Psychology Student Scholarships

During the 2014-15 academic year, the Psychology Department awarded over $70,000 in student scholarships to majors in the program benefitting over 20 students. The scholarships were possible through the Marie Wilson Howell’s Endowment. We have already committed $72,000 in scholarship aid to eligible students for the 2015-16 academic year.

Remembering Dr. Tommy Poling, Professor

In April, we lost our friend and colleague, Dr. Tommy Poling after a brief illness. Dr. Poling came to UALR in 1974 after graduating from Oklahoma State University with a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. In addition to being a full-time faculty member in the department, he was a licensed clinical psychologist who often provided free clinical consultations to UALR students and faculty.

During his 40 years at UALR, he participated in growing the Psychology B.A. program into one of the largest majors on campus. He developed innovative courses such as PSYC 3340 Meditation Techniques and PSYC 3363 Psychology of Religion which were popular among students as well as community members.

There was hardly a student who passed through the program who didn’t take a class from Dr. Poling. His lasting legacy will be the many students he inspired to go on to pursue clinical psychology and are currently practicing across the country. Dr. Poling’s career is marked by many innovative and important scholarly contributions in the areas of personality theory and measurement. In collaboration with faculty and student colleagues, he investigated the influence of personality characteristics on a variety of variables, including religious conversion and denominational affiliation, deity conceptualization, moral reasoning, creativity, leadership style and language use.

The faculty along with Tommy’s wife Betty are arranging for a bench with a plaque to be placed on campus in his memory in the fall.
Master of Applied Psychology – Reopens Fall 2015!

On May 1st, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education Coordinating Board gave the final approval for the re-opening of the Master of Applied Psychology program. This program will offer preparation for careers in industrial/organizational psychology.

The industrial/organizational track (41 hours) focuses on the application of psychological methods and theories in business and organizational settings. This track stresses personnel selection, personnel program evaluation, training, and organizational development.

Interested students may start applying through the UALR graduate school beginning May 18th for the Fall 2015 cohort. We will admit up to 20 students provided they meet minimum requirements. If you are interested in learning more about this program, visit www.ualr.edu/psychology.

...Points of Pride

This year, the Psychology Department won the college-wide award for “Recruitment and Retention” with a $3,000 award to use in developing resources for students.

UALR’s new Honors College will launch at the beginning of the 2015-16 academic year. Psychology has opted in and therefore qualified students will be able to choose Psychology (Honors) as a major. Two new courses have been developed for this purpose: PSYC 3361 Honors Abnormal Psychology and PSYC 3346 Honors Research Methods I. We are excited to be a part of this new initiative.

On Saturday, May 16th, we will be graduating 56 psychology majors. That makes 116 graduates for this academic year (including Summer and Fall 2014); our largest year to date. Congratulations Graduates!!

Five students presented their research “Can Anxiety Levels be an Effective Indicator of Sleep Hygiene Scores in Women?” at the Arkansas Symposium for Psychology Students held at the University of Central Arkansas. Clifton Adamson, Rebekah Redus, Lillian (Casey) Orr, Brendon Clowers, and Joe Yoder are also presenting their research at the International SLEEP Conference in Seattle this month.

The Psychology Department awarded three students the Marie Wilson Howells Award for Outstanding Graduating Senior in Psychology: Scott. Giblin, Cristy Benton, and Caitlin Caperton all are graduating from the program with a 4.0 grade point average.

The Psychology Department awarded two students, Sarah Lassiter (jr) and Taylor Sills (sr) the Marie Wilson Howells Award for Outstanding Researcher.

