In 2005, the Department of Psychological Sciences instituted the Graduate Summer Grant Writing Fellowship. The intent of this fellowship program is to provide students with summer funding for them to prepare applications for pre-doctoral fellowships from external funding sources, such as NIH national research service awards, NSF pre-doctoral fellowships, or APA minority fellowships. This grant writing program provides two months of summer support (20 hours per week) for up to five doctoral students per year.

The program has been incredibly successful. Sixty-four percent of the students who have participated in the program have been successful in securing external funding. This rate is particularly impressive, as it is double the success rates of NIH predoctoral fellowships for that period (32% from 2005 to 2008). Our students’ success at securing these competitive fellowships clearly demonstrates how outstanding our graduate students are and how well their training at MU prepares them as future scientists.

Rebecca Schwartz Mette

The Summer Grant Writing Fellowship afforded me ample, protected time over a period of approximately three months to focus on preparing my application for a National Research Service Award (NRSA F31 grant) from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The fellowship was exceptionally helpful in providing a focused environment for me to initiate and complete the application alongside my faculty sponsor, Amanda Rose. During the academic year, it is often difficult for many students to carve out a block of time to solely focus on grant writing because of responsibilities associated with other assistantships (e.g., teaching assistantships, clinical assistantships, etc.). At the end of my fellowship time, I not only had my grant proposal ready to submit, I also was able to use the grant proposal as a jumping-off point for my dissertation proposal.

The F31 grant submission and review processes were great learning experiences for me as a graduate student, experiences that I will carry throughout my career. The grant review process assisted me with refining my research program as well as my grant-writing skills. I think that being exposed in these ways during graduate training is invaluable for many students wishing to pursue a research-focused academic career.

Not only were the grant-writing, submission, and review processes excellent additions to my graduate training, the F31 grant itself provides additional professional development and career opportunities. Because the F31 prioritizes students’ training as well as research, I am able to take advantage of training experiences facilitated by the grant. For instance, I was able to take a statistics course at another university with a leading expert in the area, give an invited talk at an international conference, and have the time to pursue additional training opportunities (e.g., neuroscience) here at MU. I’ve also been able to collaborate...
I hope you enjoy our featured article on an innovative program, the Summer Grant Writing Fellowship, which the department initiated over five years ago. Originally the brainchild of a few faculty members, the program has been more successful than we ever dreamed. Prior to initiating the program, it was probably true, at best, that one of our graduate students annually received a pre-doctoral grant from one of the institutes at the National Institutes of Health. Now, as a consequence of this program, it is abundantly true, at best, that one of our graduate students annually received a pre-doctoral grant from one of the institutes at the National Institutes of Health. Now, as a consequence of this program, it was probably true, at best, that one of our graduate students annually received a pre-doctoral grant from one of the institutes at the National Institutes of Health. Now, as a consequence of this program, it is abundantly true, at best, that one of our graduate students annually received a pre-doctoral grant from one of the institutes at the National Institutes of Health.

Continued from Page 1

Graduate students/operators, including funding during the summer, experience with writing grants, and in the most fortunate of circumstances, grant funding to conduct independent research. A relatively less tangible benefit that students gain in greater self-confidence in their capacity as researchers and scholars—a priceless advantage of the program.

We also provide an update on the Brain Imaging Center (see Page 7). At the grand opening, Nelson Cowan and I shared a bit of the BIC’s short history and we thanked the many people involved in bringing this initiative to reality. If you would like to tour the center, let me or my staff members know, and we will do our best to arrange a visit. If you remember the Marx building from your years at MU, I think you will be very impressed with its transformation to the Brain Imaging Center. Another center that our faculty is associated with is the Thompson Center. An alumnus, Director Janet Farmer, has been a great supporter of our collaboration with faculty members in the Thompson Center.

Communique

New Psychology Faculty

Clinic Davis-Stober received his doctorate in quantitative psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His primary research interest is behavioral decision making. He is interested in studying how people make decisions between choice alternatives with multiple attributes, often in contexts where these attributes trade off with one another, e.g., risk versus reward. He uses an integrative approach to decision-making research, emphasizing both theoretical and experimental perspectives. He also has research interests in on-line constrained statistical inference.

Continued on Page 8

Chair Chat

By Ann Bettencourt

I am a fourth-year graduate student in cognitive and neuroscience. My research interests in order-contingent research, uses neuroimaging and psychophysics to study the relationship between the architecture of the human visual system and the functions of attention, perception, and awareness. Schneider grew up in Washington and Union, Mo., and studied physics at the California Institute of Technology and astronomy at Boston University before going to graduate school at the University of Rochester to study the brain. He was a postdoctoral fellow at Princeton University and most recently a research professor at the University of Rochester. He enjoys outdoor activities such as backpacking, skiing, and running. Schneider also does yoga, plays the guitar, and is learning to moonwalk while spending time with his son, Felix.

