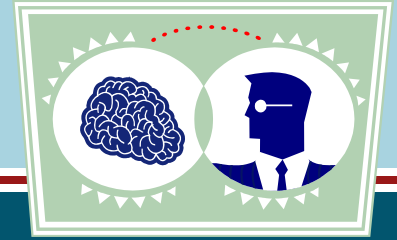


# Psychology Department Update

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Department of Psychology, University of Florida  
www.psych.ufl.edu



## Introducing Our New Chair



Neil Rowland

This past fall Dr. Neil Rowland was selected as the new chair of the University of Florida Psychology Department, becoming its 12<sup>th</sup> chair since 1931. Dr. Rowland succeeds Dr. Martin Heesacker who served as the chair since 2000. The transition should be a smooth one since Neil worked closely with Marty as the associate chair for the past eight years.

Dr. Rowland has been at the University of Florida since 1981 after receiving his Ph.D. in 1974 from the University of London. He is a member of the behavioral neuroscience area and served as its area training director from 1990-2005.

Most of his research since that time has continued in the area of the neural control of feeding and drinking in rats or mice, but more recently has extended to studying drug self-administration as well as the role of environmental factors in the control of food intake, and eventually in the development and maintenance of obesity. Neil currently has five graduate and seven undergraduate students working on these topics in his laboratory.

Dr. Rowland has authored well over 250 research papers and has received funding from several sources including the National Institutes of Health. In addition to his research, Neil has taught the department's Introduction to Psychology class, as well as more specialized courses in behavioral neuroscience.

Neil has assembled a new administrative team to help him with the management of the Department.



Julie Graber

Dr. Julie Graber will serve as a new Associate Chair, stepping in for Dr. Rowland as he takes the Chair's position. Dr. Robin West takes over for Dr. Greg Neimeyer as Graduate Coordinator.

Dr. W. Keith Berg has graciously agreed to remain as undergraduate coordinator until his retirement at the June 30th. At that time, Dr. Lise Abrams will assume that role.



Lise Abrams

In the accompanying *Chair's Report*, Neil outlines the challenges and goals for the department in the next few years.



Robin West

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# The Chair's Report

By Dr. Neil E. Rowland, Chair

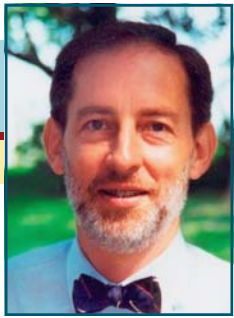


To say that these are challenging times is perhaps an understatement. There are national and local forces at work that are changing the face of education in general and higher education in particular. Some of these forces are producing fiscal challenges and some are producing intellectual challenges.

Fiscal difficulties are the most evident because of their media coverage, and include that fact that Florida's tuition rate is among the lowest in the nation and that the state payment to the institution is correspondingly low. A more significant but less known fact is that while the State has a funding formula based on student credit hours, the percentage of that total that is actually funded is quite variable, at

the whim of the Governor and legislature. This percentage has been declining for several years in parallel with the decline in State revenue from other sources. As a result of this, UF and in particular the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) found itself in a financial crisis last year, and we have now endured a full year of budgetary belt-tightening and a hiring freeze. Psychology has managed this year quite well relative to many other departments in CLAS, in no small measure because our grant-derived indirect cost returns constitute a "war chest" and because of the good humor of our faculty and students who have exhibited a selfless capacity to do more with less.

*(Continued on page 3)*



## Saying Thanks to Our Former Chair

As we welcome our new chair, we want to thank Dr. Martin Heesacker (Chair, 2000-2007) for his dedicated

service to the Department. During the first few years of his administration, significant gains were made in faculty numbers and programs, perhaps most notably the establishment of an "Aging Mind" group within the Developmental area. This articulated with a University-wide emphasis on Aging, and the establishment of an Institute on Aging in addition to the extant Center for Gerontological Studies. Marty successfully convinced the administration to permanently annex space in McCarty Hall to Psychology to accommodate this growth. Additionally, significant gains were made in our budget from the College, most notably in graduate student support, which allowed us to increase our graduate numbers as well as bring their funding to a nationally competitive level. In part forced by the obligatory transition of the University accounting system to a new electronic platform, he made important administrative and staff changes that have resulted in a more efficient and streamlined deployment of our office staff.

Unfortunately, as several previous chairs have experienced, the State's economy turned sour and so Marty's last few years were particularly difficult, with faculty leaving or retiring and not being replaced, staff hiring freezes, and flat or declining College budgets. But the reorganizations and

economies that have been forced by this retraction of resources place us in a great position to spring back vigorously.

