

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY & NEUROSCIENCE

2016 NEWSLETTER

NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART RESEARCH FACILITY OPENS

On August 19, 2016, our department celebrated the official reopening of Howell Hall, a renovated state-of-the-art research facility for psychology and neuroscience. Originally constructed in 1906 at the total cost of \$45,000, the building was called the Chemistry Building and later renamed Howell Hall in 1925 to honor Dr. Edward Vernon Howell, founder of the UNC School of Pharmacy.

Howell Hall was first home to the Department of Chemistry from 1906–1925, then the School of Pharmacy (1925–1959), and the School of Journalism (1960–1999).

Since 1999, the building was used as swing space and it fell into a state of disrepair. In 2014, a \$12 million renovation began on the building for use by the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience.

New core laboratory facilities allow our faculty to enhance and expand the collaborative capabilities of research. Faculty share space in various core laboratories for data analysis, histology, psychophysiology, behavioral testing and observation, and cognition. Former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and key supporter of the Howell Hall renovation, Karen Gil

explains, “The building really enables us to build research and teaching in cutting-edge areas in the study of psychology and neuroscience. It will provide phenomenal opportunities for our undergraduate and graduate students to work with top faculty.”

At the dedication ceremony, Chair Don Lysle and Dean Kevin Guskiewicz shared Howell Hall’s storied history and celebrated the opening. “It’s exciting to consider the future research that will happen within these walls,” Dr. Lysle

says, “These laboratories will allow our faculty to advance the study of drug and alcohol use, investigate the neural processes mediating memory in healthy aging and in Alzheimer’s, and research how the brain transforms across development.”

Students, staff, faculty, and community members cheered as Dean Guskiewicz cut the ribbon to the front doors of Howell Hall. Graduate students and faculty members welcomed guests to tour the laboratories,

continued on page 3



LEFT TO RIGHT: FORMER DEAN KAREN GIL, CHAIR DON LYSLE, DEAN KEVIN GUSKIEWICZ, FORMER SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN MIKE CRIMMINS, AND SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN CHRIS CLEMENS



HOWELL HALL

Kristen Chavez

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[GREETINGS from the CHAIR]

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

Writing this annual letter of greetings to you, our alumni and friends, I am reminded of how our department continues to grow and flourish every year. I am glad to report that this has been another successful year in Psychology and Neuroscience.

Howell Hall's renovations were completed over the summer and we were able to move in our equipment and laboratories into a new state-of-the-art research facility. In August, our faculty, students, and staff celebrated the culmination of the project with a grand reopening of the building, complete with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, tours, and a research showcase. This multi-million dollar project not only provides us the research space our growing faculty so greatly need, but is already creating opportunities for collaboration and helping our department attract the best graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty.

Our undergraduates continue to interact with faculty in new and exciting ways. This year, our Karen M. Gil Internship Program has added seven more site placements to their internship offerings, including Teledyne Scientific and Imaging, featured on page 6. New internships give our students the ability to see the variety of ways they can apply their degrees in psychology and the opportunity to network with prominent psychologists in North Carolina. One of our distinguished professors, Dr. Peter Ornstein, is teaching an unusual and exciting First-Year Seminar Course that examines children's eyewitness testimony. Dr. Ornstein's students are studying the Little Rascals Day Care case, a prominent sexual abuse trial in North Carolina in the 1990s, to understand how children testify and the effects of interviewing on testimonies. Students will also meet a forensic psychologist and an attorney that were involved in the case. From their first year at Carolina, our students have the opportunity to see psychology in-action and become deeply involved in our community.

Our collective need still exceeds the state and federal funds that are available to us. Private funding continues to play a pivotal role in helping the department capitalize on our many strengths. In this newsletter, you'll read about the innovative research being conducted by our faculty and students – and how private support from alumni like you makes those projects possible.

