



Department Research
Featured in Prestigious
Publications



Psychology Students
Recognized Across
Campus



Graduate Student
Wins Top
Award

Psychology Update

The Psychology Update is a newsletter written for Alumni and Friends of the Department of Psychology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham

Dr.
Crowe



Featured on NPR

Dr. Michael Crowe was interviewed on NPR by Dan Carsen of WBHM's Southern Education Desk in early July. The topic was relationships among education quality, racial disparities, and cognitive performance in the elderly. Dr. Crowe's primary research expertise focuses on identifying risk and protective factors for cognitive decline and dementia in older adults. He was



called to the show because of his current research where he focuses specifically on the association between

factors related to health disparities (e.g., quality of education, diabetes) and cognitive function in older adulthood.

Constraint-Induced Movement Teletherapy

Researchers in the department were recently featured in the Oct. 1 edition of *TodayinPT.COM* in an article entitled "Dialed In." With support from the National Institutes of Health, researchers are conducting a randomized clinical trial using constraint-induced movement therapy, an approach developed at UAB, with patients more than one year following a stroke who suffered mild to moderate impairment.

CI Movement therapy takes place in the patient's home and is a behavioral approach to physical rehabilitation. Therapy includes intense training of the more affected arm for several hours daily for multiple consecutive days. The less affected arm is restrained during training hours and immediately following the treatment period. These techniques are designed to transfer gains from the treatment setting to daily life.

"It's a therapy with strong evidence of efficacy, and the purpose of this trial is to see if we can find ways the therapy can be disseminated on a more widespread basis by reducing barriers for patients to access treatment," said primary investigator Gitendra Uswatte, PhD, associate professor of psychology at UAB.

The study began in June 2010 and is expected to be completed in March 2014. Researchers plan to enroll 58 participants.



Science Unbound Foundation Recognizes UAB Researchers

The Science Unbound Foundation announced its 2012 award winners for best scientific papers by investigators. Several UAB investigators walked away with prizes. Among the winners was Donna Murdaugh, recent master's graduate from UAB's Department of Psychology. Murdaugh was awarded best paper by a UAB student in obesity-related research. Her paper, "fMRI reactivity to high-calorie food pictures predicts short- and long-term outcome in a weight-loss program." Institutions that were also recognized included the New York Obesity Research Center at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center.



Early education may affect cognitive abilities of seniors, UAB expert says

By Kevin Storr



Childhood education can predict cognitive performance in later life, says new University of Alabama at Birmingham research published online in the *Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences*. In this rare look at the quality of education, researchers reported high student-teacher ratios in schools are associated with worse cognitive function while a longer school year is associated with better cognitive function in older adults.

“Many studies have found that having fewer years of education is associated with a number of negative health outcomes throughout life, including Alzheimer’s disease,” says Michael Crowe, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the UAB Department of Psychology and lead author of the study. “However, little research has explored the potential impact of quality of education on aging. This issue is particularly relevant for older blacks who grew up during the era of segregated schools, when disparities in educational opportunities were even starker than they are today.”

Crowe says several explanations for the effect of education on cognitive aging exist, each with some support. First, early schooling may provide intellectual stimulation during a critical period of brain development that could enhance brain function throughout life. Second, those who have more education may have jobs or leisure activities that lead them to be more mentally active and delay cognitive decline. Or those with more or better education may be good test-takers and perform well on cognitive tests despite subtle problems in brain function.

The research, funded by the Deep South Resource Center for Minority Aging Research, was ancillary to the UAB Study of Aging, a longitudinal study of community-dwelling older adults in central Alabama. Crowe says it is a rare look at the effect of quality of education in a field in which previous studies have focused on years of education, and the findings underscore the lifelong effects of disparities in educational opportunities. Crowe and the research team studied 433 participants, 52 percent of whom were black.

Reported location of early schooling was linked to county-level data from Alabama State Department of Education records in the 1930s.