Our physical facilities remain old, cramped and windowless. Marty developed elaborate plans, notably the Heesacker half-donut, for an expansion of the Psychology building and for a while it seemed this might make it high enough on the University's building priority list to stand a chance. But it was not to be: private donations or grants to seed this process now seem to be essential, and this remains a significant challenge for future chairs.

After completing two year research sabbatical, Marty plans to return to the counseling area as a full-time faculty member.

### A History of Leadership

1931-57: Elmer D. Hinckley	1972-88: Merle E Meyer
1957-58: Stan E. Wimberly (Interim)	Spr 1980 : Donald A. Dewsbury (Acting)
1958-69: Wilse B. Webb	1988-95: Robert D. Sorkin
1969-70: Henry Pennypacker (Interim)	1995-00: Marc N. Branch 2000-07: Martin Heesacker
1970-71: Robert C. Ziller	2007- : Neil E. Rowland
1971-72: Marvin E. Shaw (Interim)	

# The Chair's Report

By Dr. Neil E. Rowland, Chair

I am concerned, however, about the long term consequences of this austerity: it will almost certainly take many years to rebuild the department to the productivity of 3-4 years ago before the fiscal downturn.

The intellectual challenges exerted, often via political process, are more subtle but ultimately will have more enduring consequences than temporary fiscal cycles. In a major 2007 higher education report commissioned by US Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, the main recommendations included:

- improved access to and success in higher education
- a change from reputation to performance based evaluation of institutions
- the need for continuous innovation and improvement especially in science education

These may not seem controversial, but their impact will be tremendous. The first means that we have to improve graduation rates, which at least at the Institutional level will entail reaching out to those about to fall through the cracks in the system - or putting more resources to help marginal students rather than the very best. The second means that institutions are now competing with each other. Already we have seen the advent of "Academic Learning Compacts" (what we say we will teach the students) and a newly required outcome measure that is not based simply on grades in classes. In Psychology, we plan to implement this using a national test (ETS major field test in Psychology), and this will automatically put our scores in a public place for comparison with other institutions. To what extent might we be pressured to "teach to the test"? The third of these points requires constant curricular reform and incorporation of modern technologies into real and virtual learning environments.

Believe it or not, there are many voters who believe that students learn less in 4 years at University than they would have learned in the workplace, and that the investment of public funds is therefore wasted. As educators, we have to respond to that assault by giving our elected officials real data of the kind suggested in the Spellings report on what is called the "Value Added" aspect of higher education.

So these next few years will of necessity be a period of addressing these "value added" aspects. Already our department has been "downsized" through the hiring freeze and retirements, and it is quite likely that our ability to re-grow will be dependent on us demonstrating value added aspects to the upper administration. What is it that we do best? What new programs will we develop? How do we plan to make the department change with the times? How can we best manage our current resources to achieve optimal outcome measures?

The answers to these questions are complex. At the simplest level, what we should do best (at least better than any of our State peer institutions) is research. Our research quality is measured by grants received, publications, and PhD production. So these are our priorities. But most of the Value Added metrics are based on undergraduate education, so we have to balance faculty effort between research and teaching. This past fall I developed a new policy that at its core allows a reduced teaching load for research active faculty. New junior faculty will also have a reduced teaching load with the expectation that they will write grants to support a vigorous research lab. If we can succeed, we have a realistic shot at breaking the national top 20 Psychology departments.

This is YOUR department, so I hope that you all share these aspirations. We all have to work hard toward these goals, but there also has to be good coordination of effort and communication. I need to hear from you if you have ideas that can help us move forward - my door is always open. We hope that you like this new website, and this Departmental Newsletter for students, faculty, staff and alumni, but we will be happy to hear constructive ideas for improvement. While I can routinely ask those at UF for information, I would like to hear news from our alumni for inclusion in the newsletter: e-mail me at [nrowland@ufl.edu](mailto:nrowland@ufl.edu). Finally, it would be remiss to look forward without honoring the past and in particular the individuals who built the department to its present stature. In this spirit, with help from Drs Don Dewsbury, Hank Pennypacker and Bernie Webb, we have created a space on the website (<http://www.psych.ufl.edu/Alumni/history.pdf>) to recognize the faculty members who have made significant contributions to the department during its 77 year history.

# Faculty Spotlight



Dr. Timothy Vollmer, one of the Psychology Department's most prolific researchers, was recently appointed as the Colonel Allan R. and Margaret G. Crow Term Professor in Psychology. As a member of the Behavioral Analysis Program, Tim's research involves the application of basic learning principles, such as positive reinforcement, to socially relevant human problems. Currently, his work centers on two areas, children with developmental disabilities, such as autism, and child welfare.

Tim has had a long history of association with the UF Psychology department. He received his Ph.D. from UF in 1992. He was then appointed as an assistant professor at LSU and later moved to the University of Pennsylvania, School of Medicine as an associate professor in the behavioral psychology program. By 1998, however, the Gator Nation was calling and he returned to the Behavioral Analysis Program at UF and quickly moved up the ranks to full professor.

