Student Achievements

Some very talented final year students have had their achievements recognised with a variety of prizes this year. The prizes will be presented at the Graduate Reception on Monday 14th July.

Maria Gallagher is the recipient of the British Psychological Society Undergraduate Prize which is awarded to the student with the highest overall grade upon graduation. Owing to the excellent marks Maria achieved on her placement year, she is also the winner of the Best Applied Prize.

The Janet Miele Prize is awarded each year to the student who has produced the best final year project in Psychology. In 2013/14, this was awarded to Natalie Gentry.

Katie Richards has been given the School of Psychology Final Year Prize. This prize is awarded to the student with the highest final year grade. Katie is pictured below (furthest on the left) along with another Kent Psychology undergraduate, Anna Biller, and some of the staff at the in-patient neuro-rehab ward at Kent & Canterbury Hospital.

Congratulations to all of our soon-to-be graduates!

Research Events & Celebrations

The School of Psychology has been at the centre of many exciting events since the publication of the last newsletter.

In April, we celebrated the inauguration of Roger Giner-Sorolla (pictured below) as Professor. The event included an inaugural lecture by Professor Giner-Sorolla on “Moral Emotions and Moral Research” and was followed by a drinks reception. Congratulations Roger!

In the same month, the School hosted the Experimental Psychology Society Workshop and Spring Meeting (photographs below and overleaf plus student comments) as well as the BPS Social Psychology Section Postgraduate Conference.

Dr Aleksandra Cichocka was the co-organiser of the first Kent Workshop in Political Psychology held in May 2014. The aim of the workshop was to bring together researchers from the Schools of Psychology and Politics and International Relations, and to begin to establish collaboration that will foster a cross-disciplinary politics psychology research environment.

June was another great month for research in the School of Psychology. We held an event titled ‘Researching Social Exclusion: Relevance for Public Policy and Practice’ for researchers, policy makers, practitioners, charitable bodies, and campaign groups (keynote speakers pictured below, more photographs and information on page 2).

Furthermore, a team of developmental psychologists from Kent ran a ‘Play and learn event’ for toddlers and their parents at the city’s St Stephen’s Church Hall. The event included demonstrations of eye-tracking equipment to allow parents to learn more about their child’s development and the technique which helps researchers to explore children’s understanding of themselves and their social world, which will help inform greater understanding of conditions such as autism. Finally, the 2nd Annual International Weight Stigma Conference took place at the end of June. More information about the conference and photographs are available on page 2.

Top 20 League Table Performance

Psychology at Kent has achieved top 20 positions in both the Guardian University Guide 2015 and Complete University Guide 2015 league tables.

Out of 109 Psychology departments in the UK, Kent was ranked 14th overall in the Guardian University Guide League Table 2015. Improved satisfaction rates and an excellent staff-student ratio have contributed to a position which is nine places above the School’s ranking in the 2014 table. Furthermore, Kent was ranked 5th for the percentage of Psychology graduates who find graduate-level jobs, or are studying further, within six months of graduation. As an institution, the University of Kent also maintained its status in the top 20 in the Guardian University Guide League Table 2015.

In the Complete University Guide League Table 2015, Psychology at Kent was rated 13th out of 112 institutions. From last year, Kent has climbed eight places in the table. This boost can be attributed, in part, to even better entry standards and impressive numbers of Psychology graduates who take up employment or study.

Continued on page 2
2nd Annual International Weight Stigma Conference

Dr Rachel Calogero was the host and co-organiser of the 2nd Annual International Weight Stigma Conference held at the University of Kent on 24th June 2014.

The theme of this year’s event was: Stigma Across the Weight Spectrum: Insights and Intersections. The aim of the conference was to address a number of issues, such as weight stigma across social identities, weight stigma among health professionals, public policy implications, and interventions to reduce weight stigma.

This year’s exciting line-up of speakers spanned the US and Europe and included Drs. Deb Burgard, Robert Carels, Sarah Riley, Lee Monaghan, Emma Rich, and Noorjte Amsterdam. Nearly 80 delegates from as far as Australia attended the event and lively debates and discussions took place throughout the day. This year’s conference was essential in developing the Weight Stigma Network, a growing collective of scholars and practitioners who are collaborating to better understand and address the issue of weight stigma in both research and practice.