Summer Grant Writing Fellowship

with scholars from other universities on publications relevant to his research program. These experiences assist me with building my skills as well as relationships with experts in my field. My research involves longitudinal survey and observational assessments of approximately 600 adolescents in 300 same-sex friendship dyads. The project is grounded in Coyne’s Interpersonal Theory of Depression which proposes that individuals with depressive symptoms become involved in a maladaptive cycle whereby they exhibit avoidance interpersonal behaviors, erode their social supports and experience rejection, and consequently experience increased depressive symptoms. I am especially interested in illuminating particular interpersonal behaviors (e.g., conversational self-focus strategies) that may aid in treating youth with depression and anxiety.

Karen Hebert MA. OTR/L

I am a fourth-year graduate student in cognitive and neuroscience at the University of Missouri. During summer 2009 I received a Summer Grant Writing Fellowship, and I used the two months of summer funding to write and submit a F31 pre-doctoral grant to the National Institutes of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). The focus of this proposal was on reward prediction abilities in patients with Parkinson’s disease (PD). This research allows for an investigation of specific cognitive processes while increasing understanding of a potentially neurodegenerative disorder. This proposal also has implications regarding gambling addictions that have been shown to develop in Parkinson’s patients on certain medications. By studying how reward prediction and learning occurs in PD, medications can be developed which avoid overstimulating the reward system.

The fellowship I received was extremely beneficial to my planned professional career. It was able to develop and submit the proposal for this pre-doctoral NINDS grant at an earlier time in my graduate schooling than would otherwise have been possible. The work done during this fellowship also served as the basis for my planned doctoral thesis and for an additional internal grant application from MU. By having the opportunity to spend two months devoted to working on this proposal, I have been able to develop the research plans for my doctoral thesis early enough that multiple grant funding sources can be pursued. I am confident that this fellowship will help me identify an external funding source for my dissertation work which will benefit my overall career goals of obtaining a professorship at a major university.

Sarah L. Pedersen

There are several reasons why I am proud of my graduate school experience at MU, and the Summer Grant Writing Fellowship that I received in summer 2007 is one of these reasons. Receiving this fellowship allowed me to focus solely on research for three months, a rare opportunity in graduate school where you are continually pulled in multiple directions: taking classes, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, seeing clients. During the three months that I was supported by this fellowship, I submitted a National Research Service Award (NRSA) and worked on several manuscripts. I spent this time reading the literature on racial differences in alcohol use between African Americans and caucasion and creating a proposal that was designed to begin developing an integrative framework of alcohol use in African Americans. I would not have been able to spend such a significant amount of time on the literature review or study design without the department’s support. My NRSA, thankfully, was awarded, and all of my reviewers noted that one of the reasons they supported me as a candidate was not only because of the department of which I am a part, but also that the department supported me to the level of giving me a fellowship to write the NRSA in the first place. I also strongly feel that my application was competitive because of the amount of time I was able to invest into the conceptualization and writing of the proposal. My NRSA allowed me to receive training in multicultural psychology, advanced statistical techniques, and submit several manuscripts in line with my career goals of establishing a research program designed to explore cross-cultural models of alcohol use. Additionally, when I was applying to clinical internships, my NRSA was commented on by several of the sites, particularly the research-oriented sites in which I was most interested in attending. I feel that the Summer Grant Writing Fellowship was not just an important stepping stone for receiving a pre-doctoral grant but had a ripple effect in influencing my career.
Faculty member Debi Bell talks with featured speaker Matt Kushner.

Above: Shawn Christ and Nicole Campione-Barr receive junior faculty research and teaching awards.

Above: Graduate student Karen Jones explains her poster to faculty member Tim Trull.

At left: Alumnus Gerry Koocher and graduate student Marika Solhan view a poster.

Above: Graduate student Hayley Treloar at the Psychology Day breakfast.

At left: Graduate student Whitney Brown discusses her poster with faculty member Matt Will.

At right: Undergraduate honors student Michael Koertel and faculty member Laura King at the Psychology Day poster session.

At left: Faculty member Frieder Köhn at the Psychology Day reception.
Faculty Award Winners

Several faculty members from the Department of Psychological Sciences won awards for excellence in the past two years.

David Geary won the prestigious Thomas Jefferson Award for 2009. The award is funded through a grant from the McConnell Foundation, and it acknowledges someone from the University of Missouri who “through personal influence and performance of duty in teaching, writing and scholarship, character and influence, devotion and loyalty to the university best exemplifies the principles and ideals of Thomas Jefferson.”