Throughout most of his career Tim's research has focused on the assessment and treatment of severe behavior disorders displayed by individuals with developmental disabilities. He has applied laboratories in two local schools and currently is in discussion with a third local school. His graduate students work at those sites conducting behavioral assessments, behavioral interventions, and teaching students with autism and developmental disabilities new skills. Severe behavior disorders displayed by individuals with developmental disabilities include self-injury, aggression, and property destruction. Research has shown that these forms of behavior are usually learned. Through funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), he, his students, and colleagues have shown that such dangerous behavior, despite its bizarre appearance, is exceptionally lawful and predictable when behavioral assessments and interventions are applied. By training parents and other care providers (e.g., teachers, staff members), dangerous behavior problems can be reduced while the individual is taught new (adaptive) skills such as communication or self care. He and his team have used other funding from NIH to establish a basic research laboratory to explore the basic principles underlying commonly used behavioral treatments (using rats instead of people). The implication of that research is that we can conduct subtle and extend evaluations of possible treatment components without risking harm to individuals in need of treatment. Although rats and people are of course very different, basic principles of learning apply to both species and we can examine the effects of positive reinforcement on rat learning in a way that is parallel to the effects of positive reinforcement on human learning.

There has been a recent new direction in his developmental disabilities research. One of his doctoral students, Jorge Reyes, has been conducting his dissertation research on evaluating the effects of a behavioral treatment program for sex offenders who are diagnosed with mental retardation and who have offended toward children. Because individuals with mental retardation are usually adjudicated incompetent to stand trial, they are sometimes returned to situations that may present a risk. For example, they may eventually return to live with their family or they may go live in a group home in a typical neighborhood. In the meantime, they usually reside in a treatment facility. Behavioral assessment and treatment of sex offending in developmental disabilities is a very difficult and politically sensitive topic because on the one hand the individuals are mentally retarded and may not be accountable to their actions in the same way others might be, but on the other hand potential victims must be protected. Thus, his research has focused on arranging the environment in ways that will make future offenses less likely to occur.

In addition to his research on developmental disabilities, Tim is also the principal investigator on a large-scale project aimed at teaching basic behavioral parenting skills to foster parents, biological parents, and adoptive parents. The focus is mainly on the prevention of child maltreatment (i.e., abuse and neglect) and on resolving some of the problems associated with prior maltreatment. Children who were previously maltreated tend to be at risk for frequent moves from one home to another (while in foster care), school failure, criminal offense, substance abuse, and many other negative outcomes. He and his staff oversee the parent training program in the entire Northern half of Florida while his colleagues at the University of South Florida oversee the program in the Southern half of the state. His research has addressed several facets of the program: What are the most effective and safe forms of parent-child interaction? What are the best methods by which to teach such interaction skills to both parents and children? What can we do to prevent problematic behavior displayed by children and adolescents who were once maltreated? What are the large-scale outcomes of our service? And so on.

To date, their findings have been clear that parents can be taught meaningful changes in interaction style to increase levels of positive reinforcement, favorable social interactions, and child supervision. In addition, they have success-

# Faculty Spotlight

(Continued from page 4)

fully taught parents to use behavioral procedures such as timeout, behavioral contracts, and rule setting. Other programs around the country are focused more on child safety, such as evaluating the home environment to ensure there are no hazardous or dangerous materials. They are currently in discussions with several other university-based programs around the country about a possible consortium project combining a parent-child interaction curriculum (such as the one we use) with a child safety curriculum (such as the one other programs use). The idea would be to teach parents who may be at risk of committing maltreatment (e.g., very young pregnant teenagers, substance abusing future parents, etc.) *before* any maltreatment has a chance to occur. In other words, the aim is to prevent child maltreatment.

As is clearly evident, Dr. Vollmer's program of research has had a direct and significant impact on improving the lives of children. As is equally evident, Tim has established a stellar

academic record. He is the author of over 100 articles and book chapters and has received over \$13 million of grant support from both federal and state agencies. Tim has received numerous honors, such as the B. F. Skinner Award from the American Psychological Association, for best new researcher. He has served as editor or associate of several prestigious journals, including the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*. Finally, he has been an advisor and mentor to numerous graduate students who have embarked on their own successful careers.

While it may be difficult to see how, Tim actually has a life outside of academics. He enjoys spending time with his wife, three children, and Labradoodle (a dog to the unfamiliar). In addition to watching his children play sports and watching Gatorsports, Tim enjoys playing golf and reading. The department is very fortunate that Tim did decide to come home again.

