

# P.U.N. Psychology Undergraduate Newsletter

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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS



## Special points of interest:

- *John A. Stern Research Award for Undergrads*
- *Psi Chi news*
- *Capstone Experience*

## John A. Stern Fund for Undergraduate Research

Thanks to a bequest by the late Professor Emeritus John Stern, funds are available to support undergraduate psychology majors in their research endeavors. Applications are invited from students who are doing or plan to do research in the context of Independent Study, a Supplemental Concentration, or an Honors project.

John Stern, as Chair of the Department and as a research men-

tor, supported and encouraged undergraduates at all levels of research involvement. In tribute to his work, the John A. Stern Undergraduate Research Fund was established to provide awards to students to help pay for research expenses such as equipment, subject payments, and travel to conventions and meetings.

Application forms are available from the Undergraduate Coor-

dinator, Sharon Corcoran, room 207B of the Psychology Building. To apply for funds, a student will need to submit an application approved by his/her research mentor, detailing the research to be conducted (e.g., the IRB protocol) and justification for the requested funds.

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## Psi Chi Inducts New Members, Plans Activities

The Washington University chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology, recently inducted a new class of 36 members and is planning some exciting events and projects for this semester.

On October 26, Psi Chi hosted a forum entitled *Careers in Psychology*, at which representatives from several psychology-related professions spoke about their field of work and the educational requirements of their profession. Students heard presentations regarding Psychiatry, Social Work, School Psychology, Occupational Therapy, and Clinical Practice. Psi Chi plans to hold a similar event

during the spring semester at which students will hear about less-traditional careers in psychology such as Marketing, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, and Applied Educational Psychology.

The Community Service Committee has decided to focus on Psychology and mental health-related initiatives this year so that members can have the opportunity to learn more about the field while still reaching out to their community. Psi Chi will work with Queen of Peace Center, a nonprofit agency that provides comprehensive treatment services to addicted women and their children. In

addition to volunteering at Queen of Peace Center, Psi Chi members will participate in various one-day service opportunities related to Psychology and mental health, including sponsoring a fundraiser with another nonprofit. Members should look out for more information on how they can become involved.

Psi Chi also is holding a research information session Thursday, November 11, at 5 pm in Psychology room 215 at which representatives from the Psychology Department's labs will give an overview of their research program. Psi Chi hopes that exposing under-

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## The Capstone Experience: What are your options?

Undergraduates at Washington University are encouraged to complete a capstone experience in their major. The undertaking of a final research project as a capstone experience may be an especially rewarding way to bring one's work in the major to completion. All Psychology majors are required to complete Experimental Psychology (Psych 301 or 3011). This 4-unit course will prepare students for a meaningful capstone experience by training them in hypothesis development and evaluation and methodological design. The student will be required to conduct literature reviews, write scientific empirical papers, perform statistical analyses of data, and complete an independent research paper. Finally, the student identifies a psychological research question, designs an empirical study to address it, collects the data, and writes up the results in the form of a journal article. The research topic you choose to study in Experimental Psychology can be the basis of a more fully-

developed Capstone project.

After completion of Experimental Psychology, the Department has three opportunities that provide a capstone experience:

- (1) Students who qualify for and complete the Honors Program in Psychology will fulfill the capstone experience. The Honors Program requires the development, undertaking, and completion of an independent empirical project, a written honors thesis, and presentation of the research at the department's annual honors poster session. As well, the first semester of Honors, Psy 498, is a writing-intensive (WI) course.
- (2) A student may conduct research as an Independent Study (Psy 500) in his or her junior or senior year. If this is to serve as a capstone experience, then the student must also write a scientific report on the research and give an oral presentation at the annual UR-PSymposium, the Undergraduate Research in Psychology

symposium.

(3) A Supplemental Concentration in Psychology will be a capstone experience, contingent on completion of the required research paper, plus presentation. A Supplemental Concentration project can also serve as an Honors thesis, provided the student qualifies otherwise for Honors. A Concentration can be pursued concurrently with the requirements for your major. For more information, contact the Undergraduate Coordinator, Sharon Corcoran, 935-5169, [sharon-corcoran@wustl.edu](mailto:sharon-corcoran@wustl.edu).

Sophomores, you can prepare yourselves for a capstone by familiarizing yourselves with faculty research labs, especially those of faculty who have taught courses that most interest you. Ask if you can do a research assistantship in their lab through Psych 500 (Independent Study). If you are a junior, it is particularly important to begin thinking about Honors now, so that you have a research idea ready to go by the beginning of your senior year. And if you are going abroad for the spring semester, you have to start thinking about it even earlier! Dr. Mitch Sommers coordinates the Honors program (Psych 498-499), and anyone interested should speak to him prior to registering.

*The undertaking of a final research project as a capstone experience may be an especially rewarding way to bring one's work in the major to completion.*



### Psi Chi, continued from p. 1

graduates directly to professors and graduate students will help foster research involvement from the undergraduate population. Students who wish to become research assistants but who are not sure what type of research they might enjoy should plan to attend.

## WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of Psychology  
Campus Box 1125  
One Brookings Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63130  
Phone: 314-935-5169  
Fax: 314-935-7588  
E-mail: [sharoncorcoran@wustl.edu](mailto:sharoncorcoran@wustl.edu)

### *The Psychology Department offers undergrads:*

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**Visit us on the web:**

[www.artsci.wustl.edu/~psych/undergrad.html](http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~psych/undergrad.html)

## Advisor/Advisee Lunches

During the week of Oct. 25-29, a number of Psychology faculty members hosted lunches with their advisees. In all, 13 faculty advisors participated: Simine Vizire, Tom Oltmanns, Denise Head, Leonard Green, David Balota, Michael Merbaum, Tom Rodebaugh, Heather Rice, Jim Reid, Mark McDaniel, Brian Carpenter, Lori Markson, and Mitch Sommers.

Advisors and their advisees met in the Psychology Department lounge and enjoyed Jimmy John's boxed lunches.

Opposite are pictured Dr. Mark McDaniel and Dr. Heather Rice with a few of their advisees.

