Mizzou’s transition from the Big 12 to the Southeastern Conference is an opportunity to highlight sports-related research in our department. The connection between psychology and sports is a natural one, as illustrated by Yogi Berra’s observation that “Baseball is 90 percent mental; the other half is physical.”

In his engaging and readable book, The Psychology of Baseball, Associate Professor Mike Stadler argues that psychological science lends itself to an appreciation of competitive sports that is richer than that offered by folk psychology and common sense. Stadler shows how phenomena from experimental psychology such as cognitive biases and unconscious priming can help us to understand athletic performance at a deeper level. Statistical techniques borrowed from the behavioral sciences are helping team managers to improve recruitment, as portrayed in the film Moneyball, starring MU alumnus Brad Pitt. Concepts from psychometric-based psychology also provide insights, for example, specification of motivational processes and personality traits that predict success on the playing field.

Personality characteristics such as conscientiousness and resilience help athletes to stick to a demanding regime of practice, according to Stadler, which allows new skills to be embedded in implicit memory. A psychologist at Florida State University, Anders Ericsson, estimated that 10,000 hours of deliberate practice are required to achieve world-class expertise in domains such as music, chess, or sports. Although critics have challenged Ericsson’s dismissal of genetic factors, no one would deny that excellence in competitive sports requires phenomenal amounts of practice.

Stadler points out that one of the ways athletes motivate themselves is to find the fun in practice, to create ways to make tedious repetition seem interesting and enjoyable. Assistant Professor Nicole Campione-Barr, who had been a competitive figure skater before turning to a career in science, definitely agrees. “I think part of why I was willing to practice a thing over and over—say learning a new jump—was because the thrill of getting it correct was such a high that it would motivate me to keep going. Additionally, though, just because you get it once doesn’t mean you would get it again right away. The reinforcement schedule was pretty random, so I kept trying, hoping this was the time I would get it again.”

Campione-Barr uses the words “thrill” and “high.” As the reward system employs the neurotransmitter dopamine to wire a new habit into the brain, pleasure is involved. Sports psychologist Hiroaki Masaki examined this topic during a sabbatical stay at my movement disorders laboratory. At his own lab in Waseda University in Tokyo, Masaki’s recent graduate students have included two Olympic skaters and a tennis player who competed at Wimbledon. Masaki used EEG and functional MRI to determine if the rewarding properties of “getting it right” depend on knowing that the success...
From the Chair
By Moshe Naveh-Benjamin

Our department is doing very well despite challenging times at the university. Faculty members continue to excel, and this year several of them have received honors for their outstanding research and teaching. Amanda Rose received a Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity for 2012, Alan Strathman received a Graduate Studies Outstanding Departmental Contribution Award for 2012, Ines Segert received a William T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence for 2012, and Etti Naveh-Benjamin received a Faculty–Alumni Award for 2012. In addition, several of our researchers were awarded multi-year grant support by NSF and NIH.

Finally, under the leadership of Ken Shei, our NIH-funded training grant in addiction, which provides support for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, was renewed for five additional years. We’ve also had a new faculty member join us this year: Laura Scherer, coming from the University of Michigan, joins our local psychology and emotion research training area. Laura’s research interests lie in when, how, and to what advantage people use spontaneous associations and “gut feelings” when making decisions. See Page 5 for more information about Laura’s research.

We, likewise, continue to do well in our mission of educating our undergraduate and graduate students. We now have about 1,300 majors and are working hard to engage both the interests of those students who are taking psychology courses as part of their general social sciences requirements and those who are interested in pursuing careers in psychology and related areas. To provide more thorough preparation for the latter group, our department is planning a more rigorous, science-intensive degree program that will make psychology students both more attractive candidates for postgraduate admission and more likely to succeed once they begin. To achieve this, the department has submitted requests to allow for the creation of a new bachelor of science degree and a master’s degree in applied psychometrics. See Page 5 for more on these programs.

Coinciding with the transition of Mizzou to the Southeastern Conference, this issue highlights research conducted in our department that has relevance for sports. The front-page article describes our department’s psychological and neuro-imaging projects on reward-based learning, skill acquisition, and tool use. These studies explore these skills’ impact on both peak performance in the playing field and on rehabilitation techniques, for example, for stroke patients. In this context, we spotlight several of our stellar undergraduate students who are also accomplished athletes (see Page 3).