Private giving is crucial to maintaining the academic excellence for current and future students. So much of what we do depends on the generous support we receive from alumni and friends of the department. We are appreciative of any gift, large or small. If you have already made a gift to us this year, we thank you for your generous support.

I hope you enjoy hearing news from our department. When you visit Carolina, I invite you to visit us in Davie Hall or our new research facility, Howell Hall.

Sincerely,



Donald T. Lysle, Ph.D.

Chair of the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience
Kenan Distinguished Professor



DR. DONALD LYSLE,
CHAIR

[FACULTY Spotlight]

NEW RESEARCH LABS IMPROVE AND ENRICH COLLABORATIONS

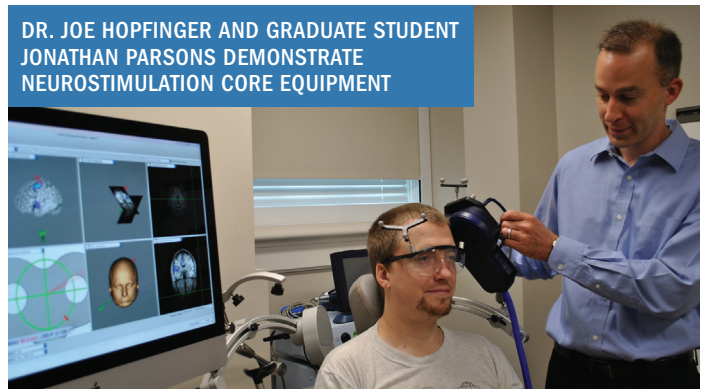
Howell Hall, our new research facility, utilizes a core laboratory model that shares equipment and space across doctoral programs to facilitate collaboration and the sharing of ideas. Dr. Joseph Hopfinger, a Professor of Cognitive Psychology, is the co-director of three core laboratories: the Neurostimulation Core with Dr. Charlotte Boettiger in Behavioral and Integrative Neuroscience, the Data Analysis Core with Dr. Kathleen Gates in Quantitative Psychology, and the Electrophysiology Core with Dr. Margaret Sheridan in Clinical Psychology.

Dr. Hopfinger has already found these communal research laboratories to be a benefit to his research. He says, "We're very excited about the future, because Howell Hall is already allowing us to collaborate across programs in ways we didn't before." One mutual collaboration with Dr. Gates examines online cognitive training through brain-training games intended to enhance users' mental fitness. Sixty healthy young adults, ages 21 to 35, participated in the study by playing games 30 minutes a day, five days a week, over six weeks. Participants in the training group played games that focused on tasks of visual perception, memory, and attention through a commercial cognitive gaming suite. The control group engaged in non-cognitive training games, such as Tetris, Candy Crush, and mahjong.

"We were interested to see if the attention networks in the brain were modifiable with online training and if we could see brain differences after just six weeks of this training," explains Dr. Hopfinger. At the start of the study, Dr. Hopfinger tested participants with standard working memory and attention tasks while in an fMRI scanner to measure brain activity. At the end of six weeks, the study found that the control group and the experimental group had very similar accuracy and speed when completing these tasks. "If you only looked at that behavior, it might have seemed like nothing changed," says Dr. Hopfinger. "But, when we looked inside the brain, we could see the cognitive training group wasn't working as hard to achieve that same level of performance. What the training did was help keep their level of performance high, without needing to engage those brain networks as intensely. The tasks became essentially easier for this group."

In future research, Dr. Hopfinger hopes to discover more about the neural mechanisms involved in neuroplasticity, the brain's ongoing ability to reorganize and adjust itself to experiences. Dr. Hopfinger says, "The online training study showed a longer-term change in the brain over six weeks of cognitive training. We were able to modify the brain through training. Now, it is just a matter of realizing the potential promise of inducing targeted brain plasticity."