“Even though everyone we studied grew up in Alabama, we found a broad range in funding, teacher-student ratio and length of school year both within and between the black schools and white schools across the 40 counties in which participants went to school,” says Crowe. “We saw some school years with less than 100 days per year and others with around 180 days per year. On average, school-year length was 32 days shorter for black schools. You could have one person with 10 years of education that technically went to school a couple of years longer than someone else with the same education level but on the low end of the school-year spectrum.”

Crowe says poor-quality education increases the potential for misdiagnoses among seniors because cognitive test scores typically are compared to the average performance of others the same age and education level. Below-average scores could lead to lost financial independence and medical decision-making powers or premature commitment to a nursing home.

“A worrisome score on a cognitive screening test always should be followed with a more in-depth medical and neuropsychological evaluation because factors such as vision, hearing, lack of sleep, depression and medications can cause low cognitive performance. Health-care professionals without geriatric training are more likely to misdiagnose Alzheimer’s disease based on brief screening tests,” Crowe says.

He suggests that people could undergo cognitive testing at age 65, when the risk of Alzheimer’s disease and other common forms of dementia still is relatively low. “This creates a baseline that could be used if you later become worried about changes in memory or other abilities.”

-With permission of the UAB Reporter

Undergraduate Spotlight: A.T. Helix

Junior A.T. Helix was featured in the October issue of UAB Magazine in a profile written by Matt Windsor in the “Speak You Mind” section. Helix was spotlighted for her work with the UAB chapter of Active Minds in which she is the founder and president. According to the article, “Helix says Active Minds is a national organization whose mission is to change the conversation about mental health.”

Helix realized at a young age that her true passion is to help those who cannot help themselves. She is now well on her way to reaching her career goal of becoming a clinical psychologist.

Helix is a Neuroscience major from Huntsville, Al who in addition to being the president of Active Minds, is also a member of the Global and Community Leadership Honors Program. For her undergraduate research she is studying the glycosylation pathway in schizophrenia in the lab of James Meador-Woodruff, M.D., Ph.D., chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurobiology.



Outstanding Neuroscience Student Receives Dean’s Award

Earlier this year, Kavita Nadendla was named the recipient of the Neuroscience Program’s Outstanding Student Award. By receiving this award, Nadendla qualified as a candidate for the College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Award as the Outstanding Undergraduate Student. The Dean’s Award was announced in mid-April with Nadendla as its proud recipient. Nadendla, who has never made less than an “A” in her life, graduated last spring with a double major in Neuroscience and Biology. She was a member of the University Honors Program and the Early Medical School Acceptance Program.

For those of you keeping count, this is two in a row for the neuroscience program. Last year, Caitlin Aamodt, received the CAS Award as an Anthropology major before transferring to our program. She is currently working in the lab of Dr. David Sweatt, chair of Neurobiology.



Students Win First Prize

Graduate Student Aaron Davis won first prize for his poster at the 25th Anniversary Midwest Regional Conference on Pediatric Psychology in Milwaukee in late April. TRIP Lab’s Summer Scholars, Shannon Denny and Melissa Walters also took home first prize at the UAB Summer Research Expo in late July.

Pictured Below:
Shannon Denny and Melissa Walters—1ST PLACE, Session: Public Health and Social and Behavioral Sciences I & II



Softball Team Wins Summer League Championship



The Psychology Intramural Softball Team, Pink Freud, won the Summer League Championship on Aug. 6 in a two game playoff series.

Front row (L to R): Twana Tyson, Sarah West, Mark Pennick **Back row** (L to R): Matt Waesche, Danny Proto, William Neumeier (**Team Captain**), Erin Dehon, Kate McCalla, Lindsay Sutton, Donny Not pictured: Laura Dreer, Shawneen Pazienza, Chelsey Sterling, Molly Hensler, Juliette Galindo, Josh Shumen, David Knight, Tyler Rickards

2011-2012 Graduate Student Awards In the Department of Psychology

Outstanding Graduate Student in
Developmental Psychology –
Pariya Fazeli (Mentors: Karlene
Ball and David Vance)

Outstanding Graduate Student in
Medical Clinical Psychology -
Kelly Ross Wolfe
(Mentors: Avi Madan-Swain and
Rajesh Kana)

Gregg Steele Outstanding
Graduate Student in Behavioral
Neuroscience -**Amber Shaffer**
(Mentor: Alan Randich)

Overall Outstanding Graduate
Student in Psychology –
Kelly Ross Wolfe

The Department's nominee for the
Dean's Graduate Research Award -
Kelly Ross Wolfe.



