Welcome to the Fall 2021 edition of the department newsletter!

This summer, our Chair, Dr. Robert Morgan, assumed a new position as Dean of the College of Health and Human Services at Southern Illinois University. I want to thank Bob for his twenty-one years of dedicated service to our department and university. He will be missed, and we wish him well as he enters into an exciting new chapter in his career.

During my eighteen years at Texas Tech, I have served the department in various capacities, including as Human Factors Program Coordinator, as Director of Experimental Psychology Programs, and as Associate Chair. I am excited to now serve our department as Interim Chair. My aim is to make a positive impact in the lives of students, faculty, and staff.

COVID-19 has made this a challenging time to be an educator. I am proud of our department’s response. Our instructors have found creative new ways to provide excellent educational opportunities despite the pandemic forcing us to temporarily shelve tried-and-true approaches, and have gone above and beyond to ensure that students receive the high-quality instruction they deserve. I thank them for their tireless efforts.

On a more positive note, we are excited to welcome three new, highly qualified, and enthusiastic faculty members to our department. We are also excited to welcome a new class of superb graduate students into our doctoral programs. I am sure these additions will greatly enhance our department.

As always, you can visit our media page to stay abreast of department news, and our donate page to find ways to support our department’s ability to train the next generation of psychological scientists and practitioners. Please consider giving if you are able. Your support enables us to do things we simply could not do otherwise.

To conclude, I want to note that you are always welcome in our department, and I would love to hear from you. One of the things I enjoy most about being a faculty member is listening to stories about the awesome things that our alumni’s education has enabled them to do. I would love to learn more about your story.

Dr. Keith S. Jones
keith.s.jones@ttu.edu
Welcome Our New Faculty Members

**Nicholas C. Borgogna, Ph.D.**  
*Assistant Professor, Counseling Psychology*

Dr. Borgogna received his Ph.D. in combined-integrated Clinical and Counseling Psychology from the University of South Alabama and completed his pre-doctoral internship in health service psychology from the College of William and Mary in 2021. He is currently teaching introduction to counseling psychology for the counseling Ph.D. students. Other teaching interests include research methods, statistics, psychopathology, ethics, and practicum at the graduate level, as well as abnormal psychology and introduction to counseling at the undergraduate level. His research primarily examines the intersection of human sexuality and psychological distress. He is also interested in improving clinical approaches to a variety of mental health problems, and is in the process of starting a new lab at Texas Tech and anticipates taking a new graduate student in the fall of 2022.

**Caroline Cummings, Ph.D.**  
*Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychology*

Dr. Cummings received her clinical psychology doctoral degree from the University of Nevada, Reno. At TTU, she plans to pursue a program of research that examines the interconnections between emotion, related self-regulatory systems, and health in youths and young adults with or at-risk for chronic and complex medical conditions (e.g., type 1 diabetes, overweight/obesity, substance use). She enjoys mentoring both undergraduate and graduate students to assist in their professional development and is currently accepting applications to work as a research assistant in her lab. Also, she looks forward to teaching a developmental psychopathology graduate course in the fall and an undergraduate abnormal psychology course in the spring.

**Dr. Jonathan Singer, Ph.D.**  
*Visiting Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychology*

Dr. Singer dedicates his research and clinical work to improving the psychological and physical health of patient-caregiver dyads. More specifically, he examines the interconnection of the biopsychosocial processes within individuals with life limiting illnesses (e.g., cancer; dementia) and their caregivers. Using multiple methods, the ultimate goal of his research program is to translate basic and applied research into scalable, technology-based interventions. Jonathan will be teaching objective personality assessment to graduate students in the fall and research methods to graduate students in the spring. He hopes to start a health and aging course at the undergraduate and graduate level in the future. He also looks forward to mentoring both undergraduate and graduate students. Jonathan enjoys playing golf, watching the Steelers beat the Browns and Ravens, and eating lots of food!
Welcome Our New Graduate Students

Clinical

Clockwise from top left:
Tristen Hefiner, Carlos Sanchez, Michael LeDuc, Alexandra Bammel, Victoria Dennis, Amanda Bianco

Counseling

Clockwise from top left:
Daniela Navarro-Verdugo, Samantha Gonzalez, Bryce Robinson, Nina Clinton, Megan Keen, (not pictured) Joe Grossman

Experimental

Back row: Joseph Opdenaker, Jacob Vaughn, Bradford Howe, Yves Valentin
Middle row: Tyler Owen, Marissa Tharp, James Peabody, Jordyn Glick
Front row: Nicolasa Villalobos, Jenna Donet, Chidera Azubike, Jesse Saxon, Najib Nia
Not pictured: Aleksei Proskurin, Irina Lavrova
University Integrated Scholar

Dr. Adam Schmidt
This award recognizes faculty whose research, teaching, and service activities reflect significant accomplishments and effective synergy. Integrated scholars are recognized for infusing the results of their scholarship and creative activity into the learning experiences they provide to students and their service and engagement activities.