DR. JOE HOPFINGER AND GRADUATE STUDENT
JONATHAN PARSONS DEMONSTRATE
NEUROSTIMULATION CORE EQUIPMENT





[FACULTY Spotlight]

BLACK ADOLESCENTS MAY FACE LARGER RISK OF POLICE BRUTALITY

The *Washington Post* is compiling data annually of every fatal shooting of a civilian in the United States by a police officer in the line of duty. At the time of this article, 178 African American men had been killed in 2016 and almost half of these men were under the age of 30. Dr. Kurt Gray, an Assistant Professor of Social Psychology, and Dr. Keith Payne, a Professor of Social Psychology, were recently awarded a Russell Sage Foundation grant for their project, “Cast as a Criminal: How Moral Typecasting

Leads to Racial Prejudice.” Their project will explore whether or not moral typecasting can help explain aggressive law enforcement tactics towards non-whites, especially black men.

Social psychologists have studied prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination for decades. “Stereotypes are generally understood as just good or bad,” explains Dr. Payne. “What we’re saying is that stereotypes have a moral element – either you are a perpetrator or a victim.” Moral typecasting is a process much like typecasting

an actor – once a person becomes strongly identified with a set of traits or role, it is challenging to alter that perception. Dr. Gray says, “We believe what gives prejudice a lot of its force, in groups we don’t like, we don’t just see that group as unpleasant. We see them as immoral and wrong to justify treating them badly.”

In New York City, the New York Police Department’s Stop, Question, and Frisk program (more commonly known as stop-and-frisk) is the practice in which police officers stop to question a civilian and then frisk them for weapons, drugs, or other contraband. Pedestrians, before new guidelines were released in 2013, were stopped-and-frisked for being present in a high-crime area, furtive movements, or standing alone. In 2012, New Yorkers were stopped by the police over 530,000 times. 55% identified as African American and 32% were Latino.

The Cast as a Criminal project has several components planned over the next two years, including the analysis of archival data and behavioral experiments to understand the psychological mechanisms involved with racial bias. Neil Hester, a fourth-year graduate student in Social Psychology, is analyzing the data points in the 2012 stop-and-frisk records. In reviewing this data, Hester

found that of the adolescents who were stopped by police, African American youth were disproportionately represented. For example, of the 11 year olds that were stopped-and-frisked, 88.7% were African American. In the 12 year

ADOLESCENTS ARE NOT QUITE CHILDREN AND THEY’RE NOT QUITE ADULTS, SO WE DON’T KNOW HOW MUCH MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSIGN THEM.

—NEIL HESTER

old category, 81% were African American.

“Adolescents are not quite children and they’re not quite adults, so we don’t know how much moral responsibility to assign them,” says Hester. “Adolescents are ambiguous, so people use other factors such as race to figure out if they are threatening.” The theory of moral typecasting suggests that criminalizing stereotypes are especially strong when judging ambiguous situations, such as in age with adolescents. The Cast as a Criminal team plans to examine other archival data, including juvenile justice system data, to study the links among age, race, and sentencing. Looking at the severity of sentencing, our social psychologists will be able to determine the gap between black and white sentencing and if it is larger for younger criminals.

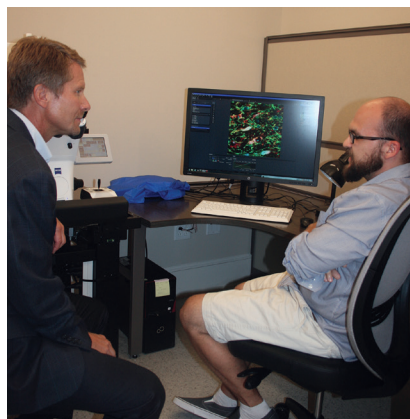
“A lot of the focus in the media is just at the racial level and the concern that black people – particularly black males – face disproportionate levels of risk at being victims of police violence and police brutality,” Hester explains. “We’re interested in getting a richer sense of who is at-risk and we’re looking at the possibility that risk is amplified for black adolescents.”

