Psychology
Department
Newsletter
Fall 2009

Teaching Award

Dr. Sherry Beaumont won a 2009 UNBC Excellence in Teaching Award

Publications (Note: student authors are indicated by *)


Li, Han (2008). Culture and nonverbal communication, in H. Giles (Eds.) Intercultural and Intergroup Communication, Blackwell (pp. 329-334). [SSHRC supported]


**Conference Presentations/Invited Address**


Li, Han (2009, March). Bridging the differences between the East and West: A sojourner in North America, University of Alicante, Spain (invited address).

**Faculty Grants**

Beaumont, S. L. Identity, generativity, and wisdom. UNBC / SSHRC Seed Grant (awarded due to 4A ranking in SSHRC competition), $7,000.
Beaumont, S. L. Identity, wisdom, and personal goals. UNBC Seed Grant, $5,000.

Graduate Students Grants/Awards

Annabel Levesque (PhD student) has obtained a research grant from the Consortium national de formation en santé in the amount of $10,000 to support her dissertation data collection (Supervisor: Dr. Han Li).

Cherisse Seaton (PhD student) has received a student research award for Masters’ Thesis entitled “The link between identity style and intimacy balance: Does emotional intelligence provide the key?” from the Society for Research on Identity Formation (SRIF) (Supervisor: Dr. Sherry Beaumont).

Sherri Tillotson (PhD student) has received a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship – Doctoral Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) in the amount of $105,000 (Supervisor: Dr. Ken Prkachin).

Michele Wellsby (MSc student) was awarded a NSERC Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarship ($17,500) and the CASHS Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching Award. In November she will receive the BC Psychological Association Gold Model Award (Supervisor: Dr. Paul Siakaluk).

CPA Certificate of Academic Excellence Awards

Jodi Jacob (Supervisor: Dr. Sherry Beaumont)

Cherisse Seaton (Supervisor: Dr. Sherry Beaumont)

Andrea Hamel (Supervisor: Dr. Paul Siakaluk)

Nicole Burnett, (Supervisor: Dr. Paul Siakaluk)

Lucy Chen (Supervisor: Dr. Cindy Hardy)

Psychology Department Colloquium Series

By External Speaker:

The curious consequences of Kafka and other absurd tales from the Meaning Maintenance Model by Dr. Steven J. Heine (UBC)

By Internal Speakers (Faculty):

A theory of work ecology by Dr. Steven Cronshaw

In search of optimal self-esteem by Dr. Loraine Lavallee

The nexus of pain by Dr. Ken Prkachin

By Internal Speakers (Graduate Students):

The Link between Identity Style and Intimacy Balance: Does Emotional Intelligence Provide the Key by Cherisse Seaton (Supervisor: Dr. Sherry Beaumont)

Communication of Pain and Anxiety between Mothers and Infants During Routine Immunization Procedures by Tammy Klassen-Ross (Supervisor: Dr. Ken Prkachin)
Innovation in the North: Are Health Service Providers Ready for the Uptake of an Internet-based Chronic Disease Management Platform by Sherri Tillotson (Supervisor: Dr. Ken Prkachin)

**Academic Exposure** (Report from Julie Orlando, organizer of our participation in this event)

The Academic Exposure event on Sept 6th, Sunday was a success, we had a number of students stopping by the table to take a brochure or indicate their interest in psychology. I’d like to thank BJ, Loraine, Glenda, Sherry, Cindy, Paul, and Han for providing research info/slides for the table presentation materials, and BJ, Sherry, and Han for coming out to the table on Sunday afternoon.

**Psychology Orientation**

The Psychology Department held our annual orientation session on Friday, Sept 11, 2009. Graduate Advisor, Dr. Sherry Beaumont, met with new and returning graduate students. Dr. Glenda Prkachin, undergraduate advisor, met with new and returning undergraduate students. Almost all the faculty members spoke at the orientation, welcoming new and returning students and introducing their research and teaching. About 50 students attended the event which was followed by a casual get-to-know-each-other with pizza. Dr. Glenda Prkachin organized this successful event. Our Administrative Assistant, Loreen Obst, greatly contributed to the success of this event.

