

PSYCHOLOGY

UC Riverside Psychology Newsletter | Issue 4 | Editors: Dr. Rachel Wu & Lilian Shin

New faculty positions

Dr. Natsuki Atagi (postdoc): Assistant Professor in Child and Adolescent Studies at California State University, Fullerton

Dr. Annie Ditta (postdoc): Assistant Professor of Teaching in Psychology at UC Riverside

Dr. Eve Higby (postdoc): Assistant Professor in Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences at California State University, East Bay

Dr. Elizabeth Muñoz (postdoc): Assistant Professor in Human Development and Family Sciences at the University of Texas, Austin

Dr. Megan Zirnstein (postdoc): Assistant Professor in Linguistics and Cognitive Science at Pomona College

Achievements and community engagement

UCR's Department of Psychology has had a number of major achievements in the past six months, including both academic achievements, as well as achievements in community engagement. This issue provides an overview of these accomplishments achieved in the past six months.

R'PSYC Conference

R'PSYC 2019 was the inaugural undergraduate research conference for UCR Psychology, Psychology: Law & Society, and Neuroscience students and researchers. Undergraduate researchers presented posters or oral presentations of their research. R'PSYC was held on May 18, 2019 from 1:00PM to 5:00PM in the UCR Psychology Building. The keynote speaker was Dr. Robert Rosenthal (Distinguished Professor of Psychology).



New postdoc positions

Megan Fritz (graduate student): Postdoc in Cardiovascular Behavioral Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh

Robert Wright (graduate student): Postdoc in Surgery at Stanford School of Medicine

Lilian Shin (graduate student): Postdoc at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Josh Dorsi (graduate student): Postdoc in the Department of Neural & Behavioral Sciences at Penn State University

Alex Karan (graduate student): Postdoc in the Department of Psychology at University of Illinois



Council on Undergraduate Research @ UCR

The department has recently taken on an ambitious project, led by **Dr. Rebekah Richert**, to transform the undergraduate psychology curriculum to better prepare students for the next steps in their academic and non-academic careers. This 4-year project, supported by the Council on Undergraduate Research and the National Science Foundation, provides the opportunity to revamp the curriculum to provide a better understanding of research and scientific thinking. Through the program, the department periodically meets with mentors, who are nationwide faculty consultants on undergraduate STEM curriculum. We will implement changes over the next few years and collect data, with the help of a new Assistant Professor of Teaching, **Dr. Annie Ditta**, to determine best practices and ways forward. We are very excited about this opportunity, and look forward to the tangible outcomes that this project will produce to enhance undergraduate psychology education, and beyond.

Research to Policy

Graduate students, **Danielle Delany** and **Agnes Varghese**, both completed the UCR Science to Policy Certificate Program and were awarded a certificate from State Assembly member Jose Medina for their involvement in science policy.



Select new grants

- **Dr. Cecilia Cheung:** NSF, *Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers*, with Dr. Kelley Barsanti, Assistant Professor of Chemical and Environmental Engineering
- **Dr. Chandra Reynolds:** USC/NIH, *Clarifying Risk and Protective Factors for Dementia with the Interplay of Genes and Environment in Multiple Studies (IGEMS) consortium*
- **Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky:** John Templeton Foundation: *Is Gratitude Only for the Self? Exploring the Benefits of Recalling, Sharing, Receiving, and Witnessing*
- **Dr. Tuppert Yates:** NIH/NICHD (child development), *Children's Academic Competence in Contexts of Risk: Longitudinal Relations with Sleep and Physical Health in Adolescence*



Awards and Honors

Dr. Howard Friedman: Edward A. Dickson Emeritus Professorship

Dr. Thomas Sy: CHASS Academic Senate Distinguished Teaching Award

Dr. Cecilia Cheung: Society for Research on Child Development (Asian Caucus) Early Career Award; AERA-SRCD Early Career Fellowship in Middle Childhood Education and Development

Events

Distinguished Speaker Series on Cognitive Neuroscience

This year the department is hosting a Distinguished Speaker Series on Cognitive Neuroscience. Drs. Ilana Bennett and Judy Kroll invited three prominent researchers to share their work using cutting edge neuroscience techniques to study the neural bases of cognitive processes, such as memory and language.