RESEARCH FACILITY, *continued from page 1*

demonstrating new technology and showcasing their research. Jennifer MacCormack, a graduate student in Social Psychology, showed guests the new Emotion Induction Suite. With several undergraduate research assistants, MacCormack demonstrated a mood induction task that collects physiological data wirelessly, allowing researchers to see immediately if a specific mood can impact outcomes like social perceptions, memory recall, and decision-making.

Howell Hall was crowded with

members of the department, students, and guests – all clearly enthused to see the new equipment and space. MacCormack shared, “Howell Hall has already helped build connections across labs, but this space especially benefits us trainees. Howell makes learning and using top-tier methodologies more accessible – thus creating more opportunities to build our expertise.”

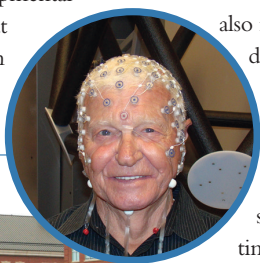


DEAN KEVIN GUSKIEWICZ TOURS THE MICROSCOPY SUITE IN HOWELL HALL

[FACULTY Spotlight]

BLUEBERRIES MAY PREVENT COGNITIVE DECLINE

At the North Carolina Research Campus, eight universities are connected with healthcare organizations and industries to forge collaborative partnerships to advance health, nutrition, and agriculture for disease prevention and treatment. One of our faculty, Dr. Carol Cheatham, an Associate Professor of Developmental Psychology, works at the UNC Nutrition Research Institute in Kannapolis to



and experimental groups.

“Across the sexes in the blueberry group, we found that speed of visual processing improved by 60 milliseconds,” explains Dr. Cheatham. “You’re probably thinking that 60 milliseconds is nothing, but 13 milliseconds is all it takes to see and process an image – so 60 milliseconds is a huge amount of time for the brain.” Dr. Cheatham also found that a six-month daily dose of blueberries prevented mild cognitive decline for some participants. “The men had less change in their MoCA scores. They did not continue to decline cognitively compared to the placebo group.”

Dr. Cheatham’s study is the first large-scale human clinical trial involving blueberries. Past animal studies have shown that anthocyanins, the blue pigment in blueberries, can positively affect memory and processing in the brain. “The mechanism by which blueberries can improve our processing hasn’t been determined yet,” says Dr. Cheatham. “The reason that I came to this campus is that it is designed for universities and industries to work together. We’re studying blueberries because the USDA came to campus to work with Dr. Lila, a blueberry expert, and they needed my expertise in cognitive science.” Dr. Lila and Dr. Cheatham continue to study the effects of blueberries and are currently working on a research proposal involving blueberries and the remediation of the effects of sleep deprivation for the Department of the Defense. “I have an obligation to the public to do something meaningful with my work,” explains Dr. Cheatham. “By adding a nutrition component to my research, it is readily applicable to the public.”

study nutrition across the lifespan.

In collaboration with Dr. Mary Ann Lila of NC State University’s Plants for Human Health Institute, Dr. Cheatham recently concluded a three-year study on the effects of blueberries on cognitive decline. In her clinical trial, 80 subjects, ages 65 to 80 years old who present with mild cognitive impairment, were enrolled in the project. Participants were either given a placebo or received the freeze dried equivalent of two cups of blueberries a day for six months. At the beginning and at the end of the study, subjects completed the Cambridge Neuropsychological Test Automated Battery (CANTAB) tests, a series of computer-based neuropsychological tests used to measure cognitive assessment, during event-related potentials recording. In addition, Dr. Cheatham employed a tool called MoCA or Montreal Cognitive Assessment, to measure and compare cognitive decline in the control

[ALUMNI Spotlight]

CLINICAL ALUMNA EXAMINES ROLE OF NON-PARENTAL ADULTS IN UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

A graduate of our Clinical Psychology doctoral program in 2011, Dr. Emma Sterrett-Hong is currently an Assistant Professor and Director of the Couples and Family Therapy Program at University of Louisville. At the time of her undergraduate degree, Dr. Sterrett-Hong says, “I thought I was going to be a reporter. I really did enjoy learning about people, but the idea of just hearing their stories and writing it up – and then not coming back with an intervention or a strategy to help them – that was really unfulfilling for me.”