Ken Sher received the distinguished 2008 President’s Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity. This award honors a University of Missouri faculty member for a sustained nationally and internationally recognized record of research or creativity.

Lynne Cooper won a Curtanos Professorship in 2009. This award is granted to an outstanding faculty member with a well-established reputation.

Ken Sheldon won the Minidigm Academic Prize for the best published article demonstrating pioneering work in the field of positive psychology.

Moshe Naveh-Benjamin was given the Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity for 2008. This award gives special recognition to MU faculty members who have made outstanding contributions in research or creative activity.

Laura King was named a Middlebush Professor in Psychology for 2009–2012. This award was named after Frederick Middlebush who was the president of MU from 1935 to 1954 and is given to faculty with outstanding and demonstrated ability in both teaching and research.

Several researchers in the department already have published neuroimaging studies. Assistant Professor Shawn Christ uses imaging with various tasks to understand the nature of cognitive processes in children with autism. In addition to fMRI, Christ also uses diffusion tensor imaging (DTI), which allows a picture of various fiber tracts in the brain, with color coding that indicates the direction of each fiber. His graduate student, Aman da Moffitt, has been closely involved in the research, and a social psychologist, Bruce Bartholow, will join Korns to extend the research to the effects of alcohol. It is a topic of special interest to other faculty in the department.

A new faculty member in the department, Keith Schneider, studies brain structure and function in relation to visual perception and, in one project, will be studying the underlying causes of dyslexia, a common reading disorder. He is also developing methods to take advantage of the inadvertent head movements subjects make in the MRI scanner, to sharpen the brain images.

Other professors who have used behavioral and electrophysiological techniques are now starting imaging studies. Steve Hackley and Etti Naveh-Benjamin are interested in memory in aging, Alzheimer’s disease, and Parkinson’s disease. Cowan’s research is on working memory – the small amount of information that can be held in the mind to carry out cognitive tasks. Cowan’s doctoral student, Dawei Li, came to the department with extensive neuroimaging experience and is helping with the memory research. Jef frey Rouder, plans incorporate imaging into his studies of perception and consciousness.

The facility is open to users from other departments, and Bill Newtown, of the Department of Health Psychology, and Dan Cohen, of the Department of Religious Studies, are working together on the role of spirituality on brain function. The uses will be limited to studies of research, either. Members of the Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physi olgy are interested in using the scanner to study body composition, cardiovascular function, and liver function in obesity and during obesity interventions.
University of Missouri
College of Arts and Science
317 Lowry Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

Commuñique is published annually by the Department of Psychological Sciences at the University of Missouri.

Editorial Office
Department of Psychological Sciences
Columbia, MO 65211
Phone: 573-882-6860
E-mail: daviskel@missouri.edu
Web site: psychology.missouri.edu

Editorial Board
Denis McCarthy
Anne Bettencourt
Melody Galen

The department appreciates hearing from alumni and friends. Send announcements or milestones to the address listed above.

Psychology Day 2010

The Department of Psychological Sciences is pleased to announce its third annual Psychology Day, April 16, 2010.

Alumna Emily Elliott, PhD ’01, associate professor in the Department of Psychology at the Louisiana State University, will be the featured speaker. Her presentation is titled “Individual Differences in Interference from Auditory Distractors: The Role of Working Memory Capacity.”

During the day, undergraduate honors students and graduate students will present findings from their research. The day will wrap up with a reception in the cast gallery at the Museum of Art and Archaeology in Pickard Hall on campus.

All alumni are invited to attend Psychology Day. For more information, or to let the department know you are coming, contact Kelly Davis at 573-884-6277 or daviskel@missouri.edu.

Want to know more? Please visit the department’s Web site at psychology.missouri.edu.

Chair Chat
Continued from Page 2

recruit and train graduate students.

The research of both our graduate and undergraduate students will be highlighted at our third annual Psych Day – a celebration of our students’ good research. Our undergraduate honors students will display and discuss their poster presentations, which they will present soon afterward at the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association. Their annual attendance at that meeting is made possible through the Jack N. Thornton Opportunities for Excellence Award. In addition to poster presentations during the day, several accolades are awarded at Psychology Day, including the Sam C. Brown Outstanding Achievement Award and the Max F. Meyer Achievement Award for undergraduates, and the Lizette Peterson-Homer Graduate Fellowship and the Mark H. Thelen Outstanding Clinical Graduate Student Award for graduate students. I encourage you to consider attending Psychology Day this year — please join us!