

# Psychology at Montana State University

An Electronic Newsletter to Alumni and Friends



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## From the Head



**Michael Babcock, Ph.D.**

I hope this edition of our electronic newsletter finds you well. As you know, it doesn't get much better than summer in Bozeman.

Besides working with my summer research students (see story on Page 2), I've been enjoying time with my family doing all the recreational activities that our community has to offer. It's a great time to reflect on the accomplishments of our department, faculty and students. It's a privilege to work at MSU and live in this wonderful community.

In this issue, you'll read about the latest departmental happenings

and updates on some exciting projects. I hate to keep making this request, but I want to encourage each of you to keep in touch with us. I'd like to see our Alumni update page become the center piece of this newsletter.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and the rest of your summer. With the Bozeman Sweet Pea festival just around the corner, I better get my snow blower ready to go.

## Dr. Keith Hutchison Arrives

*Editors Note: Dr. Hutchison is the newest addition to our faculty. I asked Keith to write a short description of his background and research.*

I arrived at MSU this summer to teach a course on the Psychology of Prejudice. I am really enjoying both the experience of teaching this class and the opportunity to experience the beautiful Gallatin valley.

I am very impressed with the psychology program

here at MSU. The professors are helpful, friendly and easy-going, yet at the same time seriously committed to their individual (and collaborative) programs of research. My students this summer have been some of the best I have ever taught. They are actively participating in every class and enthusiastic about the material. Finally, Betsy Centa (the departmental administrator) has been extraordinarily helpful and patient through all my questions and requests.

As a brief history about myself, I received both my B.A. (Psychology) and my M.A. (Psychology: research option) at California State University, Long Beach. My Masters thesis examined the information we utilize in estimating what other people know. From there, I went to the State University of New York at Albany where I conducted research on human attention, memory, and language.

(See HUTCHISON page 2)

## Summer Research Programs

Psychology faculty are participating in several minority research programs this summer. Professor Wes Lynch is sponsoring Loren Chesarek (IMSD program) and Sydney Eastman (BRIDGES program). These students are working on a survey for the measurement of Social Support in Native American students. They will be reporting their preliminary results at the Leadership Alliance meeting in Virginia. Professor Mike Babcock has four undergraduate minority students in his laboratory this summer. MSU students Samantha Allen and Khena Bullshields (IMSD program) were joined by Valencia Warren

from the University of Delaware (Leader Alliance program) and Denean Standing from (BRIDGES program). The Babcock laboratory is focusing on the role of calcium second messengers in ischemic cell death.

BRIDGES (Bridges to the Baccalaureate Program) is a collaborative program with Little Big Horn College, Fort Belknap College, and Fort Peck Community College aimed at increasing the number of students successfully transferring from the two-year tribal colleges to MSU and pursuing academic studies in the biomedical and other

health-related sciences. The goal of the IMSD (Initiative for Minority Student Development) is to increase American Indian students' academic competency in biomedical fields. The Leadership Alliance is a consortium of 31 of this nation's leading research and teaching academic institutions. The Leadership Alliance

Summer Research Early Identification Programs is designed to encourage highly motivated underrepresented students across all disciplines to consider academic careers in higher education. MSU has sponsored three Leadership Alliance students, all in the dept of psychology.



*Summer research students in Dr. Babcock's laboratory*

## Hutchison (Continued from page 1)



*Dr. Keith Hutchison  
"I am extremely excited to be here and to start my research at MSU"*

In particular, my research involved (1) isolating conscious from automatic retrieval of semantic knowledge and (2) examining the role of attention on the perception of objects and words. My dissertation examined the effects of selective attention and associative relatedness on both positive (facilitatory) and negative (inhibitory) semantic priming. After receiving my Ph.D. in December, 2001, I spent two years in a post-doctoral research position

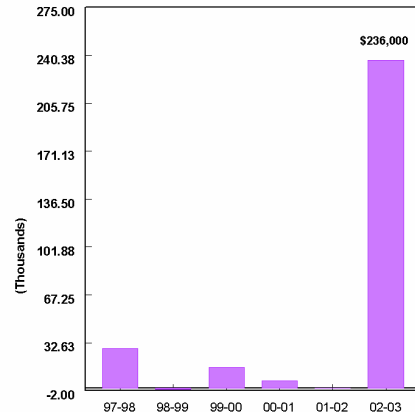
at Washington University in St. Louis examining attentional breakdowns among healthy older adults and Alzheimer's patients. Specifically, I examined the effects of aging and dementia on people's ability to "switch" attention, to "maintain" attention, to "selectively" attend, and to "disengage" attention from distracting objects. My most current interests involve the very common situation in which we must select appropriate responses while simultaneously

inhibiting more dominant, yet inappropriate, responses. The "oppositional" nature of such situations is most obvious when our attentional control breaks down (such as during divided attention), allowing automatic habits to dominate. I am extremely excited to be here and to start my research at MSU. My lab is open to motivated and responsible students who are interested in gaining research experience.