**Psyc Out**

Fourteen students presented the findings of their research projects at this year’s Psyc Out, the annual celebration of student research in psychology on April 7, 2009. Students from Psyc 445 also participated in this event. Psyc Out was organized by Dr. Loraine Lavallee.

**The Psychology Club** (Report by President Lindsey Kermer)

The Psychology Club is up and running! We would like to inform you of our latest event and student program! The event being held was a GRE and Grad School Presentation on October 28th at 6pm in room 7-152. The new program we are starting is a casual drop-in tutoring service run by 3rd, 4th year, and graduate students. The tutoring program will run every Thursday from 2:30-5:30 pm in room 6-348, so please feel free to stop by and share your wisdom!

**Welcome New Faculty**

William Tippett (tenure-track, Assistant Professor) received his PhD training at York University, Toronto, ON in the department of Kinesiology and Health Science (neuroscience) which he concluded in August 2006. The general aim of his PhD research was in understanding the complexities of neural transformations manifested through visually guided motor performance. He conducted novel research examining brain mechanisms underlying visually-guided reaching in both healthy adult populations and individuals afflicted with Alzheimer’s disease. BJ went on to
complete a Post-doctoral fellowship at Sunnybrook Health Science Centre (Toronto, ON) in Sept. 2006, under the supervision of Dr. Sandra Black, an internationally renowned researcher/clinician in cognitive neurology. During his tenure at Sunnybrook BJ expanded on his PhD research in an effort to further examine the link between visuomotor transformations and individuals experiencing Dementia related disturbances; which involved large scale psychophysical, SPECT and fMRI examinations.

Malinda Desjarlais, Lecturer. Ms. Desjarlais joined the faculty of UNBC in the fall of 2009. She is currently completing her doctorate at Brock University, Ontario.

Ms. Desjarlais’ research interests are in human development. Her current research addresses the learner and task factors that influence completion of task-related goals when using complex learning environments, such as the Internet. She is also interested in the impact of computer-mediated communication on social well-being, particularly among adolescents.

Welcome New PhD Students

Kathy Deyo
(Supervisors: Dr. Sherry Beaumont and Dr. Henry Harder). Kathy has been at the College of New Caledonia in Prince George since September of 1990 on a variety of contract types. She currently teaches Introduction and Abnormal Psychology, as well as three courses in human kinetics. Although her previous MSc in Kinesiology (Psychomotor Behaviour) from the University of Waterloo was a wonderful academic preparation, her MSc in Psychology from UNBC gave her the tools she needed to be an instructor at the College. Kathy finds her work rewarding and enjoyable - CNC is very supportive of professional development, and she loves learning and taking different courses. She is very excited to have recently been admitted into the PhD program for Rehabilitation Psychology, as she loves going to school!

Lynda Struthers
(Supervisor: Dr. William Owen). I am a speech-language pathologist. I have worked in schools supporting students with learning differences for the past 20 years. For the last 5 years, I have also worked as an education and behaviour consultant, supporting schools throughout north central BC in developing educational programs for students with Autism and other Pervasive Developmental Disorders. I completed a Master’s in Education in the area of Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on language at UNBC in 2002. My work and previous educational experiences highlight my interests in cognition and language-learning in school-aged children. I am particularly interested in the development of written language skills and the cognitive processes that support them.
**Welcome New MSc Students**

**Crystal Rollings**  
(Supervisors: Dr. Cindy Hardy and Dr. Ken Prkachin)  
completed her BSc (Honors) in Psychology at UNBC in 2009 and is currently in her first year of her MSc in Psychology. Her interests in psychology and life in general are broad and she enjoys developing, expanding, and challenging her knowledge and skills.

