Welcome to the Fall 2011 Psychology Department Newsletter!

As many of my close friends know, I am a native Oklahoman, and quite proud of that fact. My roots in this State run deep, with my grandmother coming here to stake a claim with her family when Oklahoma was still a Territory. My father grew up on a farm in Burns Flat, Oklahoma. Dirt poor and fatherless by the age of six, he and his brothers and sister slopped the hogs, picked cotton until their fingers bled, and suffered through tornadoes and drought (some things never change!). They didn’t have much food, and typically just one pair of shoes each, but the one thing that my grandmother made sure that they were given was an education. With the help of scholarships and the GI bill, my father was able to eventually spend time at OSU working on his Bachelor’s degree, and eventually received his doctorate. Ultimately, he became the Dean of the College of Education at the University of Central Oklahoma, and he retired knowing that he had touched thousands of students’ lives.

So why am I telling you this story? For one, it’s a story that reveals that education is all about opportunity, particularly at a land grant university, where any individual, regardless of their background, can be successful and go on to make the world a much better place. Few knew that lesson as well as my father. He realized that education was the great equalizer, and that it is indeed our responsibility as educators to provide our students with opportunities. That is indeed a large part of our mission at OSU and in the Department of Psychology—to provide rich opportunities for our students to be successful and to go forward to shape our world. In this edition, we feature two of our graduates who epitomize this lesson—Dr. Kent Hutchison and Dr. Mark Cunningham. As Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of Colorado, Kent currently conducts cutting edge research on identifying genetic markers in processes of addiction, as well as developing more effective drug treatments for addiction. He has trained dozens of graduate students who now carry on their own work in understanding addiction. Mark is a nationally recognized expert in the assessment of violence risk in prisoners, testifying in death penalty proceedings at both the state and federal level. Licensed in 19 states, he has won numerous awards for his work in forensic psychology, including APA’s award for Distinguished Contributions to Research in Public Policy. As you read their stories, it is clear that their work has-and will continue- to influence our scientific understanding of the complexities of human behavior, but just as importantly, make an impact on our society.

So as you peruse the pages to follow, full of news of the accomplishments of our students and faculty, remember the opportunities that you were given as you passed along this path. Feel free to send us your story as well. And please remember to support our efforts to develop scholarships for both our undergraduates and graduate students through your donations.

Best Wishes for 2012 and a Hearty Congratulations to the Cowboy Football Team!

Larry L. Mullins, Ph.D.
Dr. Mark Cunningham of Dallas, TX is a distinguished alumnus of the Oklahoma State University Psychology Department. Dr. Cunningham received his bachelor's degree from Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas before receiving his Ph.D. from the Clinical Psychology program at Oklahoma State University in 1977. He completed his Clinical Internship training at the National Naval Medical Center and went on to complete a post-doctoral fellowship at the Yale University School of Medicine. Dr. Cunningham currently maintains an independent forensic psychology practice in the Dallas area.

Dr. Cunningham's professional and research interests have led him to testify in over 65 federal capital cases and 100 state capital cases. He retains licensure in 19 states, allowing him to provide his professional expertise on capital cases throughout the nation. His testimonies serve to inform the administration of justice by providing an empirically based perspective on the developmental factors associated with later criminality. He also testifies regarding assessment of violence risk in death penalty proceedings.

In addition to his professional practice, Dr. Cunningham conducts research regarding capital sentencing and assessment. Specifically, he has developed empirically-derived methodology for assessment of violence risk in inmates. Along with Dr. Mark Vigen, Dr. Cunningham evaluated the competency of death-row inmates in Mississippi to represent themselves in post-conviction court proceedings; it was concluded that these inmates were not competent to represent themselves that revised the ruling set forth by the Mississippi Supreme Court. Notably, Dr. Cunningham's work also emphasizes educating mental health professionals, graduate students, attorneys, and judges about psychological correlates of and empirical assessment for violence risk in prisoners.

Dr. Cunningham has earned a number of impressive awards and distinctions in recognition of his research and professional contributions to the field including the National Association of Sentencing Advocates John Augustus Award, the Texas Psychological Association Award for Outstanding Contribution to Science, and the American Psychological Association Award for Distinguished Contributions to Research in Public Policy. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Association Division 41 (American Psychology-Law Society). Dr Cunningham has published over 50 book chapters and peer-reviewed publications in the areas of capital sentencing and prison misconduct and violence. Currently, he is also a consulting editor to the Journal Assessment and serves on the editorial board of the Open Access Journal of Forensic Psychology.
Kent Hutchison, Ph.D.

Dr. Kent Hutchison graduated from Oklahoma State University in 1995 with a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, where he also received his bachelor’s degree. He went on to receive his internship training at Brown University and served as a post-doctoral fellow, again at Brown University, at the Center for Alcohol and Addiction studies. Currently, Dr. Hutchison is working as a Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and serves as both the Director of Neurogenetics Core and Chief Science Officer at the Mind Research Network.