## Grant Activity on the Rise

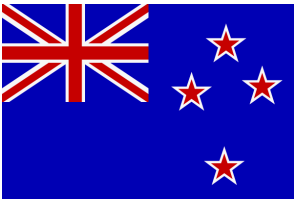
The department of psychology has shown some significant increases in grant activity during the past several years. Professor Lynch was awarded a two year grant from NIH. Dr. Martell received a grant from NSF. The NIH BRIN program provided support for Dr. Babcock research program. In addition, Dr. Boldry has pending proposals to both NIH and NSF. The remaining

faculty members are actively developing proposals. This dramatic change reflects a strategic plan aimed at strengthening the research agenda in our department. This activity provides important research opportunities for our undergraduate and graduate students.



Grant awards to the Psychology Department

## Dr. Babcock awarded Sabbatical



Professor Mike Babcock has been awarded a sabbatical for spring semester, 2004. He and his family will be traveling to the University of Otago located in Dunedin, New Zealand. During his visit, Dr. Babcock will be working in the laboratory of Prof. Cliff Abraham, who studies models of hippocampal plasticity

(LTP). During his four month sabbatical, Dr. Babcock will learn new techniques that complement his ongoing research in transient cerebral ischemia. Montana University awarded 8 sabbaticals to faculty. Babcock's leave from MSU will coincide with a visit from Charles Malsbury, Professor of

Psychology at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada. He is visiting Montana State University as part of a sabbatical leave from his home institution. Dr. Malsbury will be teaching Physiological Psychology in the department during spring semester.

## Graduate Program update by Dr. Jennifer Boldry

As recently appointed graduate program coordinator, I would like to take this opportunity to share some of my goals as well as some recent changes to the program. As a faculty, we wrote a graduate student handbook that is now available on our website. This handbook details the requirements and expectations of the

graduate program and includes some advice from both faculty and former graduate students. Worthy of note, we have instituted several new policies in our handbook, including policies for choosing a thesis advisor and reformed policies for semester performance evaluations. It is our hope that this handbook will clarify our requirements

and expectations for both current and new graduate students and provide a realistic preview of graduate life in the psychology department at MSU for prospective graduate students. My goals for the graduate program in the upcoming year are two-fold.

One of my primary objectives is to improve communication between the faculty and graduate students. Recent research suggests that former students have been hesitant to approach faculty with their concerns or feedback about the program. (See GRAD on page 4)

## GRAD (continued from page 3)

As a faculty we would like to emphasize that we are committed to providing a valuable graduate experience in the psychology department and we recognize the importance of student feedback in order to achieve our goals. We will continue to work to create a climate in our graduate program that fosters open communication and the sharing of ideas among students and faculty. My second goal for the program is to grow enrollment. We currently have 10 students enrolled in the program

and would like to see enrollment between 15 and 20 students. Our efforts in the upcoming year will be aimed at recruiting students who are interested in acquiring solid methodological training with goals of applying their research knowledge either at the Ph.D. level or in the private sector. This is an exciting time for graduate studies in psychology at MSU. The department is committed to expanding the program and continuing to improve the quality of graduate training.

As part of that mission, I would like to welcome our new faculty member Keith Hutchison as well as our new graduate students, Jesse Bengson, Nathan Betzen, Frank Bosco, Paul Jessen, Ann Moody, and Elizabeth Schwartz.



*Dr. Jennifer Boldry,  
Graduate Coordinator*

## Department News and Updates

Professor Chuck Pierce had a research article accepted for publication in *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes (OBHDP)*. The article, "Responding to Sexual Harassment Complaints: Effects of a Dissolved Workplace Romance on Decision-Making Standards," is co-authored with two of his former graduate students, Brandee Broberg and Jamie McClure. Professor Pierce is currently writing a National Science Foundation grant proposal to conduct research that will follow-up on results reported in his *OBHDP* manuscript in press and in his *Academy of Management Journal (AMJ)* article published in 2000.

Dr. Mike Babcock has been promoted to Full Professor. Mike joined the MSU faculty in 1991 and

has served as department head since 1998.

Dr. Jennifer Boldry attended a grant writing workshop at Texas A&M. Jennifer will serve as the new departmental graduate program director.

Professor Rick Block was awarded a course release in the Fall semester to write a grant proposal to NSF.

Adjunct Professor Fred (Bill) Whitford was awarded a university grant to revamp the Introductory Psychology course to fit the new core curriculum which will begin Fall 2004.

Professor Richard Martell chaired a symposium and presented a paper the 2003 Society of Industrial-Organizational Psychology Annual Convention, Orlando, Florida.

Professor Wesley Lynch has continued working on his NIH funded grant project. Wes sponsored Loren Chesarek, a BRIDGES student, in his lab this summer. Loren presented a paper at the Leadership Alliance Symposium in Chantilly Virginia based on her research with Dr. Lynch.