**Mira Rizkalla**  
(Supervisor: Dr. William J. Tippett). I received my Bachelor of Science, majoring in Psychology, from the University of Toronto in 2007. I recently moved from Toronto in order to pursue a Masters degree in psychology. I am interested in the study of neurodegenerative disorders at the integrative level. To date, my research efforts have focused on the cognitive repercussions of stroke and dementia utilizing concurrent clinical, neuropsychological and neuroimaging measures. I believe that information obtained from this type of research may provide insight into early diagnosis of dementia, ultimately leading to early interventions that can be used to slow decline and aid cognitive recovery from the disease. I am eager to be back in school and look forward to the upcoming two years as I have been greeted warmly by the friendly folks, mountain scenery and the outdoor life.

**Where Are They Now?**

**A. Nicole Burnett** successfully defended her Masters’ thesis on June 8, 2009 (MSc Supervisor: Dr. Paul Siakaluk). She is now a Ph.D. student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Calgary, working under the supervision of Dr. Glen Bodner.

**Lucy Chen** graduated with the MSc in Psychology in 2009 (MSc Supervisor: Dr. Cindy Hardy). In her research, Lucy examined the relationship between alcohol consumption and changes in physical and mental health and mortality over a 10 year period. Using data from Statistics Canada’s National Population Health Survey, a sample of 4187 people aged 50 years and older were followed for 10 years. In age-adjusted analyses, heavy drinkers had greater risk of mortality compared to lifetime abstainers. When other predictors of mortality (e.g., level of education, smoker/nonsmoker) were controlled, alcohol consumption was not significantly related to risk of mortality. Among survivors, alcohol consumption was not significantly related to changes in psychological distress over the 10 years of the study. Compared to lifetime abstainers, occasional and light drinkers had significantly reduced risk of a substantial decline in functional health over the 10 years, while moderate drinkers had a nonsignificantly reduced risk. Overall, the findings suggest that older middle-aged people who engage in light-to-moderate alcohol consumption enjoy a reduced risk of substantial functional health decline.
Candice Manahan graduated with the BSc in Psychology in 2006 and the MSc in Community Health Science in 2009 (MSc Supervisor: Dr. Cindy Hardy). In her research Candice interviewed health professionals who have practiced long-term in northern BC. Some grew up here, while others came from away. A variety of professions were represented, including psychology, social work, speech-language, and physiotherapy. The professionals reported varying levels of exposure to rural and northern-focused education and training before moving to northern BC. Those who lived here before entering their profession reported they stayed because of family and other connections to the area. Those who came from away reported choosing northern BC because of the professional challenges available to them, the adventure of living in the north, and the opportunities for outdoor recreation such as skiing. Professionals reported staying because of their great lifestyle, the low cost of living, professional challenges and satisfaction, and their care for the people who live here. The data reveal that professionals select rural practice in the north and stay long-term because of personal and professional factors that fit their values, and that some of these values change over time.

Dave Nordstokke (MSc supervisor: Dr. Glenda Prkachin) recently defended his dissertation "Investigating tests for equal variances". It went very well and he has already made the minor revisions and submitted it to the Faculty of Grad Studies. He received his PhD in Measurement, Evaluation, & Research Methodology in May 2009. Since September he is a tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Division of Applied Psychology at the University of Calgary.

Jasrit Pahal received his MSc at UNBC (MSc supervisor: Dr. Han Li), and is now attending dental school at the University of Calgary. For his thesis, Jasrit studied resident-patient communication patterns (audio-taped 40 interviews at a teaching clinic in Prince George). Based on the data, Jasrit has published two articles in peer-reviewed journals, one as first author, and the other as co-author. In addition, Jasrit has recently submitted a paper to a peer-reviewed journal on patient adherence to physicians’ recommendations to medical regimen and life-style changes based on data collected among 298 adults who had seen a physician at least twice in the past six months in Prince George. This project was supported by a Michael Smith summer student grant to Pahal.