## Noteworthy Area Accomplishments

### Behavior Analysis

**Grants:** Dr. Jesse Dallery was appointed Principal Investigator at the Center for Technology and Health, National Development and Research Institutes

**New and Revised Grants:** J. Dallery (PI). Technological innovations in behavioral treatments for cigarette smoking. R01DA023469 \$250,000/year requested, NIH

**Publications:** Normand, M., & Dallery, J. (2007). Mercury Rising: Exposing the Vaccine-Autism Myth. *The Skeptic*, 13.

**Book Chapters Published:** Sigmon, S. C., Lamb, R. J., Dallery, J. (2008). Tobacco. In Higgins, S. T., Silverman, K., Heil, S. H. (Eds). *Contingency management in substance abuse treatment*. The Guilford Press: New York, 99-119.

**Articles Accepted for Publication:** Locey, M., & Dallery, J. Isolating behavioral mechanisms of inter-temporal choice: Nicotine effects on delay discounting and amount sensitivity. *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*.

Reynolds, B., Dallery, J., Shroff, P., Patak, M., Leraas, K. A Web-Based Contingency Management Program with Adolescent Smokers. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*.

Dallery, J., Meredith, S., Glenn, I. A deposit contract method to deliver abstinence reinforcement for cigarette smoking. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*.

**Meeting presentations:** Dallery, J., January, 2008: The Society for Performance Management and the Behavior Analysis Student Association at Florida Institute of Technology. Contingency Management and Cigarette Smoking.

# Noteworthy Area Accomplishments

## Behavioral Neuroscience

**Donald Dewsbury** retired from teaching in May 2007, but remains active in research on the history of psychology. He is currently editing a section on Darwin's influence on Psychology for the American Psychologist and co-editing a second edition of his book with autobiographies of prominent animal behaviorists. He was recently elected president of Division 1 (General) of the APA.

**Grants: M.M. Bradley:** Angelman Syndrome Foundation "Brain potentials of cognition and emotion in individuals with Angelman's syndrome"

**D.P. Devine:** Cure Autism Now Foundation (C.A.N.) "Self-Injurious Behavior: Pharmacological Studies in a Rat Model"

**D.P. Devine:** National Science Foundation (N.S.F.) "Stress-Modulating Actions of Orphanin FQ (N/OFQ)"

**Publications:** Green, M.K., Barbieri, E.V., Brown, B.D., Chen, K.-W. and **Devine, D. P.** (2007). Roles of the bed nucleus of stria terminalis and of the amygdala in N/OFQ-mediated anxiety and HPA axis activation, *Neuropeptides*, **41**: 399-410.

King, C.D., **Devine, D. P.**, Vierck, C. J., Mauderli, A., and Yeziarski, R. P. (2007). Opioid modulation of reflex versus operant responses following stress in the rat, *Neuroscience*, **147**: 174-182.

Blake, B. L., Muehlmann, A. M., Egami, K., Breese, G. R., **Devine, D. P.**, and Jinnah, H. A. (2007). Nifedipine suppresses self-injurious behaviors in animals, *Developmental Neuroscience*, **29**: 241-250.

**N.E. Rowland.** Food or fluid restriction in common laboratory animals: balancing welfare considerations with scientific inquiry. *Comparative Medicine* 57: 149-160, 2007.

**N.E. Rowland.** Matching salt intake to physiological need in rats using foraging protocols. *Brazilian Journal of Medical and Biological Research* 40: 713-720, 2007.

**Graduate Students:** Anaya Mitra received from the American Psychological Association a prestigious \$1,000 Dissertation Research Award for her research on transgenerational effects of maternal obesity on physiology and behavior in rats predisposed to borderline hypertension.

Amber M. Muehlmann (Devine lab) scored in the 8<sup>th</sup> percentile on her NIH F31 fellowship application, entitled "Vulnerability for Self-Injurious Behavior: Neurobiological Mechanisms".

Vincent Costa (Bradley lab) scored in the 9<sup>th</sup> percentile on his NIH F31 fellowship application.

## Counseling Psychology

**Graduate Students:** Jessica Jones was selected by the Florida Education Fund (FEF) as the winner of the prestigious Russell V. Ewald Award for Academic Excellence and Human Service. The announcement of this honor was made during the Annual McKnight Doctoral Fellows Conference. Jessica was specifically honored for her outstanding contribution to research and to her community via her research and volunteer work.

**Awards: Shands Vista** received the prestigious Sapphire Award, one of the most prestigious in the health care industry. Counseling graduate student **Jessica Jones'** work (with diabetic patients) was cited as one of the key elements in landing this award.



# Noteworthy Area Accomplishments

## Cognitive & Sensory Processes

**Publications:** Moratti, S., Clementz, B., Ortiz, T., & Keil, A. Neural mechanisms of evoked oscillations: Stability and interaction with transient events. *Human Brain Mapping*. 2007; 28:1318-1333.