Dr. Hutchison’s areas of research lie in treatments for addiction, including developing more effective drug therapies and determining which individuals are most vulnerable to addiction and who might benefit most from these given treatments. More specifically, his research at University of Colorado involves alcohol and neuroimaging to identify how genetic variations can be affected by various pharmacotherapies; treatment of alcohol dependence, to identify genetic markers that predict which medications are most effective for treatment; infusion of ethanol, to better understand how biology plays a role in the origination, or acute effects, of alcohol dependence; cannabis research, to examine genetic factors that underlie use and abuse; and tobacco research, to better understand genetic roles and how brain structures are activated that change sensitivity to nicotine.

Dr. Hutchison’s research has yielded nearly 100 publications. He currently serves as the principal investigator on several R01 grants with the NIAAA and NIDA. His lab work is also an extension of research partnered with the Mind Research Network (MRN) in Albuquerque, NM, which is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing diagnosis and treatment of mental illness and brain injury. As a Professor, Dr. Hutchison has served as an advisor to a number of students (including undergraduate honors students, graduate students, and post-doctoral trainees), many of whom have gone on to earn teaching positions at Brown University, University of Michigan, and Boston University. In addition to teaching and research, Dr. Hutchison has served as a grant reviewer for the National Institutes of Health on addiction and medication development related projects for going on a decade now. His work as a journal reviewer includes the Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Health Psychology Psychophysiology, and Journal of Behavioral Medicine, among many others.
Nicki Aubuchon-Endsley, M.S., a Clinical Psychology graduate student currently on internship, was awarded the Phi Kappa Phi 2011 Love of Learning Award.

Stephanie Hullman, M.S., a fourth year Clinical Psychology student was nominated outstanding graduate student in Pediatric Psychology by the Society of Pediatric Psychology (Division 54). Also, she received an OSU Distinguished Graduate Fellowship ($2,200.00) for three years and won first prize paper presentation at the 2011 Oklahoma Psychological Association Conference, Tulsa, OK.

Liz Molzon, a second year Clinical Psychology student won a Society of Pediatric Psychology Student Poster Award at the 2011 American Psychological Association Convention, Washington, DC.

Lisa Kasper and Sarah Rhoades-Kerswill, both third year students, Liz Molzon, a second year student and Kristen Hudec, a fourth year student received PGSA Travel Awards.

Erin Brannon, a first year Clinical Psychology student, won first prize paper presentation at the 2011 Oklahoma Psychological Association Conference, Tulsa, OK.

Angela Bell, a first year Lifespan Developmental Psychology student won a travel award from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Diversity Fund to attend the 2012 SPSP Convention ($500.00).

Amy Anderson, an undergraduate Psychology major, is among the 40 students that was named Senior of Significance for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Jose Hernandez, a senior student working in Dr. John Chaney’s lab, won first place poster award at the 2011 Oklahoma Psychological Association Conference, Tulsa, OK.
Where Are They Now?

Ron Eskew, BS 1973. Ron finished his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Purdue University. He is now the Director of Institution Research and Assessment at Hilbert College, Hamburg, NY.

Edgar Kranau, Ph.D., 1983. Edgar has a private practice in Tulsa, OK.

Cynthia Turk, Ph.D., 1996. Cynthia is an Associate Professor at Washburn University.

David DiLillo, Ph.D., 1997. David is an Associate Professor and Clinical Director at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, NE.

Dennis McCargue, Ph.D., 1998. Dennis is an Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, NE.

Megan (Dunlap) Ballew, Ph.D., 2005. Megan is a Clinical Psychologist and Director of the Northeastern Oklahoma Psychology Internship Program at the Indian Health Care Resource Center, Tulsa, OK.

Christopher Neumann, Ph.D., 2005. Chris is an Associate Professor at the School of Professional Psychology at Forest Institute.

Erica Ridgley-Walner, BS, 2006. Erica finished her Master’s degree in Family and Child Development Services in 2008 at OSU, and now she is working as the Youth Coordinator at the Creek Nation, Muscogee, OK.

Jessica Parker, Ph.D., 2007. Jessica is working at Lockheed Martin Corporation as Social Scientist-Biostatistian, Rockville, Maryland.

Ted Wagener, Ph.D., 2010. Ted recently finished his Post-Doctoral fellowship at Brown University and is going to start at the OU Health Sciences Center as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics, Oklahoma City, OK.

Brooke Campell, BS, 2001. Brooke is continuing her studies at the OU College of Law, Oklahoma City, OK.

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If you are interested in supporting specific faculty research, endowing a professorship, or making a donation to a cause here, please contact the Psychology Department Head Dr. Larry L. Mullins at (405) 744-6027 or via e-mail: Larry.Mullins@okstate.edu.

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