External Funding Received

Dr. Jason Van Allen
2021-2024
Title: Equine-Assisted Positively Fit – A Family-based Obesity Intervention for Rural Youth
Sponsor: United States Department of Agriculture; National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Multiple Projects Directors: Jason Van Allen, Department of Psychological Sciences; and Katy Schroeder, Animal & Food Sciences
Amount Awarded: $150,000

This study will primarily (1) measure the effectiveness of the EAPF intervention to decrease children’s sedentary behaviors, and increase their self-efficacy for healthy eating and physical activity; and (2) measure treatment team adherence to intervention fidelity and develop curriculum training materials for future dissemination of the curriculum to other EAAT centers across the United States, among other secondary study objectives.

External Funding Received

Dr. Keith S. Jones
2020-2023
Title: Automatically measuring phishing victim susceptibility from publicly available information
Sponsor: Office of Naval Research
PI: Keith S. Jones, Department of Psychological Sciences
Co-PI: Akbar Siami Namin, Department of Computer Science
Amount Awarded: $784,732

This project will develop a system that measures users’ phishing susceptibility from publicly available information about those users (e.g., the organization’s website, individual's social media, etc.). To do so, we will accomplish four research objectives: Objective 1): Develop a large phishing susceptibility data set, Objective 2): Determine the best set of phishing susceptibility predictors, Objective 3): Identify and evaluate publicly available data about model factors, and Objective 4): Develop a prototype and test its effectiveness against truth data.
Assessment Innovation Award Winners
Drs. Brandy Piña-Watson & Sheila Garos

This award is granted to faculty and staff who are actively engaged in assessment activities within their department or unit. The counseling program is developing an assessment of program climate and outcomes in areas including diversity, inclusion, curriculum and will be used to enhance current curriculum and efforts to maintaining APA accreditation.

Alumni Association’s New Faculty Award
Dr. Paul Ingram

This award is granted through the College of Arts & Sciences based upon positive student evaluations, innovative teaching, initiation of research and creative activities, evidence of interaction with students, publishing efforts, service to the college, and attitudes that draw favorable attention from the academic community.

Texas Tech’s 2021 President’s Emerging Engaged Scholarship Award
Dr. Megan Thoen & Dr. Sean Mitchell

This award recognizes a relatively new project or initiative that demonstrates high potential for the advancement of engaged scholarship. The project or initiative shows outstanding promise for having a significant impact on communities and the university.
Departmental Graduate Student Awards

Nguyen Nguyen
Counseling Psychology
Best Researcher Award

Brittany Lancaster
Clinical Psychology
Best Researcher Award

&
Department of Psychological Sciences
Research Support Award

Tran Le
Departmental Diversity Award

Tiffany Lui
Graduate Lab TA of the Year

Mark Lacour
Experimental Psychology
Best Researcher Award

Ben Widlus
Undergraduate Lab TA of the Year

Taleen Nalabandian
Best Undergraduate Course for Close Relationships

Ema Bidiwala
PSY 1300 Instructor of the Year
Graduate Student Honors & Awards

University Honors & Awards

Amber Morrow Benet
Covenant Health & Social Services Fellowship

Gabriela Manzo
Helen DeVitt Jones Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award
Jane L. Winer Dissertation Scholarship

Zohal Heidari
Covenant Health and Social Services Fellowship
Graduate Student Research Support Award

Taleen Nalabandian
Doctoral Dissertation Completion Fellowship
Helen DeVitt Jones Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award

Brittany Lancaster
Graduate Student Research Support Award

Faith Scanlon
Horn Distinguished Professors Graduate Achievement Award

External Honors & Awards

Miriam Armstrong
Alphonse Chapanis Best Student Paper Award from the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society

Taleen Nalabandian
Doctoral Dissertation Completion Fellowship
Helen DeVitt Jones Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award

Brittany Lancaster
2020 CASA Virtual Advocate of the Year from the Court Appointed Special Advocates of the South Plains
Department News

A Statement from Psi Chi and the Psychology Club
Read more here.

Lisa Briones and Anthony Foster are Recognized for Their Winning Posters
Read more here.

Dr. Sarah Victor Quoted in USA Today
Read more here.

In Memoriam: Angela K. Stevens, Ph.D.
April 1, 1989—August 1, 2021
2019 Clinical Psychology Graduate
Read more here.
Join our Alumni Advisory Council

The department’s Alumni Advisory Council is composed of business, government, academic, and professional leaders who are interested in our department’s vitality. The council works with the department to strengthen our instructional and research programs, improve our facilities, expand our base of support, and better serve our alumni. If you are interested in serving on the Council, please contact Dr. Keith S. Jones at keith.s.jones@ttu.edu.

Contribute to the Department

There are many ways to make a gift to the Department of Psychological Sciences. Can we count on your financial investment in the students and faculty of the Department? Funds may be used for a variety of purposes including scholarships, graduate dissertation support, research, service, and outreach initiatives.

To make a donation, please visit our donate page.

Follow us throughout the year on social media!