Ihssen, N., Heim, S., & Keil, A. The costs of emotional attention: Affective processing inhibits subsequent lexico-semantic analysis. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*. 2007; 19:1932-1949.

Schweinberger, S. R., Kaufmann, J. M., Moratti, S., Keil, A., Burton, A. M. Brain Responses to Repetitions of Human and Animal Faces, Inverted Faces, and Objects - An MEG study. *Brain Research*. 2007; 1184:226-233.

**Articles Accepted for Publication:** Abrams, L., Trunk, D. L., & Merrill, L. A. Why a superman cannot help a tsunami: Activation of grammatical class influences resolution of young and older adults' tip-of-the-tongue states. *Psychology and Aging*.

**Abrams, L.**, Trunk, D. L., & White, K. K. Visual and auditory priming influences the production of low-frequency spellings. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*.

White, K. K., Abrams, L., & Zoller, S. M., & Gibson, S. M. Why did I right that? Factors that influence the production of homophone substitution errors. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*.

**Meeting presentations:** Abrams, L., White, K. K., Merrill, L. A., & Hausler, L. (2007, November). *Grammatical class influences how nonwords prime tip-of-the-tongue resolution.* Paper presented at the 48<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Psychonomic Society, Long Beach, CA.

**Abrams, L.**, & Merrill, L. A. (2007, November). *Phonologically-mediated priming resolves tip-of-the-tongue states.* Poster presented at the 48<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Psychonomic Society, Long Beach, CA.

**White, K. K.**, Gibson, S. M., Zoller, S. M., & Abrams, L. (2007, November). *Orthographic priming and homophone substitution errors: Producing similarly-spelled words might influence what you right.* Poster presented at the 48<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Psychonomic Society, Long Beach, CA.

**Awards:** Dr Lise Abrams received the 2007 Young Investigator Award from Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society at the society's annual meeting and student research conference in Orlando, FL, November 1-4, 2007.

**Patent:** International patent application PCT/US2008/051049 filed Jan 15, 2008 titled Apparatus and method for assessment of vestibulo-ocular reflexes. Keith D. White, Tana M. Bleser, Erika Espinosa, and John Bacom, co-inventors.

## Developmental Psychology

**Grant:** S. Bluck (Co-I with J. Glueck): Wisdom and the Life Story: How Life Experiences Foster Wisdom \$100, 000 Arete Initiative, University of Chicago

**Publications:** Glück, J., & Bluck, S. (2007). Looking back across the lifespan: a life story account of the reminiscence bump. *Memory and Cognition*, 35, 1928-1939.

Baron, J.M., & Bluck, S. (in press). Autobiographical memory sharing in everyday life: Who tells better stories? *International Journal of Behavioural Development*.

**Meeting presentations:** Dirk, J., Bluck, S., & Mackay, M. (2007). Life experience with death: relation to the use of death-related memories. Poster presented at the 18th Meeting of the German Division of Developmental Psychology, Heidelberg, Germany.

# Noteworthy Area Accomplishments

## Developmental Psychology continued . . .

Ashwell, S., & Farrar, M. J. (2007). *The role of representational ability in the development of phonological awareness in pre-schoolers*. Paper presented at the 2007 National Reading Conference, Austin TX.

Hastings, C. L., & West, R. L. (2007, November). *The relative success of self-help and group-based memory training program*. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, San Francisco, CA.

**Bluck, S.** (2007). *Listening to the data: three stories from research*. Plenary session paper presented at the International Conference on Reminiscence and Life Review. San Francisco, CA.

Mackay, M.M., Ainsworth, S., & **Bluck, S.** (2007). *Reflecting on life: lessons learned from challenging experiences*. Poster presented at the International Conference on Reminiscence and Life Review, San Francisco, CA.

**Media Interviews: Dr. Julia Graber**, (Fall 2007) ABC News, website article at ABCNEWS.com, Tampa Tribune

## Social Psychology

**Articles Accepted for Publication: Chambers, J. R.** Explaining false uniqueness: Why we're both better and worse than others. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*.

Grace, J. L., & **Shepperd, J. A.** (2007). Social loafing. In R. Baumeister & K. D. Vohs, (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*, Vol. 2, pp. 909-910. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sweeny, K., & **Shepperd, J. A.** (2007). Do people brace sensibly? Risk judgments and risk prevalence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33, 1064-1075.

Terry, M., Sweeny, K., & **Shepperd, J. A.** (2007). Self-presentation. In R. Baumeister & K. D. Vohs, (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*, Vol 2, pp. 335-838. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sweeny, K., & **Shepperd, J. A.** (2007). Being the best bearer of bad tidings: The bad news response model. *Review of General Psychology*, 11, 235-257.