After completing her M.S. in Marital and Family Therapy from Northwestern University, Dr. Sterrett-Hong attended Carolina. She explains, “I wanted excellent research training and I liked UNC because they had Deborah Jones, who ended up as my advisor. She did research on families, specifically in co-parenting. I really saw an overlap in Deborah’s work and my research interests and, ultimately, that’s why I chose UNC.”

“Deborah was so supportive in allowing us to follow our interests. If we had a passion for something, she helped us figure out how to follow that interest,” says Dr. Sterrett-Hong. Her dissertation focused on African American youth from single-mother families and the influence of co-parents on adolescents’ self-esteem and behaviors. However, her primary interest was in non-parental adult social support. Dr. Sterrett-Hong has continued to focus on non-parental adults in the lives of underrepresented groups in her research.

One recent study focused on young African American and Latino gay and bisexual men and the role of non-parental adults in the lives of these young men. She found that ethnic minority gay and bisexual men report stronger relationships with non-parental adults than Caucasian gay and bisexual men. “One of the reasons I was interested in looking at racial differences was because, in general, we know that in African American and Latino cultures, there can be a stronger emphasis on individuals outside of the nuclear family. I thought that young men from these two cultural backgrounds may be more open to seeking out, or more receptive to, strong relationships with individuals who are not their parents,” explains Dr. Sterrett-Hong. “Also, for years, there has been research showing that African American and Latino gay and bisexual men face more discrimination and rejection in their families than Caucasian men who are gay and bisexual. I also hypothesized that it might be possible they may be looking for more support from people outside their nuclear families.”

In her current role, Dr. Sterrett-Hong continues to supervise and train students in evidence-based treatments. She explains, “That is definitely a direct result of my training at UNC. I really feel like I am providing a valuable service to students in helping them get equipped and ready to provide good treatment for their clients.” Dr. Sterrett-Hong says, for current doctoral students, “I encourage you to take a moment to step back and really think about where your passions lie. As you are learning, give yourself permission to get in touch with what would be the most fulfilling and find ways to pursue and prepare for that.”

DR. EMMA STERRETT-HONG '11



IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NONCONFORMING YOUTH

With the recent passage of the North Carolina House Bill 2 (HB2), transgender and gender nonconforming youth – youth whose gender identity or expression diverges from what is typically associated with their sex assigned at birth – are receiving increased attention in the public media. Empirical literature in this area is small, but growing – and existing data suggests that transgender and gender nonconforming youth are a vulnerable population. These individuals are at a heightened risk for depression, anxiety, non-suicidal self-injury, and suicide compared to those who identify as the gender that corresponds to their biological sex (cisgender individuals). Research suggests that these elevated risks may result from identity-related stressors, such as stigma, discrimination, and interpersonal rejection.

Leigh Spivey, a third-year Clinical Psychology graduate student, is studying identity development and mental health in transgender and gender nonconforming youth in a variety of ways. In 2014, Spivey received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship and, with her graduate advisor, Dr. Mitch Prinstein, Spivey has conducted a longitudinal study to assess adolescent gender

identity development by measuring both implicit and explicit gender nonconformity in a sample of high school students. In the study, Spivey uses a version of the Implicit Associations Test (IAT) to measure how strongly participants associate themselves with male- or female-related words. Data from the project is still being analyzed, but Spivey expects to find that implicit gender variance in expression predicts future reports of gender nonconformity.

THIS ONLINE PLATFORM CAN PROVIDE AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE RESOURCE FOR PARENTS WHO MAY NOT BE READY TO REACH OUT TO OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT.