Graduate Students Score 100% on Match Day

Shiquina Andrews
MEDVAMC– Houston, TX

Patricia Barreto
North Florida / South Georgia
VA Health System

Jacquelynn Copeland
Southwest Consortium/NMVAHC

Aaron Davis
Baylor College-
Medical Psychology &
Behavioral Science

Margaux Barnes Gillian
Alpert Medical School of
Brown University

Natalie P. Goodwin
Baylor College-
Medical Psychology &
Behavioral Science

Elisabeth S. Mitchell
U N. Carolina-Chapel Hill
TEACCH

Adam Clay Perkins
Dwight David Eisenhower
Army Medical Center

Andrea C. Sartori
VA Medical Center
Minneapolis, MN

Kelly Ross Wolfe
Nationwide Children's Hospital

Congratulations 2011-2012 Graduates!



Behavioral Neuroscience Program

Kathy Avsar, Ph.D.
Demet Gurler, Ph.D.
Amber Shaffer Ph.D.

Lifespan Developmental Psychology Program

Desiree DeJong, Ph.D.
Joan Dodson, Ph.D.
Pariya Fazeli, Ph.D.
Bridgett Kennedy, Ph.D.
Dana Smith, Ph.D.
Wei Su, Ph.D.

Medical Clinical Psychology Program

Katherine Walker Byington, Ph.D.
Annie Artiga Gerdner, Ph.D.
Donald Labbe, Ph.D.
Timothy O'Brien, Ph.D.
Trista Perez, Ph.D.

Robinson Named DSS Outstanding Faculty Member

Dr. Christopher Robinson was selected as the recipient of the Disability Support Services Outstanding Faculty Award for the Spring 2012 semester. This award is presented during the Fall and Spring semesters to a UAB faculty member who is dedicated to providing equal access and opportunity to students with disabilities.

Students who are registered with DSS are encouraged to nominate professors who promote an inclusive classroom, value diverse learning styles and abilities, challenge and support students with disabilities, and believe in working with all students.



Dr. Clay Receives NIH Funding

Dr. Olivio Clay recently received funding from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Dr. Clay's areas of research include racial/ethnic disparities, caregiving, social support, and cognition and mobility in older adults. The funding is awarded for a period of one year.

Graduate Students Receive Div. 36 Student Research Awards



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Five graduate students in the department of psychology: Philip Bonanno, Steven Pirutinsky, Nina C Reynolds, Frances Victory, and Gary J. Phillips, were each awarded \$700, the maximum award received in this division of APA based on their research proposals. Proposals were reviewed by a team of four leading psychology scholars. Gary Phillips becomes the first winner of the Div. 36 Student Research Award. Each award recipient is expected to present at either the APA Mid-Year Conference or the 2013 APA Conference that will be held August 2013 in Hawaii.

Dr. Shaffer Awarded Prestigious Fellowship

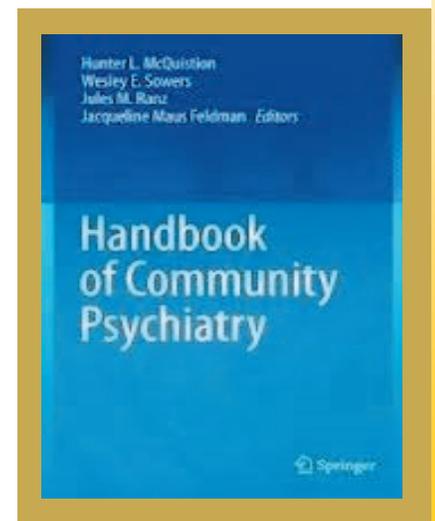
Dr. Amber Shaffer, a recent graduate of the Behavioral Neuroscience Ph.D. Program in Psychology, was awarded a John J. Bonica Trainee Fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh Pain Center. The John J. Bonica Trainee Fellowship is one of the most prestigious awards given in the area of pain research.