Carroll, P. J., **Shepperd, J. A.**, Sweeny, K., Carlson, E., & Benigno, J. P. (2007). Disappointment for others. *Cognition & Emotion*, 21, 1565-1576.

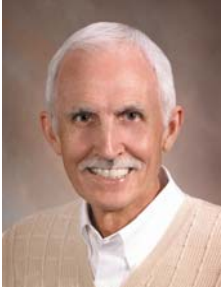
Koch, E., & **Shepperd, J. A.** (2008). Is self-esteem more than a sociometer? Testing competence and acceptance explanations of self-esteem. *Self & Identity*, 7, 54-74.

**Shepperd, J. A.**, Carroll, P. J., & Sweeny, K., (2008). A functional approach to explaining fluctuations in future outlooks: From self-enhancement to self-criticism. In E. Chang (ed.), *Self-criticism and self-enhancement: Theory, research and clinical implications*, pp. 161-180. Washington, DC: APA press.

**Chambers, J. R.**, Epley, N., Savitsky, K., & Windschitl, P. D. Knowing too much: Using private information to predict others impressions. *Psychological Science*.

**Graduate Students:** Kate Sweeney has accepted a tenure-track faculty position at the University of California, Riverside. Kate also just published (in January, 2008) a solo-authored paper in *Psychological Bulletin* outlining a new theory of health decision making called Crisis Decision Theory.

## Goings: Dr. Richard A. Griggs



Richard A. Griggs retired as of January 1, 2008 after being in the Psychology Department for almost 34 years. He and his wife, Sherri Jackson, have moved to Jacksonville, where Sherri is a Professor in the Psychology Department at Jacksonville University.

After earning his Ph.D. in cognitive psychology at Indiana University, Dr. Griggs went to the University of Florida, where he has spent his entire academic career. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Florida.

He has won numerous teaching awards at the University of Florida and was named APA's Society for the Teaching of Psychology Teacher of the Year for 4-year Colleges and Universities in 1994. He served on the Editorial Board of *Teaching of Psychology* for over a decade, as a *Contemporary Psychology* Consulting Editor for textbook reviews, and as an Associate Editor of *Thinking and Reasoning*.

His two main research areas are human reasoning and the teaching of psychology. He has published over 100 journal articles, reviews, and book chapters, including 31 in the *Teaching of Psychology*. He was also one of the originators and developers of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's on-line resource, *A Compendium of Introductory Psychology Textbooks*, and the editor of Volume 3 of the Society's *Handbook for Teaching Introductory Psychology*.

Rich calculated that he taught about 26,000 students during his time at UF, with the bulk of them in introductory psychology. He has few plans for academic work during retirement other than to continue working on his introductory psychology textbook, *Psychology: A Concise Introduction*, which will be published in a second edition in February. He and his wife do plan, however, to edit the fourth volume of *The Handbook for Teaching Introductory Psychology* in the next year or so. He says that one thing is certain—he doesn't plan to teach introductory psychology any time soon.

Rich plans to spend his retirement mainly working out, running, playing golf, reading, constructing crossword puzzles, and most importantly, spending more time with his wife and their dog, Henry. He said that he truly had no words of wisdom to impart after all of his years at UF other than to "expect the worst," and you usually won't be disappointed.

## Goings: Dr. Robert Sorkin



Dr. Robert Sorkin retired from his position as a Professor in the Department of Psychology at the end of December 2007. He recently completed a two year assignment as Senior Scientist for Cognitive Engineering, at the Air Force Research Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. Prior to that assignment, Bob had been asked by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research to spend a year in Arlington, Virginia, as manager of their Cognitive Science program. Bob still has a few ongoing Air Force research projects including two pending patent applications.

Dr. Robert Sorkin received his B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University and his Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Michigan. Upon leaving Michigan, he joined the Psychology faculty at Purdue University and was there until 1988 when he joined the faculty at the University of Florida.

From 1988 to 1995, he chaired the Department of Psychology and during 1994-1995 was elected chair of the national Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology. His research has been supported by grants from AFOSR, FAA, NASA, NWC, NIMH, and NSF, and he has published articles on auditory and visual perception, human factors, and individual and group decision making, and is coauthor (with Barry Kantowitz) of a Human Factors textbook.

He is a Fellow of the Acoustical Society of America, the Association for Psychological Science, and the American Psychological Association. He has served as director of the NSF Psychobiology program, manager of the Cognitive Science Program of the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, and on many national research committees and editorial boards. His recent research has applied optimal detection models to advice acquisition and team deliberation, and this work has resulted in several dissertations, articles, and patent applications.

