jacob Owens '14** and **Romeo Amoa '13** traveled to New Orleans last fall to present their research at the Society for Neuroscience Annual Meeting, and in May, **Jacob Owens '14** and a previous summer intern, **Connor O'Rear '14**, presented their findings in Chicago in the Psi Chi poster session of the Midwestern Psychological Association Meeting. This year, Neil is developing a new set of experiments, looking at the effectiveness of cognitive training video games to improve spatial memory in humans.

Neil lives over on Main Street with his wife, Wendy and two daughters. The family spends much of their time watching the kids swim with the Sugar Creek Swim Club. In their spare time, the family enjoys hiking on the Sugar Creek Trail and local state parks.

## Congratulations to the Class of 2013

*The following group of Wabash Men left these hallowed halls with an AB in Psychology, and will move on to the next chapter of their life:*

Nathaniel Borden, Hung Duong, Jason Farbstein, Conor Frame, Robert Hechinger, Pedro Martinez, Garrett McCarthy, Kyle Mener, Liam Smith, Xumin Sun, Jamen Suter-Donaldson, Tyler Swaim, Nicholas Swintz, and Nathan Walters

## Awards and Recognition

Distinguished Senior in Psychology for the Class of 2013:

Nathaniel Carroll Borden & Liam Louis Smith

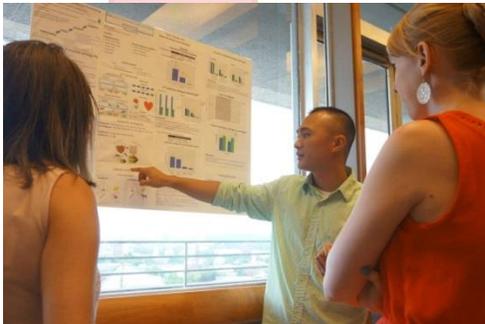
Senior Capstone Award for the Class of 2013:

Hung Mahn Duong

## Student Research

During the summer of 2013, several Wabash students participated in summer research or presented their research findings.

Yunan “Charles” Wu ‘15 worked at the Laboratory of Development Studies at Harvard University with Professor Jesse Snedeker on the relationship between executive function and sentence processing.



Andy Walsh '14 worked with Dr. Eric Olofson and Dr. Dare Baldwin from the University of Oregon to attempt to measure the change in children’s understanding of others’ mental states

Connor O’Rear ’14 and Jacob Owens’14 presented their poster project, *Facilitation of habit-learning by post-training infusion of cocaine into the infralimbic cortex*, at the Psi Chi poster session of the Midwestern Psychological Association’s annual meeting in Chicago.

Connor O’Rear ’14 worked as Professor Robert Horton’s research assistant, focusing on collecting data for temporal analysis of child reports of parenting behavior.

## Brain Day!

On Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at the Carnegie Museum in Crawfordsville, IN, the Psychology Department hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Brain Day. The theme of the day was “Carnival of Brains”, where people of all ages played games like the Prism-Goggle Cornhole, the Lie Detector Game, and the Humpty Dumpty Brain Puzzle. Like the Society for Neuroscience’s “Brain Awareness Week”, Brain Day is designed to

demonstrate basic principles of brain



function, helping participants gain appreciation and knowledge of the brain and how to take care of them. Dr. Karen Gunther, Dr. Teresa Aubele, Dr. Neil Schmitzer-Torbert, and several Wabash students led Brain Day, helping to celebrate five “brainy” years with the department.

## Social Media



Want an easy way to connect with, students, alumni, and faculty? Well join us on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/WabashPsych>

## Psi Chi News

Psi Chi is the International Honor Society in Psychology, founded in 1929 for the purposes of encouraging, stimulating, and maintaining excellence in scholarship, and advancing the science of psychology. Psi Chi is a member of the Association of College Honor Societies and is an affiliate of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Association for Psychological Science (APS).

At our Annual Psi Chi BBQ, Douglas Baker and Brock Smith were officially inducted into the Psi Chi Honor Society. The members of Psi Chi are currently planning a wide range of possible events for the future. More updates to come.

## Alumni News: Back for Big Bash

This summer in July, the psychology department welcomed back the psychology alumni to the Bankhart Lounge in Baxter. 10 alumni were able to join us, including Mark Rain '73, Arthur Howe '82, Ralph Olsen '83, and several others. Graduates



ranging from 1960 to 2003 met with Karen Gunther, Eric Olofson, Bobby Horton, Terri Aubele, Neil Schmitzer-Torbert, and rising senior Andy Walsh '14 to discuss how careers have flourished since graduating and to reminisce on their time at Wabash. If you were unable to attend, feel free to add your stories to the Alumni Update form below and give us your information so you can be reminded of

next summer's Big Bash celebration and the department's reception.

# Alumni Update

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Please send your contact information to Dr. Neil Schmitzer-Torbert at [torbertn@wabash.edu](mailto:torbertn@wabash.edu)

## Contact Us

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## The Psychology Department's Special Psychology Fund

Every year, students participate in research from many different fields of psychology. Students have the opportunity to take part in research by doing independent study, aiding a professor, or waiting until their senior capstone project. Though many projects require little equipment, some studies, like tests on animals, require a significant amount of money to be successful. Students also get the chance to present their research at conferences or at the college's Student Research Days. Attending a conference provides a great experience that helps our Psychology majors prepare for graduate school and provides them with a possible glimpse of the future.

With that in mind, the Psychology Department encourages you to donate to the Special Psychology Fund, to provide students with the tools they need to research thought-provoking topics and give them the opportunity to present their hard work at future conferences.

To donate, send a check or money order to the Wabash College Psychology Department for the Special Psychology Fund. *You can also simply earmark the Special Psychology Fund in your annual giving for a fast and easy way to donate.* If you have any questions, feel free to contact Dr. Neil Schmitzer-Torbert at [torbertn@wabash.edu](mailto:torbertn@wabash.edu)