On May 5th, twenty students were inducted into the Psi Chi Honors Society: Clifton Adamson, Leslie Boyd, Ma'Leah Dunn, Ashlee Duryea, Barakah Gillis, Andrea Haygood, Shalae Hesselbein, Jasmine Ice, Emily Jones, Bianca McCrary, Mallisha McCravy, Mackenzie Moore, Emily Nail, LaChansity O'Guinn, Lucy Parkhurst, Dale Pennington, Rebekah Redus, Stephanie Robinson, Andrew Stanley, and Veniece Walker. Congratulations!
Sarah Lassiter – From Student to Scholar

Sarah Lassiter (Psychology Junior) has had quite the year! Last November, she won the Statewide Undergraduate Research Fellowship from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. This semester, at the College of Social Sciences and Communication Student Research and Creative Works Symposium she won top honors for her research poster. Finally, the departmental faculty gave her the Marie Wilson Howells Outstanding Psychology Research Award. After graduating with B.A.’s in Psychology and Philosophy, Sarah plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Clinical Neuropsychology.

What drew you to UALR as an institution and Psychology as a major?
I’ve always been intrigued by the human mind, so Psychology was a natural choice for a major. It is fascinating how enigmatic we remain to our own selves. Psychology is full of unanswered questions, and with recent advances in technology and science, we are becoming increasingly capable of investigating them. This field is on the brink of discovery, and I want to be involved.

I am a transfer student, and this grants me a unique perspective into some of the distinct advantages of UALR and its Psychology department. Coming from a larger university, I can attest to the fact that because UALR is slightly smaller, there are more opportunities for motivated students. This decreased size allows students to form meaningful, productive relationships with the university’s excellent faculty.

Speaking of faculty, talk about your research with Dr. Benjamin Kowal.
I began working with Dr. Kowal in the fall of 2014. He invited me to join him in his research on impulsivity. The first study I worked on investigated the relationship between sleepiness and impulsivity. We are currently completing a study investigating ways to decrease levels of impulsivity. I couldn’t ask for a better mentor.

How did winning the Statewide Undergraduate Research Fellowship help you in your work this year?
Winning the SURF grant made me feel like what I was doing was important, and gave me a boost of confidence in my own ability to succeed. It felt great to get that type of affirmation. The entire process has been challenging and rewarding, and I have gained valuable insight into another important aspect of the research process.

What advice do you have for other students in general, and specifically those who want to pursue the same kinds of research experiences with faculty as you have?
All I can do is stress how important it is to be excited about what you are doing. For me, that included becoming involved in research and declaring a double major in Philosophy. If you are genuinely excited about what you’re doing, not only will you succeed, but it won’t even feel like work.

I advise students who wish to become involved with research to simply talk to their professors. Just let them know that you are interested and if they are not working on anything at the moment, they would know someone who is.

Student Advising and Tutoring

Advising is still available for Summer and Fall 2015. If you need to be advised, please visit our webpage www.ualr.edu/psychology to sign up for advising.

We offer free tutoring in the Psychology Statistics Laboratory to students enrolled in research and statistics courses across the college. The Lab is located in Stabler Hall 502. Tutoring will be available through final exams and then re-open for summer classes May 26th.
Greetings!

We have reached the end of the Spring 2015 semester and it has been a busy one for faculty and students alike. I am incredibly proud of our students and the research they are generating under the mentorship of our talented faculty. The work highlighted in this newsletter represents only a fraction of what is actually going on.

As we move into the next academic year, I will continue to look for ways of developing the student research infrastructure in both the undergraduate and the new graduate program. With the re-opening of our Master’s program, I look forward to meeting a new cohort of talented graduate students in August.

Of course these successes are tempered by the devastating loss of our friend and colleague, Dr. Tommy Poling. Tommy spearheaded the revitalization of the Master’s program...its success will be due in part to his vision and hard work. Many of you reading this have taken a course or were advised by Dr. Poling and will undoubtedly be saddened by the news of his loss. We plan to dedicate a new park bench by Coleman Creek on campus in his memory. News of the dedication will be forthcoming.

As always, we welcome your comments as well as news about significant events or activities in your own lives. You can keep us informed through our website “Alumni Update” link found here: http://ualr.edu/psychology. You can also find us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/UALRpsych.

Best wishes for a great summer!

Amanda Nolen, Ph.D.
Interim Department Chair