— LEIGH SPIVEY

Spivey is also interested in understanding how parental reactions to gender nonconforming behaviors, either positive or negative, can influence a child's development. In her master's thesis, Spivey examined the individual

characteristics associated with parents' responses to these behaviors, such as playing with gender atypical dolls or dressing up as other-gender movie characters. Her study results found that parents of boys and parents with traditional attitudes towards gender roles were more likely to express discomfort with gender nonconforming behaviors and also more likely to discourage such behaviors. Additionally, this study suggested that parents' discomfort with gender nonconformity was inversely related to their child's behavior, so that a child that rarely engaged in gender nonconforming behaviors had parents that expressed the most discomfort.

To further understand the reactions of parents and the effect on development of transgender and nonconforming adolescents, Spivey is currently collecting qualitative data to learn more about the family's experiences following a child's disclosure of gender identity. Using this data, Spivey can better develop an internet-based intervention to help parents learn how to support their child after learning of their transgender or gender nonconforming identity. Spivey explains, "This online platform can provide an easily accessible resource for parents who may not be ready to reach out to other sources of support. Ideally, it will help parents learn how to respond to their children in a supportive and affirming manner."

In her future research, Spivey

plans to examine transgender and gender nonconforming youth and their elevated risk for suicide and non-suicidal self-injury. Dr. Prinstein's laboratory is currently conducting a study on adolescent girls' biological responses to interpersonal stress in relation to suicide risk. Recruiting a sub-sample of biologically-matched transgender and gender nonconforming youth, Spivey hopes to investigate the ways in which their stress response and risk for suicidality may be dif-



LEIGH SPIVEY,
3RD YEAR CLINICAL STUDENT

ferent than their cisgender peers. Spivey says, "Our field, and society as a whole, is coming to recognize and accept the natural variation in gender identity and expression. Yet, transgender and gender nonconforming individuals continue to be victimized and discriminated against based on their gender identity. There is a desperate need for empirical research that can be used to support this vulnerable and diverse population."

Your generous donations through the College of Arts and Sciences Foundation provided the following support last year:

6 Graduate Student Fellowships

22 Undergraduate Student Interns

21 Graduate Students with Travel Support

6 Faculty Members with Research Support

5 Graduate Students with Dissertation Support

17 Students with Research Support

Your support allowed us to reach our educational and research objectives, which we couldn't have done without your gifts. Thank you!
To make a gift, please visit <http://psychology.unc.edu/make-a-gift>

GIL INTERN INVESTIGATES MEMORY PERFORMANCE THROUGH VIRTUAL REALITY

The Karen M. Gil Internship in Psychology and Neuroscience added seven new placement sites in the Triangle to their internship offerings this year. Mary Whatley '16 spent the spring semester at one of the internship's newest placements, Teledyne Scientific Company in Durham, a research and development business

of the project," says Whatley. "It involved attempting to answer many questions in one study. Also, with the day-time nap, running one participant through the entire study took four days total."

The participant was responsible for navigating in an environment created by a virtual reality headset. Landmarks and locations were

the ways soldiers can be trained to complete tasks, like navigating a place they have never been to with a virtual reality map. This study is still ongoing, but preliminary findings indicate that subjects that had environmental cues replayed during sleep had better memories of the map. Whatley explains, "We are also beginning

kind of setting where a psychology degree and my interests can be applied. My research skills certainly improved overall and I became better at working independently. The internship taught me more about what I ultimately want to do with my degree."

Our Gil Internship Program Numbers

40

Internship Sites

52

Interns in 5 semesters

10

Interns in Fall 2016

15

Former Gil interns are now in Doctoral Programs



MARY WHATLEY
DEMONSTRATES VIRTUAL
REALITY GEAR

for the global marketplace. Whatley worked on a Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) funded study with Dr. Stephen Simons.