Our numerous alumni, both undergraduate and graduate, are a source of pride for the department. We hope to continue to have your support for our missions, and considering the fact that resources are tight at the university, our department benefits tremendously from alumni contributions to our research, teaching, and community involvement.

Finally, our sixth Psychology Day on April 26, will see both graduate and honors undergraduate students present their research from the current academic year. That same day, we will also be sponsoring an award ceremony to note the accomplishments of our students, joined by our alumni board members. Our guest speaker will be Michael C. Roberts, an undergraduate alumnus of the department, (read his bio on Page 6). We invite all of you to join us for the event.

I thank all of you—faculty, students, our dedicated staff, as well as our alumni everywhere—for your part in our lasting success.

Bethany Pfeiffer—senior (track & field), 3.70 GPA, double major in psychology and math, honors student, NCAA Championships qualifier in 2011, 2012. Academic All-Big 12 and All-academic Women’s Track & Field Team in 2012.

Pfeiffer has put her psychology studies to use by helping others and herself overcome competition anxiety and work through stressful training. She plans to obtain a master’s degree in higher education administration at Southeast Missouri State University. This degree would allow her to start training high school math and eventually transition into an administration position at a community college. Pfeiffer believes that studying psychology will help her achieve her future goals because it allows her to identify study tactics and test-taking skills, and learn about the development of children and how to communicate effectively with co-workers.

Lisa Nathanson—senior (swimming), 3.82 GPA, double major in psychology and business administration, honors student. Competed in 2008 and 2012 Olympic Trials and was an NCAA All American in 2012.

Nathanson believes that studying psychology has made her more aware of the mental aspects of athletics, both when competing and training. Swimming requires a lot of mental focus, first on technique, in order to train effectively, and second, on confidence for racing. She has used what she has learned about psychology to help her excel during her swimming career at Mizzou. Nathanson’s future plans include studying behavioral genetics, and she already has applied to various graduate schools. Her career interests also include management, human resources, and higher-education positions, as well as possible coaching high school swimming at some point.

Haley Krentz—senior (soccer), 3.52 GPA, double major in psychology and health sciences. Started all 22 games in senior year. Ranked second on team for points (16 goals) and second in SEC for total assists (10) in 2012.

According to Krentz, one of the most important aspects to being a collegiate athlete is that it requires mental toughness. She defines mental strength as having the capability and drive to put out a hard workout, maintain a high level of focus through an entire game, and remain positive when things do not go your way. Krentz has used psychology in sports by using positive affirmations and thinking in the present versus the past and future. She has also used strategies learned studying sports psychology to control her emotions, both on and off the field. Krentz plans to earn a master’s degree in applied behavior analysis.

Undergraduate Research at the Capitol

Two senior psychology majors presented their honors thesis research projects to the Missouri State Legislature at Undergraduate Research Day at The Capitol in Jefferson City, Mo., on March 2nd. Allison Steddy’s project examined how parental monitoring of adolescents’ activities and adolescents’ disclosure to parents about their activities impact adolescents’ academic achievement. Chris Shepard’s project examined how positive and negative sibling relationship qualities are related to different aspects of adolescents’ self-worth. Both are mentored by Assistant Professor Nicole Campione-Barr.
Sports-related Research
Continued from Page 3
was the right anterior insular cortex, located about an inch beneath the right temple. This structure is known to mediate awareness of our emotional reactions, which is congruent with Campione-Barr’s findings. This structure is known to mediate awareness of our emotional reactions, which is congruent with Campione-Barr’s findings.

The researchers highlighted below have been published far and wide, in the Times of India and in the New York Daily News.

Doctoral student Elizabeth Martin found that Facebook activity provided a window into the psychological health of study participants. Her findings were published on Modern Health and in New York Daily News.

Assistant Professor Victoria Shaffer found patients were disassociated with their care when physicians relied on behavior and avoided therapy. Her findings were published on Yahoo! News and in the Daily Mail.

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Alumnus Michael C. Roberts Is Speaker at 2013 Psychology Day

By Nicole Campione-Barr
Michael C. Roberts, BA '73, is a professor in the child clinical psychology program at the University of Kansas, but well before he was a Jayhawk, he was a Missouri Tiger. Roberts graduated from MU, having obtained departmental honors and general honors as well as being a member of the MU chapters of Psi Chi (the national honors society in psychology) and Phi Beta Kappa. After graduation, he pursued his master's degree and doctorate in clinical psychology at Purdue University in 1978. From there he joined the faculty at the University of Alabama until 1991, when he joined the faculty at the University of Kansas.