Hannah Tummon, a student in her second year of a Psychology BSc degree at Kent, wrote the following about her experience of the EPS Workshop:

A conference was held at the University of Kent by the Experimental Psychology Society. Held over three days, researchers shared their research in a series of parallel lectures and posters. Various cognitive and developmental topics were covered; symposiums included the role of executive functions in self and other perspective use, attentional control, and recent advances in developmental prosopagnosia research. Professor Martin Eimer of Birkbeck College, University of London, received the Twelfth EPS Mid-Career Award in recognition of his research into the use of top-down control in visual attention.

I was grateful for the opportunity to attend the conference, because it has given me experience of how research is conducted and presented, but also of how it is developed. Being able to ask questions about in the lectures improved my understanding of the content and hearing the suggestions of others has demonstrated how beneficial the conferences are to researchers; they have the opportunity to take on board other ideas which further progresses the research. I really enjoyed the event and look forward to attending more in the future.

Kent Psychology PhD students also had the opportunity to present their research in poster form and network with research groups across the country. PhD student Rachael Morris had this to say about the day:

I was involved in demonstrating practical sessions of how to setup an EEG experiment in our new EEG-TMS laboratory. It was good experience and I met PhD students and academics from Psychology departments across the UK.

Researching Social Exclusion Event

Organised by Dr Ayse Uskul and Dr Lindsey Cameron, this British Academy funded research impact one-day event brought together psychologists, members of policy groups, practitioners, activists and charities working in social exclusion with an interest in research and collaboration. The event provided a forum for practitioners to find out about the latest psychological research on social exclusion and for academics to learn about the needs and perspectives of practitioners and pave the way for continued communication in the future and opportunities to work together.

Keynote presentations were given by Professor Rupert Brown (University of Sussex), Professor Patrick Lehman (Royal Holloway, University of London), Professor Steve Reicher (University of St Andrews), Dr Craig Morgan (King’s College London), Dr Hannah Swift (University of Kent), and Dr Harriet Tennenbaum (University of Surrey) with commentary provided by the Three Faiths Forum, Greenwich CID, Schools Linking Network, the McPin Foundation, Age UK, and Equality and Human Rights Commission. The keynote speakers are pictured on page one.

Below is a photograph of some of the postgraduate students who contributed to the success of this event.

Student Achievements Continued

Following a nomination from an Access to HE Diploma course lecturer at K College, stage one student Theresa Hardy, will be presented with the regional award for outstanding commitment to study later this month. Theresa was also recently presented with the Keith Fletcher Memorial runner-up prize at the Palace of Westminster by MP Nic Dakin.

Final year student Jake Brooker delivered a 20 minute presentation at a conference in June 2014. Here’s what he had to say about it:

The AIRS project (Advanced Interdisciplinary Research in Singing) is an ongoing collaborative research initiative primarily investigating the development of singing and its use as therapy. Before I analysed the results from my FYP, I discovered that the project (with which I had previously been in contact with) were holding a “Student and Early Career Researcher Workshop” in June in Toronto. They were looking for people to present their research, or proposed research, and or conduct a workshop. I decided to apply, hoping that I would at least be informing them of who I was and my research interests, but I was accepted and offered funding to cover the... Continued on page 4
Recent Publications


Congratulations to Tim Hopthrow (PI) and Dominic Abrams (Co-I) who have been awarded £2,000 by Tonic Consultants for a project entitled “Analysis of pre-loaders and binge drinkers’ drinking habits and attitudes”. Tim has also been awarded £1,336 by King Baudouin Foundation for a project entitled “Teaching on the TRAIN project”.

Congratulations to Lindsey Cameron who has been awarded funds for a number of events for the ESRC including: £1,955 for a project entitled “How to make a happy school”; £620 for a project entitled “Social butterflies and busy bees: Your child’s social psychology”; and £1,400 for an event entitled “The Social Science of Cyberbullying”. All three events will form part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science 2014. On behalf of Kent Child Development Unit, Lindsey has also been awarded £1,985, by the PVC (Research) to fund two events for local families to learn about child development and the research conducted in KCDU.

Congratulations to Georgina Randsley de Moura who has been awarded £1,200 by the British Psychological Society to fund an Undergraduate Research Assistantship for Fatima Tresh on a project entitled “It’s a man’s world”: Gender as a boundary condition of preference for potential engineers who has also been awarded £5,525 by Ideas Factory for a project entitled “Leadership in Challenging Times”.

Congratulations to Christos Platsikas who has been awarded £600 by the Guarantors of Brain towards attendance at the OHBM (Organization for Human Brain Mapping) Conference.

Congratulations to Afrodit Pina who has been awarded £3,038 by the Faculty Research Committee for a project entitled “Watching me watching you: The development of a cyber-harassment proclivity scale”.