This study investigates the effect of an intervention during a day-time nap on memory performance in a navigation task in a virtual environment. The intervention involved targeted brain stimulation during sleep biomarkers that are hypothesized to be involved in memory replay and consolidation. "The most challenging aspect of the internship was the complexity

enhanced by sounds and haptic cues. Following a series of tasks to assess their knowledge of the map, subjects took a nap, which has been shown to successfully consolidate recently learned information. Some of the sleeping participants heard cues from the virtual reality or received electrical current. After the nap, Whatley helped investigators to reassess knowledge of the map to determine if memory performance was enhanced by sleep, current, or environmental cues.

This study is funded by the Department of Defense to assess

to see certain neural markers when these cues are replayed that suggest different neural processes are occurring to better consolidate the memories associated with those cues."

Whatley graduated with her B.S. in Psychology and a minor in Neuroscience and continued working at Teledyne through September. She recently began a new job as a Research Assistant at 3C Institute for Social Development. Whatley says, "The Gil Internship gave me the opportunity to explore a different

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—MARY WHATLEY

UNC WELCOMES MINORITY STUDENTS TO 2016 DCP WEEKEND



24 students attended this year's Diversifying Clinical Psychology (DCP) Weekend, hosted by our Clinical Psychology doctoral program. A biennial event, DCP Weekend is an opportunity for talented ethnic/racial minority undergraduates and recent college graduates to learn more about the pursuit of a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. Travel, housing, and meals were provided for all attendees.

This program is engineered to provide attendees a comprehensive look at graduate school through an intensive set of seminars and workshops. During the weekend, attendees learned about everything ranging from the application process and funding to life as a doctoral student. They also had the valuable opportunity to meet with UNC Clinical Psychology faculty and doctoral students. "My favorite part of

this weekend is working directly with students who are interested in pursuing graduate school. Being able to connect and mentor students during and after that weekend is a very rewarding experience that I hope to continue," says Donte Bernard, a fourth-year Clinical graduate student. Bernard has served as a member of the diversity committee since his first year at Carolina. Bernard explains, "As a member of an ethnic/racial minority group, it is important to continue to open doors and offer opportunities to students who are underrepresented in the field of psychology."

Effua Sosoo attended the inaugural DCP Weekend in 2014. At the time, she was questioning whether she could find a clinical psychology program she could thrive in. "My experience attending DCP Weekend was crucial

not only to my decision to apply to graduate school, but also to my decision to apply to UNC," says Sosoo. "The privilege of meeting black students who were successfully navigating this program led me to envision myself successfully navigating graduate school. I knew if I came to UNC, I would leave well-rounded in research and clinical work."

Now, Sosoo is a second-year Clinical Psychology graduate student and assisted in planning the 2016 DCP Weekend. Sosoo was ecstatic to join the planning efforts of the diversity committee: "I felt blessed to have the opportunity to create for other students what was given to me the year before. This was the most satisfying experience I've had at Carolina. It felt as though I was paying forward the precious gift the program gave to me."

[AWARD *Spotlight*]

VULETICH AWARDED 2016 PD SOROS FELLOWSHIP

The Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans is a merit-based fellowship for immigrants and children of immigrants who are pursuing graduate education in the United States. Every year, the program selects 30 of the most promising new Americans that will go on to make a significant contribution to US society, culture, or their academic field. Each award, worth up to \$90,000, supports up to two years of graduate study. Selection criteria focuses on accomplishments that show creativity, originality, and innovation in light of the challenges and opportunities that have been part of the applicant's immigration experience.

The purpose of the fellowship is to provide opportunities for continuing generations of able and accomplished New Americans to achieve leadership in their chosen fields and to partake of the American dream. 2016 was the PD Soros Fellowship's most competitive year ever with over 1,400 applications – and Heidi Vuletich, a third-year doctoral student in Social and Developmental Psychology, was one of this year's recipients. Vuletich says, "During my interviews in L.A., I met some of the other finalists for the fellowship. Not only did everyone have a unique immigrant story, but they all had stories of taking insight from their journey and making big contributions to society. When I was chosen as a fellow, I was excited and grateful – part of me was incredulous

too. I felt everyone was deserving of the honor."