Roberts' research interests have been focused on general issues in clinical child and pediatric psychology, psychotherapeutic outcomes, program evaluation, and professional issues, including ethics and training. Previously Roberts' work has focused on prevention, especially injury control. In addition, Roberts is consulting with the World Health Organization on the revision of the International Classification of Diseases-10, focusing on the chapter for mental and behavioral codes. He has published over 200 journal articles and book chapters revolving around the application of psychology to understanding and influencing children's physical and mental health. He has written or co-edited 19 books, including Handbook of Pediatric Psychology; Handbook of Clinical Child Psychology; Handbook of Research Methods in Clinical Psychology; Handbook of Mental Health Services for Children, Adolescents, and Families; Handbook of Evidence-based Treatments for Children and Adolescents; Prevention of Problems in Childhood; and Helping Children Cope with Disasters and Terrorism.

The editor of the APA journal Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, Roberts has previously served as editor for Journal of Pediatric Psychology: Children's Health Care; and Children's Services: Social Policy, Research, and Practice; and as associate editor for Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology. He is also the editor of the book series Issues in Clinical Child Psychology with Springer.

Roberts has been president of the Society of Pediatric Psychology and the APA Section on Clinical Child Psychology, and he was chair of the APA Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, and he was on the APA Board of Professional Affairs. He is the outgoing president of the Society for Child and Family Policy and Practice (Division 37 of the APA) and the incoming president of the American Board of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology. In recognition of his outstanding service to the field, Roberts has won numerous awards. He is a 2006 recipient of the APA Award for Distinguished Contributions to Education and Training, the 2008 Levin Award for Mentoring from the Society of Pediatric Psychology, the 2008 Beverly Thorn Award for Outstanding DCT Service, and the 2008 APA Education Advocacy Distinguished Service Award.

Roberts' illustrious career began at MU, and, in particular, with his collaboration with Professor Emeritus Mark Thelen who served as Roberts' advisor for two honors theses which were both eventually published. "My first article was in JPSY with Mark, and I thought publishing was going to be so easy, and in such prestigious journals! Mark opened the world of research to me... he was a true mentor before the concept was in vogue." Roberts says of his former mentor. His connection to MU has also provided other collaborative opportunities. "My friendship with an MU clinical grad, Steve Dollinger, started on Mark's team, and we collaborated from afar through my whole career. (Former Curators' Professor) Lizette Peterson-Homer came to Missouri long after I graduated and went on to graduate school, but we ended up working together on multiple projects (and a book) because our interest areas were so similar, and we could be hard on each other's writings—that benefited both of us."

Giving Back
If you are interested in giving to the Department of Psychological Sciences History Museum, Right: Graduate students Liz Martin and Samantha Heinzelman at the reception.

Above: One of the exhibits in the new Department of Psychological Sciences History Museum.

Below: Graduate students Whitney Brown and Maria Niculete enjoy the reception at the Museum of Art and Archaeology Cast Gallery.

Photo at right: Kim Fleming, Rachel Wingo, and Amelia Talley examine a student research poster.

Alumni board member Tom Kolditz, graduate student Melissa Tarantola, and Daniel Kivlahan, 2012 keynote speaker, discuss student research at the student poster session.
Sixth Annual Psychology Day, April 26

Michael C. Roberts (see Page 6) will be the keynote speaker for Psychology Day this year. His presentation is titled "Clinical Child and Pediatric Psychology: Developments in Training, Research, and Applications."

During the day, undergraduate honors students and graduate students will present findings from their research. The day will end with the traditional 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.

National Newsmakers

Continued from Page 4

higher levels of happiness consisting of two major components: the need to keep having new and positive life-changing experiences and the need to keep appreciating what you already have and not want more too soon. His findings were publicized on Fox News, ABCNews.Go.com, and in The Globe and Mail and The Vancouver Sun (Canada).

Professor Jamie Arndt and doctoral student Kenneth Vail found that thoughts of mortality can lead to decreased militaristic attitudes, better health decisions, increased altruism and helpfulness, and reduced divorce rates. Their findings were published in the Daily Mail and Telegraph (U.K.), and on Science Daily and Men’s Health.