Congratulations to Hannah Swift who has been awarded £1,916 by Age UK Canterbury for a project entitled “Assistance with evaluation of a home from hospital care scheme”.

Congratulations to David Wilkinson who has been awarded £7,137 by Ideas Factory for a project entitled “Development of a Mobile Application for the Diagnosis of Hemi-spatial Neglect”. This project involves School of Engineering and Digital Arts and the award is split as follows:- £6,462 to EDA and £675 to Psychology.

Congratulations to Heather Ferguson (in collaboration with Jane Reeves at the Centre for Child Protection) who has been awarded £1,500 by Kent Health for an eye-tracking project to assess a new...

Kent Psychologists in the Media

Last month, the Mail Online highlighted research conducted by psychologists including Dr Eduardo Vasquez and others from two US universities on the links between alcohol-related words and aggression (dailym.ai/ShgrYs). The research shows that exposing people to alcohol-related words such as ‘whisky’ and ‘wine’ can influence aggressive behaviour in ways that are consistent with the effects of alcohol consumption. To read the full news story, go to: bit.ly/1ssqyH6.

In an article on the Newsweek website titled ‘The Plots to Destroy America’ (bit.ly/1jxsgA6) Dr Karen Douglas was quoted in relation to her work with postgraduate researcher, Daniel Jolley, on belief in anti-vaccine conspiracy theories and the consequences for children’s health. To read the full news story, go to: bit.ly/ffoLB8n.
2013 MSc in Forensic Psychology graduate Naomi Rose was given the prize for research with the most relevance to forensic practice in the recent BPS Forensic Update MSc Competition. Below, Naomi tells us how her research came about:

I completed my BSc (hons) with the Open University, initially with the intention of working within educational psychology, having spent many years in teaching. However, after beginning my current job as a teacher in prison, I decided that Forensic psychology was much more interesting and so began my MSc in Forensic Psychology at the University if Kent. I was fortunate to be able to conduct my research project at the prison in which I worked and was asked by the Governor to conduct an evaluation of a peer led program that was being run at the prison.

The program was call TRUST and was aimed at helping prisoners that were not coping with prison life. It involved a two week course run by existing prisoners, followed by a period of time spent on a separate wing were additional support was offered. The Trust aimed to help prisoners who were experiencing problems due to bullying, notoriety, poor coping skills (e.g. having difficulty relating to other prisoners, getting themselves into trouble), etc. Its success was measured by the number of prisoners that were able to relocate back into the main body of the prison.

Initially I conducted a qualitative evaluation in which I conducted interviews with staff, prisoners partaking in the program and the prisoner peers that were leading the program. I sat in on a session and studied the materials used. Following this, I conducted a quantitative evaluation, designing a questionnaire based on my findings from the qualitative study, with the continuing help and support of Dr Jane Wood, who also helped me through the monumental task of acquiring prison ethical clearance.

The study was a within participants repeated measures longitudinal design that assessed prisoners before they took part in the TRUST program (time 1) and again once they had completed it (time 2). The questionnaire measured understanding of prison matters, coping skills and anxiety levels and incorporated (Speielberger 1983), State and trait Personality inventory. The participants were 16 male prisoners, both sentenced and remand, aged from 18 to 47, with a mean age of 26. All participants were participating in the TRUST program and were considered vulnerable.

The results were evaluated using a t-test and found a significant improvement in all items measured. The results for understanding were t(15) =-5.69 p<0.001, for anxiety t(15)=-1.963, p=0.068 and for coping skills t(15)=-3.206, p=0.006. This highlights the value of peer led programs in prison and may be used as good practice within other prisons.

Need Help/Advice?
If you have any personal or academic issues that may affect your ability to study you can talk to Lisa Clark, Student Advisor for Psychology.
Please email her at: psychadvisor@kent.ac.uk
There are a range of services available to all Kent students including the following:
• Careers and Employability Service
• Disability and Dyslexia Support Service
• International Students
• Counselling
• Chaplaincy
• Medical
Plus many more...
You can find more out about Student Services from the following webpage: www.kent.ac.uk/guidance/

Any Suggestions?
If you have any comments or suggestions for the staff in the School of Psychology, then you can feed these back to us by using our suggestions box located outside the Psychology Student Office (Keynes M1.13).

Kent Psychologist
The School of Psychology’s Newsletter is for students and staff. We welcome contributions from both staff and students for future issues. If you would like to write an article or have any news you’d like to share, please contact Carly Turnham.
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