

The Psych Chronicle

A publication for the alumni and friends of the Department of Psychology

Sigma Xi Research



Associate professor Kevin Shockley checks the high tech head gear on a test subject in the Perceptual-Motor Dynamics Lab.

Associate professor Kevin Shockley was awarded the Sigma Xi Young Investigator Award for his research, "Em-body-ing Perception." The award given by the University of Cincinnati's scientific research society goes to a junior faculty member with distinguished research in a field of science and engineering. Here he describes what "Em-body-ing Perception" means:

The title "Em-body-ing Perception" was meant to reflect the growing recognition that the body is playing an increasingly prominent role in our understanding of how we perceive the world around us.

In contrast to how perception has historically been portrayed, it is becoming increasingly apparent that perceiving the world around us is not simply a matter of making a copy of the world in our head based on activation patterns of our senses. Rather, how we perceive the world around us seems to depend on having a body with particular perceptual-motor capabilities. Another way of saying this is that

perception appears to be grounded in our action system. For example, when perceiving spatial layout, such as distances, slants or heights, our percepts are scaled to actions we can perform in the space in question such as how much effort it would take to traverse a distance. Similarly, our awareness of objects we wield with our hands, such as a hammer or a tennis racket, is constrained by how we can manipulate the object rather than action-neutral properties of the object such as its weight or dimensions.

Our research team in the Perceptual-Motor Dynamics Lab places the body front and center in our investigations into perception and cognition. My lecture on "Em-body-ing Perception" reviewed a range of research projects Mike Riley and I have conducted with our students here at UC addressing these issues.



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From the Head



Greetings friends and alums,
I want to salute three longtime members of the faculty who are retiring at the end of this academic year. Professor Robert Stutz has been with the department more than 40 years, 18 of which he served as department head. Professor Robert Frank is retiring

from UC after 30 years in order to take the position of Dean of Arts and Sciences at Ohio University. While Bob has always been affiliated with the department, much of his time over the past 15 years has been in administration, most recently as associate dean of the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences. Professor Bruce Schefft is also retiring after 25 years in the department. Bruce helped found and for many years led our clinical neuropsychology program.

In the past year, our doctoral program in clinical psychology was re-accredited by the American Psychological Association. We are also in the final stages of a Doctoral Program Excellence review being conducted for all doctoral programs at the University of Cincinnati by the new administration. I believe we will do well, thanks in part to some recent good news from Academic Analytics, which placed us at about the 75th percentile for participating benchmark programs.

And I was delighted to learn that the Psychology Department was the only academic program at UC included among the top 200 programs in the world by QS World University Rankings for 2011-12 (we were 54th among the American programs that made the list). Our Masters in Human Resources program was also reviewed by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business as part of its overall accreditation of the UC College of Business.

It's exciting to watch the process of integrating our new colleagues from the formerly independent Center for Organizational Leadership into our research programs and doctoral training. We are revising our strategic plan and will include a new research focus in diversity science/ human resources to operate alongside our existing foci in health psychology, neuropsychology/neuroscience, and cognition, action and perception.

Best regards,

Steve Howe

New Professor



Sarah Anderson

Psychology is much more than "Dr. Phil." But that doesn't keep students from occasionally stopping by assistant professor Sarah Anderson's office to proclaim they've been inspired by the popular daytime-television shrink.

"I get a lot of people in my office who will say, 'I want to be a psychology major because I want to be like Dr. Phil,' which is fine," Anderson says. "But there are a lot of things

you can do with psychology that, as an incoming freshman, you might not be aware of." Like those freshmen, Anderson is relatively new to the University of Cincinnati, having been hired in January 2011. After her first quarter of teaching, she knew she wanted to work more closely with undergraduates and help them learn all that psychology has to offer—the stuff beyond the canon of Dr. Phil. So she became advisor of the Psych Club, a student-run organization open to anyone curious about studying psychology.

Anderson contributes to the array of innovative science being performed in the Psychology Department through her research on language processing. Her work uses language as a test space to study the effects environmental cues have on various cognitive processes. One of the things Anderson's work explores is how altering those environmental cues can affect comprehension of language and, by extension, the world.

Honor Roll Donor

We thank the following individuals for their generous donations to the department from March 2011 to March 2012. These gifts fund scholarships, attract and retain the finest faculty, and enrich the experiences of our undergraduate and graduate students.

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For information on making a gift to the Department of Psychology, please contact Deb Livingston at deborah.livingston@uc.edu or (513)556-5806.

Burlew Awarded



Kathy Burlew

Professor Kathy Burlew was recently awarded the 2011 Kenneth and Mamie Clark Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Professional Development of Ethnic and Minority Graduate Students by the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students. The award, which requires a student nomination, is given yearly to psychologists who mentor ethnic and minority students in the field.

"Dr. Burlew is truly committed to the professional development of African-American psychology graduate students and psychologists. She is an amazing mentor," says LaTrice Montgomery, UC psychology graduate student and nominator of the award. "Although her professional and mentoring abilities have set her apart as a highly respected psychologist in the field, I believe that her humble, caring spirit is what is most inspiring to her students.

"Dr. Burlew's excellence, professionalism and genuine support cannot be matched. As a budding mentor and professional, I would be lucky to be half as talented as Dr. Burlew. "Burlew, who received UC's Excellence

in Mentoring Award in 2007 and the Edith C. Alexander Distinguished Teaching Award that same year, says she models her mentoring based on her own experiences as a graduate student at the University of Michigan under professor Patricia Gurin.

Burlew states: "I'm honored that my students thought enough of me to nominate me for this award, and I'm also blessed that I really do have some excellent students who help take me and my work to a new level.

"I've always tried to pay it forward. For me, it's very rewarding to see students start to believe in themselves in the same way I believe in them."

The sentiments are echoed at the administrative level.

"Kathy has successfully mentored a long, long line of doctoral students in psychology. She has played a critically important role in our PhD graduation rate of minority students being so phenomenally good," says Steve Howe, Psychology Department head.

Student Outcomes

Kimberly Avallone was selected as this year's recipient of the McMicken College Outstanding Master's Student Award.

Mike Basso (PhD, '94) is now in an endowed faculty position as McFarlin associate professor of psychology at University of Tulsa and also Clinical associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Oklahoma.

Michelle Bonnet ('12), having recently switched her career plans from seeking an MD to a PhD in psychology, is working in a paid position at Children's Hospital and has been named to Phi Beta Kappa by the university.

Tehran Davis (PhD) started a position as assistant professor of psychology at the University of Connecticut in January.

Jamie Fargo (PhD '04) is tenured associate professor and director of the Sociobehavioral Epidemiology Program in the Department of Psychology at Utah State University.

Deak Helton won the 2011 Earl Alluisi Award for Early Career Achievement (American Psychological Association, Division 21). The recipient of the award delivers an invited address at the 2012 APA Convention.

LaTrice Montgomery was appointed to the faculty in College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services.

Scott Moore (PhD) is a clinical health scientist with the US Department of Veteran Affairs National Center for Organization Development, an organization directed by **Sue Dyrenforth**, also a graduate of UC's Psychology Department doctoral program.

Following the completion of his dissertation last fall, **Sebastian Wallot** began a postdoctoral fellowship at the center for Functionally Integrative Neuroscience at Aarhus University in Denmark. Wallot and professor Guy Van Orden used nonlinear statistics to demonstrate coupling, across time, between the heart rates of participants in a fire-walking ceremony and their own family members during the ceremony. By contrast, tourists and other unrelated observers displayed no such link. For those who have ever wondered whether their family is "there" for them, they are.