INSIGHT

A glance at the XU psychology department's latest projects and recognitions

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Vytautas (Vitas) Bieliauskas has been the pater familias to this department since the late 1950s. As chair, he was responsible for starting the four Master’s programs in Clinical, Counseling, Industrial-Organizational and Experimental in 1962 and was one of the real political pillars of the University. I understand he was a real force to be reckoned with, though also a kind and nurturing person who took students under his wing. He was an active researcher who published widely, especially on the House Tree Person test. He was integral to the development of clinical psychology as a recognized profession in Ohio, serving as the President of the State Board of Psychology. So it is with great sadness but also affection that I report his passing last fall. Mike Nelson co-wrote an obituary with his son, Linus, a neuropsychologist at the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System about Vitas’s outstanding contributions to Xavier, the field of Psychology, and the Lithuanian community (American Psychologist, 2013, 68, 885).

While we lost an important member of the community, we also have gained a new member, Tammy Sonmentag. She is currently completing her Ph.D. in Developmental and Social Psychology at Kansas State University and will join us in August. Her research is the identification of the “Moral Rebel”; someone who will stand up for what is right even in circumstances where that is unpopular.

Tammy joins Abbie Beacham, a health psychologist, who started this academic year and is the new Director of Clinical Training (DCT). She succeeds Janet Schultz who is still a department member, and who was the inaugural DCT; a position she held for sixteen years. Since most DCTs serve for less than five years, Janet’s longevity was an indicator of her dedication to the students. Abbie’s exciting ideas about how to improve the visibility of the PsyD program is infectious, and she believes that it can be recognized as one of the top programs in the country.

Jen Gibson was the person who was hired before Dr. Beacham. She is a clinical child psychologist whose area of research focuses on bullying and helping schools more proactively engage with bullies. She earned her doctorate at Miami University and came to us from her internship at University of Maryland, School of Medicine.

There is a transition on the horizon – Susan Kenford will complete her fourth year of directing the Psychological Services Center (PSC) and will be succeeded this summer by Nick Salsman. They will play a bit of do-si-do as Nick will be going on Sabbatical in the spring – he will be travelling to Germany to collaborate with a colleague in Dialectical Behavior Therapy research. Anna Ghee is taking a sabbatical this spring to work on a laboratory workbook for the General Experimental course that she and other faculty members teach as a core curriculum offering in the sciences to our undergraduates.

That’s part of the view from the chair. It continues to be a pleasure to work with colleagues as fine as the faculty we have. I feel blessed to have been a part of this department throughout most of my career.

-Dr. Karl Stukenberg
INTRODUCTION TO X-CORP

Over the past few years, the Xavier University Industrial-Organizational (I-O) Psychology program has been laying the groundwork for a new Center on campus, focused on offering graduate students (and potentially undergraduates) with the opportunity to engage in applied I-O work. X-CORP – the Xavier Center for Organizational Research and Practice – will serve both as a means to provide our students with real-world I-O experience and as a means of providing I-O related services to the community.

During fall semester 2013, a group of second-year I-O students undertook a needs assessment project to determine which of the many potential services X-CORP might offer should be prioritized. The project was conducted under the guidance of I-O program alum Sjen von Dienes-Oehm (M.S. 2010), who generously donated her time and expertise as relates to Organizational Development to further the growth of X-CORP.

In conducting the needs assessment, the students developed a survey of potential I-O products and services, then identified key constituencies in the local and regional community. A pilot version of the survey was provided to a number of other program alumni, who offered excellent insights and suggestions (they are too numerous to list here, but we thank them all!). The final version of the survey was distributed in late November. A total of 99 local and regional HR professionals, organizational consultants, and other key decision-makers weighed in on how X-CORP could help them, and what kinds of products and services they might be inclined to pursue if such were offered.

The results were very encouraging. The data revealed a great need for the products and services and the qualitative comments underscored Xavier’s outstanding reputation within the local business community and their desire to see have this center as a resource.

We believe that X-CORP has a great deal to offer, and that both for-profit and non-profit companies can potentially benefit from what our students, faculty, and alumni have to offer. Watch these pages for future updates as we move forward!

"X-CORP has a great deal to offer, and that both for-profit and non-profit companies can potentially benefit."

- Morrie Mullins, Ph.D.

TWIN LAKES

This past fall, the second year I/O students were assigned a project in their training and development class. This project required them to develop a training program for the company they were assigned to work with. Ashley Brown, Chuck Cooper, Christina Foster, Nicole Sanders and Chelsea Wymer were asked to develop a training program for the State Tested Nursing Assistants (STNAs) at Twin Lakes in Cincinnati. Twin Lakes is life-enriching community that offers a lifestyle that includes the finest luxury accommodations and amenities, along with assuring the quality of on-site health services. Twin lakes offers a variety of services, but is mainly known for it’s senior communities. The students worked closely with Jim Mayer, the director of Twin Lakes to assure confidentiality boundaries were not crossed, and to identify the goals he had for his organization. The training program was developed to improve interpersonal communication and conflict management between STNAs and residents. It also provided them with additional knowledge on the best ways to identify signs of cognitive decline to better their communication with residents portraying the symptoms. The material that was developed for this program was collected by onsite observations and structured interviews with 7 STNAs. By doing observations, the students were able to grasp a better understanding of the daily functions of the job, and the needs of the residents. The main goal of the training was to improve the lives of all individuals influenced by the Twin Lakes community. Twin Lakes was very satisfied with the outcome of the training program that they have decided to move forward with implementing it into their own in-house training.
An Update on Dr Hart:

Have you been wondering what Kathy Hart has been up to? Ever wonder what happened to her daughters, whose IQ test performances you watched and scored in IQ testing? Well, all is well at the Hart-Mossman household. Sarah, Kathy’s nearly 23-year-old daughter (yes, she is really that old now!) is finishing a year studying Musical Theatre at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Leah is a 13-year-old 8th grader who is also studying voice and enjoys participating in musicals at her middle school. Leah is also “sporty” and is currently running track; she has played basketball, volleyball and baseball (on a team where she was the only girl!). Kathy’s husband, Douglas Mossman, who some of you remember from his lectures in Forensic Psychology, is busy seeing patients, doing forensic evaluations, and doing research in risk assessment. He also presents widely on this topic; in April 2014 he will be a week long guest at the Department of Psychiatry at Yale where, among other things, he will present Grand Rounds.

When she is not driving Leah back and forth to lessons or practices, or planning her next trip to visit Sarah in London, Kathy continues to teach at both the graduate and undergraduate level, and she chairs a number of dissertations. Most of her current research addresses issues facing children in the juvenile court system, including evaluating a program to increase children’s court-related knowledge and assessing the utility of a widely-used risk assessment instrument for juvenile offenders. In fact, she has recently created a research team with several 1st and 2nd year students to help develop a coordinated research agenda, in the hope that the knowledge gained will improve the lives and circumstances of children whose path takes them before the juvenile court.

Students and faculty gathered for the annual SEPA conference this spring in Nashville to present their cutting-edge research

APAGS THROUGH THE YEAR

APAGS, Xavier’s graduate psychology student association, is at a busy time of the year!

Recently, Xavier’s Psy.D. program had its annual Interview Day to give prospective students a chance to learn more about the program. This is always an exciting time for APAGS! We contact all prospective students to personally congratulate them and answer any questions they have. We also arrange for current students to take in applicants who need a place to stay while in town. To help prospective relax and interact with current students in an informal setting, we always plan a social event the night before Interview Day. Finally, we make a strong presence on Interview Day, attending meals, talks, and question and answer sessions, providing our insights and perspective to prospective students throughout the day. Interview Day was a big success this year, and we look forward to meeting the incoming class this Fall!

With Interview Day behind us, APAGS is busy working on several different projects. We are currently accepting applications for both our annual conference awards and our research award. We offer these awards every year to financially support graduate psychology students and foster their professional development. We are also in the process of planning our annual event for the Women of Excellence program. Through this program we will invite adolescent girls to Xavier and provide them with a number of workshops designed to help them prepare for college or jobs after they graduate from high school. Finally, we planned a major department social event and fundraiser – inviting students, faculty, staff, family, and friends to a Reds game in April. We worked hard to make this event a success, and hope to make it an annual event that the department looks forward to every year!
Psi Chi has planned and presented a variety of academic, informational, social, and service-related events this year. The executive board’s goal was to provide students with access to information from many sources, both on and off campus, and give them the opportunity to connect with people in multiple fields.

The academic events included presentations from speakers in little-known branches of psychology. These speakers talked about performance psychology and school psychology. Students also saw the dedication and effort that their peers devoted to developing their own research projects through the Research Methods and Design poster sessions. Another topic that Psi Chi focused on this year was exposing students to the GRE through weekly informational sessions and regular practice tests.

The informational events included presentations about social and racial health disparities, the Talbert House, and information about eating disorders during National Eating Disorders Awareness Week. All of these events involved collaborating with other groups or outside presenters. These individuals and groups included Dr. Aida L. Giachello, the Career Services Office, Active Minds and the Student Health Advisory Council, and the Lindner Center for Hope.

The social events were designed to be informal gatherings for psychology majors of all levels. They included a meet-and-greet event with Psi Chi board and some faculty members, pumpkin carving for Halloween, and the annual inductions ceremony. The inductions ceremony also allowed us to celebrate student accomplishments and welcome the new executive board members.

The service events were designed to promote awareness of issues within our area of Cincinnati and offer support to those in need. The events included the annual Alzheimer’s Walk in downtown Cincinnati and decorating Valentines for residents at the Cincinnati Children’s Home, Northern Kentucky Children’s Home and EPIC House. These events were a way to demonstrate our individual character and fulfill the Jesuit mission.

Congratulations to Avelina Padin who will graduate in May for receiving the prestigious Psi Chi Regional Research Award at the Southeastern Psychological Association two years in a row! – in Atlanta in 2013 and Nashville in 2014 (Dr. End was her mentor each time). The title of her award winning presentations were: “Cross-cultural differences in the effect of outcome on relationships” and “The fantasy owner’s complex: the effect of fantasy and real success on mood and self-esteem.” Avelina said that she really enjoyed her experiences at both SEPA conferences and that “attending the conferences was a great way to bond with other psychology students from Xavier and learn about what other students are studying across the region. They also provided great informational sessions that aided me in my preparation for applying to graduate school”.

Psi Chi Induction Ceremony