Graduate Student, Contributes to Chapter in *Handbook of Community Psychiatry*

Graduate Student, Natalie Goodwin, was recently published in the *Handbook of Community Psychiatry* alongside two colleagues in the Department of Psychiatry at UAB.

Goodwin contributed to the chapter "Program Evaluation and Quality Management." The *Handbook of Community Psychiatry* was released earlier this year.

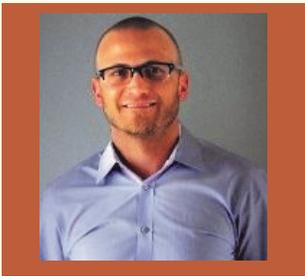


New Faculty in the Department of Psychology



Despina Stavrinou, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor formerly on faculty at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Department of Medicine

Bulent Turan, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor formerly at the University of California, San Francisco.



Burel Goodin, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Completed his postdoctorate at the University of Florida, Comprehensive Center for Pain Research.

Sarah O'Kelley, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor Completed her predoctoral internship and postdoctoral fellowship at UAB's Civitan-Sparks Clinics where she was on staff until 2009.



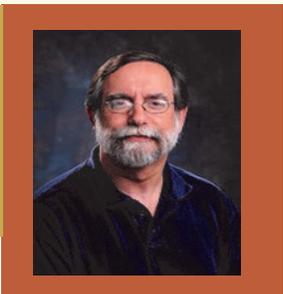
Laura Stoppelbein, Ph.D.
Associate Professor formerly on faculty at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, Jackson, MS.

Robert Sorge, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor formerly a postdoctoral fellow at McGill University, Montreal, Canada.



New Doctoral Program Directors

Director, Medical/Clinical Psychology Graduate Program
Associate Professor of Psychology and of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurobiology



Edwin W. Cook III, Ph.D.



Franklin R. Amthor, Ph.D.

Interim Director, Behavioral Neuroscience Psychology Graduate Program
Professor of Neurophysiology and Neuroanatomy

Incoming 2012-2013 Graduate Students



Medical Clinical Program

Hailey Bulls.....University of Florida
 Sarah Gillot.....Butler University
 Amber Gregory.....San Diego State University
 Christina Jagielski.....Indiana University
 Vinetra King.....UAB
 Jilian Nieman.....Michigan State University
 Caroline Oates.....University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
 Jesse Passler.....University of Central Florida
 Desti Shepard.....Southeastern Louisiana University
 Hayley Wells.....Northwestern University



Lifespan Developmental Program

Meredith Henry.....Villanova University
 Haley Johnson.....Birmingham Southern
 Danielle Lorch.....Loyola University
 Benjamin McManus.....UAB
 Eva Trinh.....UAB
 Shannon Wittig.....Henderson State



Behavioral Neuroscience Program

Wesley Burge.....Auburn University
 Thomas DeRamus.....UAB
 Joseph Griffis.....UAB



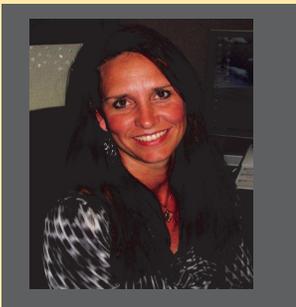
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**The Department of Psychology
would like to hear from you!**

PLEASE SEND US INFORMATION
about your professional and personal
achievements for placement in our
magazine.

Thank you to those who contributed
information for this edition of the UAB
Psychology Update. Please share this
update with colleagues and friends.

New Staff in the Psychology Office



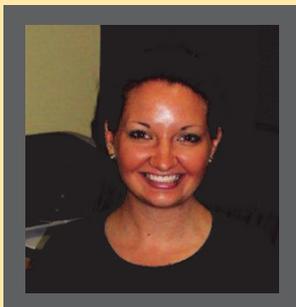
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