



NORTHERN MICHIGAN  
UNIVERSITY

# DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

January 2020

Dear Psychology Alumni and Friends,

I'm writing to wish you Happy Holidays from the NMU Department of Psychological Science! We hope that you're doing well in your adventures post-NMU.

As part of our holiday letter, I wanted to share the news and events in our department occurring this past year. In 2018, the department celebrated our 50th anniversary! We held an open house during fall 2018's homecoming weekend, and it was great to catch up with those who traveled back to Marquette. By the way, our doors are always open to alums, so please stop in if you are ever in the area. The department has moved from Gries Hall and we're now located in Weston Hall (formerly the New Science Facility).

We've welcomed many new faculty to the Department of Psychological Science, bringing a variety of specialty areas for our students to gain experience in.

**Ashley Shayter** joined our department as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst to help the department train students in Applied Behavior Analysis. Ashley specializes in traumatic brain injury and disabilities in adults. She recently made the newspaper for a study she conducted to assess a type of therapy to improve memory among the elderly in a local nursing home.



**Jon Barch** came to the department this year and brings with him a specialization in social and personality psychology. He has already established a productive lab focused on the effects of inter-personal relationships and motivation.



The department also recently hired **Amber LaCrosse**, who will help the department with psychology and neuroscience courses. She has a background in neuro-oncology, with a particular interest in the cognitive and behavioral deficits associated with glioblastoma tumors as well as chemotherapy drugs.



**Vince Jeevar** is here and teaches courses in developmental psychology – he also has a background in performance psychology, particularly related to athletic coaching.



Next fall, **Lin Fang** will join the department – her background is in attention-cognitive processing. She also will teach psychology and neuroscience classes.

The department has a number of familiar and new faces. Those of us here the longest are Paul Andronis, Josh Carlson, Grace Albert, and myself.

**Paul Andronis** has taken over teaching the history of psychology. As you are undoubtedly aware, Paul has an encyclopedic knowledge of psychology, making this a perfect class for him.

**Josh Carlson** has, over the years, developed a nationally recognized laboratory for research on attention-bias modification in anxiety, and he recently received a large grant from the National Institute on Mental Illness to support this work. He publishes multiple studies per year with student co-authors, and he was recently recognized by NMU as being this year's Peter White Scholar – a very notable award.

**Grace Albert** continues to keep the department on track, especially as we navigate the many changes to our programs.

I'm now in my fourth year as the Head of the Department of Psychological Science, and I mostly spend my time trying to keep up with and support the exceptional level of activity from our faculty. I've maintained an active research program to study psychoactive drugs for treating mental illnesses.

The department's sweeping changes involve revisions to our undergraduate programs in order to modernize them and to provide more opportunities for research training.

The behavior analysis program now has specific courses designed to meet certification requirements by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board. Students completing the program's course and extensive practicum hours meet the



requirements to sit for the Board Certified assistant Behavior Analyst exam upon graduation. Practicum hours are conducted in the **Behavior Education Assessment and Research Center** (what we call the BEAR Center), which includes an on-campus clinic for helping children with autism or related disorders up to age 6, and sites in the community, including schools, nursing homes, and community mental health agencies. All of this work requires a dedicated team, and the "BEAR" staff includes a mix of department professors and clinicians. The faculty involved with the BEAR Center include Jacob Daar (director), Ashley Shayter, and Jeremy Biesbrouck. Our two full-time behavior analyst clinicians are Victoria Mattson and Colin Hahn, and the clerical and billing person at the BEAR Center is Suzanne Hintsala.

As you can imagine, traveling to off-campus sites requires a lot of driving. To help students, the Ford Motor Company in partnership with Fox Motors, the NMU Foundation, and NMU Academic Affairs, recently donated two new Ford Vehicles to students and staff to use. The vehicles are nicely equipped SUVs complete with NMU logos, and provide safe commuting in the U.P. winters.



The Psychology Major now includes four concentration areas, which students pursue after taking a core curriculum consisting of foundation area classes. One of the concentrations is for pre-clinical students (the mental health / pre-clinical psychology concentration). For pre-clinical, we've designed a program that gives students access to clinical job shadowing opportunities and internships, along with a research

experience and a senior thesis. The other concentration areas include Brain and Behavior, Developmental Psychology, and Social/Personality Psychology. These concentrations include new upper divisions specialty courses in the respective areas and they end in a capstone project. The major also includes a "general" option allowing students to choose any electives they would like to complete. Our last undergraduate major is the neuroscience major, which we share with the Biology Department. This program continues to grow, and is particularly attractive for pre-med students.

The department also has a new psychology major housed completely online. We recently hired Jon Barch as an assistant professor in the department, and he has extensive experience leading dynamic and engaging online educational experiences for our students. Thanks to this program, numerous students whose life circumstances prevented completing their psychology degrees have returned to NMU online to achieve their college goals. Jon's innovative approach not only facilitates a sense of connection with fellow online learners, but also gives students avenues to gain research experience – a central theme to our approach for undergraduate psychology education.

The department continues to support student travel to regional and national conferences. Recently, we had students attend the Society for Neuroscience meeting in Chicago, the Psychonomics meeting in Montreal, the Midwest Psychological Association in Chicago, the Association for Behavior Analysis International in Chicago, the Michigan Autism Conference in Kalamazoo, the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science in Ireland. An upcoming conference includes a trip for our pre-clinical psychology students to St. Paul to receive special training at the Violence Project conference, where students will learn about causes and predictors of violent behavior in schools and other public places. Much of the funding for their travel comes from donations given to us from alumni and friends. Gifts designated to the Department of Psychological Science support these opportunities for student travel, student research projects and more. We are very grateful for all of our donors each year – they make these wonderful educational experiences possible for our students.

On the topic of travel, there's a chance a faculty member traveling to a conference with students might be in your neighborhood. Please keep the NMU Alumni Office informed of any changes to your contact information. The Alumni Office can put us in contact with alums when we are traveling to conferences, and this would make for an excellent opportunity to catch up!

On behalf of the Department of Psychological Science faculty and staff, I wish you a happy new year!

Sincerely,

Adam Prus, Ph.D.  
Professor and Head  
Department of Psychological Science