During the last five years, Bob has greatly enjoyed working with some of his early graduate students and interacting with some of his graduate 'grandstudents'. Upon returning from Ohio in November, Bob and his wife Nancy moved from Gainesville to St. Augustine, where they had kept their yacht, *Intuition*, for many years. Even though he's been away from the University for the last five years, Bob knows that a career as a professor is the ideal choice.

## Comings: Dr. Andreas Keil



Dr. Andreas Keil joined the UF Psychology Department in February of 2007 after spending most of his academic career at the University of Konstanz, Germany, where he received his PhD in 2000.

Prior to coming to UF as an Associate Professor, he had visited the National Institutes for Mental Health, Center for the Study of Emotion and Attention at the University of Florida several times while working as an Assistant and then Associate professor at his alma mater in Germany.

“Being impressed with the openness and great scholarship of people at UF,” he states, he “was excited to be given the opportunity to join the Psychology Department,” where he is a member of both the Behavioral Neuroscience program and Cognitive and Sensory program.

Andreas’ research focuses on attention and perception in the visual system. Much of it has centered on how humans perceive emotionally arousing audiovisual media such as pictures, text, or movies. He is particularly interested in how the visual brain changes - over the life span and also as a consequence of short-term intervention - to optimize processing of information that is relevant for the individual. Together with “wonderful students and colleagues” he has studied dysfunctions of these processes in patients, e.g. with schizophrenia, Alzheimer’s disease, or anxiety disorders.

One aspect of the University of Florida he finds particularly enjoyable is the cross-discipline interactions that are possible with a great number of experts in related disciplines, ranging from biological to engineering and social sciences.

In addition to research, Andreas currently teaches a course in the psychobiology of abnormal psychology, and in the future will be teaching classes in emotion, learning, and neural plasticity.

Outside of his academic life, Andreas says that he, his wife and 16-year old son “love North Florida; in particular the incredible wildlife, the outdoors, the huge distances in which there is nothing but nature.” In addition to the outdoors, he enjoys the people and says that he is “a big fan of old-fashioned politeness” and is “thrilled that people here are warm and socially very skilled.”

## Comings: Dr. E. Christina Ford



Dr. Christina Ford joined the University of Florida, Psychology Department as an Assistant Scientist in August of 2007. She received her PhD in 2006 from UCLA, where her primary area was Developmental Psychology with concentrations in Cognition and Measurement. During the 2006-2007 academic year she taught introductory research methods at Northeastern University in Boston, MA.

Christina’s research focuses on causal reasoning. She is particularly interested in the circumstances under which people revise their causal hypotheses. One of the laboratory experiments that she is currently preparing focuses on whether people’s update mechanisms more closely resemble small incremental updates or larger revisions that are similar to hypothesis testing.

Her more applied research focuses on teacher professional development and how teachers’ theories about student learning and their interpretation of student cues change as they become more experienced.

Christina has recently become interested in the psychology of religion. She is interested in how people reason within the religious domain and the circumstances under which people alter their religious beliefs. She is very excited about collaborating with colleagues from University of Florida’s Center for Spirituality and Health.

This semester Christina is teaching the introductory research methods course at UF. When she figured out how to give short web-lectures in the form of flash presentations, she decided that they were very cool. She is having fun experimenting with the web-hybrid format and taking copious notes on how she might teach it better in the future.

Christina is a Gainesville native and is pleased to be back. She especially enjoys tap dancing at her old dance studio. Both Christina and her husband, Eric Ford, are very happy to be in Gainesville and away from the New England weather. Eric is an Assistant Professor in the Astronomy department and studies planet formation around stars outside of our solar system.

# Graduate Program News

By Dr. Robin L. West, Graduate Coordinator

For the Department of Psychology Graduate program, 2007-2008 is becoming a time of many changes! Last spring, a major restructuring of the graduate curriculum was approved. Amanda Foote, our new Graduate Program Assistant, joined us in July. In addition, I took over the Graduate Coordinator's position last summer from Dr. Greg Neimeyer, whose leadership over many years was excellent. This fall, Amanda and I totally revamped the Graduate program website and we encourage you to take a look at it if you have not seen it at [www.psych.ufl.edu](http://www.psych.ufl.edu) under the Graduate Program header. The Graduate Student Advisory Board has also reworked their part of the website (under Graduate program/Current students/GSAB), and it may be interesting for you to find out more about their activities planned for this year.

First, I'd like to make an introduction to the new leadership. I was born in Minneapolis, but lived there only briefly, before moving on as an Air Force brat and living on nine different bases by the time my parents settled down when I was 13. I completed a B.A. in Psychology at the University of Nebraska, an M.A. and Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology at Vanderbilt University and a postdoctoral fellowship in Aging and Development at Washington University in St. Louis. Within the Department, I've previously held the post of Area Director of the Developmental Psychology program. I enjoy the challenges of teaching, research (please see my profile at [www.psych.ufl.edu/~west](http://www.psych.ufl.edu/~west)), and yes, even administration. I look forward to getting a year as Graduate Coordinator "under my belt." In my spare time (what's that?), I read mysteries and love crossword puzzles and playing Mah Jongg.