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See us at:  
[www.montana.edu/wwwpy/](http://www.montana.edu/wwwpy/)

## Psychology Alumnotes

### **Laurie Lane Goldberg, (MS Experimental Psychology, 1981.**

As someone who got her MS in experimental social psychology at Bozeman in August 1981, I am pleased to see the departmental website. Currently, I'm a doctoral student in Sociology at Arizona State University and expect to defend my dissertation (Coping Strategies Employed by Respondents in Commuter Relationships) this spring. I'm concurrently registered in the Scholarly Publishing certificate program in the History Department, which I'll finish after the Ph.D. is complete. Dr. Block is the only professor's name that's familiar. Dr. William Shontz was the department chair when I was a student, and Dr. Doug Kenrick (whom I followed to ASU after finishing my thesis) was my initial chairperson. I signed up for an MSU alumna credit card. I miss the beauty of Montana, but not driving in snow. Tempe is sunny and 80 degrees right now.  
mstobedoc@aol.com

### **Scott Brown, Ph.D. (MS, Experimental Psychology, 1975)**

Dr. Scott W. Brown is a professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut ([www.education.uconn.edu/dept/epsy/](http://www.education.uconn.edu/dept/epsy/)). Scott earned a doctorate in psychology from Syracuse University, a Master's degree in psychology from Montana State University, and a Bachelor's degree in psychology from Boston University. He is the NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative for UConn, and a principal investigator on two federally funded research projects, GlobalEd ([www.globaled.uconn.edu](http://www.globaled.uconn.edu)) and Classroom of the Sea ([www.cos.uconn.edu](http://www.cos.uconn.edu)). Scott joined the faculty at UConn in 1980 and has served as the UConn Director of the Bureau Educational Research (1987-9; 2000-01) and the Head of the Educational Psychology (1994-2001).

Scott has published articles on the impact of interactivity on learning focusing on procedural as well as declarative knowledge, memory and cognitive processing, and biomechanics in journals such as *Instructional Science, Memory & Cognition, Simulations & Games, The International Journal of Instructional Media, and Strength and Conditioning*. He has been a visiting professor at Utah State University, Tamkang University (Taiwan) and Victoria University (New Zealand). Scott received the 2001 *Leo Doherty Award for Service* from the Northeastern Educational Research Association, the 1998 *UConn Excellence in Teaching Award*, and the 1998 *Academic Excellence Award* from the University of Connecticut Student-Athlete Advisory Council. Scott teaches undergraduate courses in learning and graduate courses in learning, cognition, instructional psychology, statistics and research methodology. Scott lives in Willington Connecticut with his wife Margie, who teaches for the UConn School of Nursing. Scott and Margie have three children, Matthew who works for SBC, Melissa who is a school psychologist in Massachusetts, and Steven, a student at UConn.

### **Gerald Evans, Ph.D. (MS, Experimental Psychology, 1982)**

Dr. Evans currently teaches in the areas of Information Systems, Strategic Management, and The Contemporary Organization at the School of Business Administration, University of Montana-Missoula. His research areas include Leadership and Information Systems Evaluation. Additionally, Dr. Evans is active in consulting in the business and professional community and serves on the Board of Directors of the Montana Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Dr. Evans was recently appointed as the Warren and Betsy Wilcox Faculty Fellow.

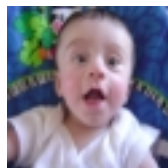
(see ALUMNI page 6)

## Alumni (Continued from page 5)

**David Baker, Ph.D. (BS Montana State University, 1994?).**

I received my Ph.D. in 1999 and went on to do a postdoc at the Medical University of South Carolina. The South wasn't our style, so we were happy when a job presented itself somewhat closer to home (Milwaukee). Somehow I fooled them into thinking I was worthy of a position. Thus far, we are both enjoying the Milwaukee experience. I have plenty of lab space and support (for the time being), and Denise likes the small town we moved to. We had our first child last year (Christmas Eve).

In fact, I was recently in Montana so that Nathan (a picture is attached) could meet his grandparents.



Nathan Baker

*Note- Dave Baker is a professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences at Marquette University. He worked in my lab as an undergrad student and actually co-authored 3 research articles with my group. Okay- I'm getting old!  
- Mike*

*Thanks for sharing your experiences! I hope you will keep in touch-- drop me an email and let me know if we can include it in our next newsletter!  
upymb@montana.edu*

## Giving Back

As Alumni and friends of our department, I hope you share my sincere belief that Montana State University is wonderful place. Many of you that have returned to campus for visits often talk about how much your educational experiences here have help you reach your career goals. As faculty, we are proud of your successes. We all want to do more to strengthen our programs and make student's educational experiences more meaningful. This requires a commitment on the part of the faculty and staff, and financial support for Alumni and friends.

How are your donations to the department being used? For the past several years, your Alumni funds have allowed us to honor our graduating seniors with a breakfast gathering. This is always a wonderful event with family and friends celebrating the accomplishments of our students.

This coming year we continue our departmental speaker program. A portion of the required matching funds came from alumni donations. The STAR program has allowed several graduate students in our program to attend national meetings, which is critical for professional development. If you have a special program or activity in the department that you would like to support, please contact me. Thank you for your continued support!