Vuletich was born in Chihuahua, Mexico and immigrated with her family to the U.S. when she was five-years old. She was the first in her family to attend college and, in 2011, she graduated *summa cum laude* from Regis University with her B.S. in Neuroscience. At Carolina, Vuletich is a dual-program student working with Dr. Beth Kurtz-Costes in Developmental Psychology and Dr. Keith Payne in Social Psychology. She is interested in understanding the psychological factors that contribute to disparities in academic achievement. For example, Vuletich studies how individuals' subjective experiences of poverty may trigger shifts in psychological and behavioral tendencies that may be detrimental for pursuing long-term goals. In another line of research, Vuletich examines how students' attributions about the causes for their successes and failures impact achievement motivation.

Once she graduates with her Ph.D., Vuletich would like to continue investigating these questions as a professor at a research-focused university to contribute knowledge that may inform effective interventions to reduce achievement gaps. The award of the PD Soros Fellowship is significant for Vuletich. She explains, "I am now part of a community of fellows – driven, like-minded people who are thirsty to make a difference in the world. It is such a privilege to have the opportunity to reach out to them and get to know them better."



**HEIDI VULETICH,
3RD YEAR DOCTORAL
STUDENT**

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[WHY I Give]

ENHANCING DIVERSITY IN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Dr. Steve Reznick often said, “We are all going to die. I just have a less ambiguous end date.” This is one example of how Steve courageously lived with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.

Steve and his wife, Donna, raised funds for the North Carolina Chapter of the ALS Association’s *Triangle Walk to Defeat ALS*. However, Donna sensed it would be more fitting for Steve to be memorialized for his lifelong commitment to education, research, and Carolina – Steve, a lifelong Tar Heel, strongly agreed.

Having graduated from Carolina in 1973 with a psychology degree, Steve was delighted to be able to come home to Carolina as a professor of psychology after working at Harvard and Yale. He was also very proud to call his daughter, Leah Tyner, and nephew, Daniel Bernstein, fellow alums. Given his meliorist nature (a person who believes the world can be made a better place through human effort), Steve put his energy into many campus service initiatives and championed many causes.

One of the many causes Steve was passionate about was enriching diversity, both in student experiences and in behavioral research with ethnic/minority populations. In recognition of his contributions to foster diversity at Carolina, his colleague, Dr. Beth Kurtz-Costes, established the J. Steven Reznick Award for Outstanding Psychological Research that Enhances Diversity, awarded to undergraduate students annually.

Donna shares Steve’s deep commitment to enrich diversity and worked

to enhance diversity at UNC Health Care. As the Director of Learning and Organizational Development, she fostered diversity educational programs and created opportunities for mentorship and career development for employees from underrepresented groups before retiring in January 2016.

“I was excited when I heard about the award established to honor Steve and knew there was an opportunity to provide some money that would benefit students,” says Donna. “Working to establish the J. Steven Reznick Diversity and Psychological Research Fund was the last project that Steve and I did together. We loved working together on community projects and made a great team.” Steve died on July 5 after bravely living with ALS for three years. “I am deeply appreciative of the 150 people who have contributed to this fund to honor Steve’s memory.”

The J. Steven Reznick Diversity and Psychological Research Fund will encourage and honor undergraduate students who conduct exemplary research on topics of concern to diverse populations (traditionally underrepresented in psychological research) through summer research stipends and prize awards to attend conferences. If you would like to contribute to this fund in memory of Steve’s legacy at Carolina, please visit: <http://psychology.unc.edu/make-a-gift>.



DONNA KAYE AND
STEVE REZNICK