Amanda Foote has filled the position left open by the departure of Sarah Lee, who worked as the Graduate Secretary for 18 years as a labor of love. Amanda has appreciated the warm reception she has received from the psychology faculty, staff and students. She has especially enjoyed talking with students and faculty about their research and academic interests. Amanda has already shown us that she is terrifically well organized and hard working and she is fast becoming a great asset for the department. In her spare time, Amanda spends time watching movies with her husband, Ken, and two dogs, Rocket and Puddles.

Changes in the graduate curriculum for the Department have resulted in a new Seminar in Psychological Science (SPS) required for all students. The purpose of the seminar is to introduce students to the Department Faculty and key research issues in psychology. Although this hourly seminar each week represents an added requirement, overall the new regulations are considered quite favorable to students. The total number of required courses has been reduced from nine to five classes, giving students much more flexibility to do courses and research that satisfy their own individual needs and interests. In addition, although most students were teaching anyway, all students are now required to teach at least once during their graduate studies. These changes are designed to enhance the overall graduate student experience.

Questions and comments regarding the Graduate Program are welcomed and can be directed to **Amanda Foote** ([anfoote@ufl.edu](mailto:anfoote@ufl.edu)) or **Dr. Robin West** ([rwest.geron@gmail.com](mailto:rwest.geron@gmail.com)).

# Undergraduate Program News

By Dr. W. Keith Berg, Undergraduate Coordinator

The Department of Psychology Undergraduate Program is big...very big. At about 1500 majors we are not only the largest major in the College of Liberal Arts, we are the largest major in the entire University! As we tell our incoming students during orientations, if our department were to secede from the university and form it's own college, we would be larger than about 40 of the 60 or so colleges and universities in the state of Florida. To continue to provide quality education to all these students the faculty are making increasing use of technology. We been rapidly expanding the number of web-based courses we teach, with six of our most popular courses now having many web-based sections. Although the web-based courses are very popular with students, all of our courses with web sections also have classroom sections as alternatives.

With a large program comes a major responsibility to provide students with high quality advising about their course selections, graduation requirements, career and post-graduate opportunities and the like. The undergraduate advising office is fortunate to have three well-trained staff members to provide this. All three are current graduate students who provide 8 to 10 hours a week of advising to students on a walk-in basis. These advisors have consistently done a great job, seeing the typical student about 4 times a year. In an anonymous evaluation provided by psychology students via the web, over 70 percent of the students report being satisfied with the quality of their advising, and 42 percent very satisfied. These ratings are well above that reported by the college advising office. The office is supervised by Dr. Keith Berg in his role as Undergraduate Coordinator for the Department of Psychology.

This Spring semester will bring some important scholarship opportunities to our undergraduates. We are fortunate to have the Thomas Pye scholarship award which each year provides a \$2000 stipend to a top quality Junior or Senior psychology major planning careers in the mental health professions. Minimum grade point average for applicants is 3.5 on the 4.0 scale. The department gratefully acknowledges the generosity of Thomas Pye, esq. for funding this award. The other opportunity coming this Spring is the University Scholars program. This award is directed toward undergraduates intending on focusing on research. The award provides a \$2500 summer stipend for the student to carry out a major research project from start to finish under the supervision of a faculty member. The department accepts applications and forwards four nominees for the award to the college for their consideration. The psychology department has always had at least one student receive the award, and typically two or three receive it. Last year's awardees will present research posters on their findings at a large university-wide poster session later this Spring.

Changes are coming to the undergraduate program. Starting next Fall we will be requiring a new course to be completed by all senior psychology majors – the senior capstone course. This course will provide several benefits to both students and the department. The intent is to provide students with an integrated overview of the field, a chance to take their varied paths through our program and consolidate some of this knowledge. Also, students will be provided with important information on career graduate school opportunities. While in the course students will provide the department with two important types of information. One is the completing the Psychology Major Field Test, a comprehensive national test of a students knowledge in the field of psychology. This both fulfills a statewide requirement for such an assessment and will help the department to evaluate how well it is providing students with their education. The second type of information will come from the completion of a senior exit survey. The survey is intended to get student evaluation of various aspects of their psychology education, and again provide the department and faculty with the information needed to provide the best education possible.

Alumni, we want to hear from you! Please send in your professional and personal accomplishments for us to include in our newsletter. Please include your degree and graduation year and send your announcements to: [nrowland@ufl.edu](mailto:nrowland@ufl.edu).