Our first speaker, **Dr. William Jagust**, visited UCR on October 17, 2018. Dr. Jagust is an Endowed Chair in Geriatric Medicine and Professor of Neuroscience and Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley. He is best known for his research using positron emission tomography (PET) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to understand brain aging and dementia and their respective impact on



cognitive functioning. He is recognized for being the first to demonstrate atrophy in the hippocampus associated with Alzheimer's Disease using MRI. He is also pioneering work using PET imaging to assess amyloid and tau accumulations in vivo. These proteins form the plaques and neurofibrillary tangles seen

PhD and Postdoc awards

- **Christian Navarro-Torres:** NSF dissertation grant, NIH NRSA
- **Cheung Lab (Pamela Sheffler, Brandon Ali, and Kevin Wu):** Western Psychological Association Student Scholarship Award, Poster title: *The Role of Parent and Autonomous Academic Goal Orientations in Children's Learning Outcomes*
- **Danielle Delany:** 2019 Western Psychological Foundation Robert L. Solso Research Award, Paper title: *Adolescents' Creativity and After School Activities: A Longitudinal Investigation in the United States and China*
- **Brandon Tran:** Meritorious Student Award from the Society for Behavioral Medicine, Talk title: *Confronting Cancer: A Qualitative Analysis of Distress at a Breast Biopsy Appointment*
- **Yeram Cheong:** Dissertation Research Grant from UCR Graduate Division
- **Dana Glenn:** NSF GRFP Honorable Mention; Arthur M. Sackler Colloquia Travel Award: *The Brain Produces Mind by Modeling*
- **Jessie Bridgewater:** Presley Center Graduate Student Fellowship; Honorable Mention Ford Fellowship

in Alzheimer's Disease. His talk was entitled "Molecules and Memory: the Borderland of Aging and Alzheimer's Disease."

Our second speaker, **Dr. Patricia Kuhl**, visited UCR on December 5, 2018. Dr. Kuhl is the Bezos Family Foundation Endowed Chair in Early Childhood Learning and Co-Director of the Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences and the NSF Science of Learning Center (LIFE) at the University of Washington. She is also a member of the National Academy of Sciences among other honors. Dr. Kuhl is internationally recognized for her work using EEG and MRI techniques to study language development in children exposed to multiple languages early in life. Her talk, which was co-sponsored by Bilingualism Matters Speaker Series, was entitled "The Mind of the Child: What Language Reveals about the Infant Brain and Learning."



The last speaker for our Distinguished Speaker Series on Cognitive Neuroscience on May 2, 2019 was **Dr. Nicholas Turk-Browne**. He is a professor of Psychology at Yale University and the 2017 recipient of the prestigious Young Investigator Award from the Cognitive Neuroscience Society. He is best known for his research using MRI and computational modeling to understand interactions among perception, attention, and memory as well as their neural substrates. His talk was entitled, "Rethinking Memory Systems for Statistical Learning".



Media

- **Dr. Anja Pahor:** Developed an app-based measure of fluid intelligence (UCMRT) with **Drs. Aaron Seitz** and **Susanne Jaeggi**. [Newsweek](#), [Science daily](#)
- **Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky:** Interviewed on NPR's Morning Edition to discuss gratitude. [NPR](#)
- **Dr. David Rosenbaum:** *The New York Times*, "Precastration: When the Early Bird Gets the Shaft". [NY Times](#), [Radio](#)
- **Dr. Megan Robbins:** Select publicity on we-talk among couples and positive functioning: [The Guardian](#); [NY Post](#)
- **Dr. Kate Sweeny:** NPR's Morning Edition on playing Tetris to stop worrying: [NPR](#)



Ross D. Parke Lecture

On Tuesday, March 5th at 3:30pm, the department hosted the third lecture in the Ross D. Parke Lecture Series in INTS 1113. This event featured a talk by **Dr. Seth Pollak**, a Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Professor of Pediatrics, Anthropology, Neuroscience, and Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Dr.



Pollak investigates children who have experienced aberrant early life experiences, including abuse and neglect, extreme poverty, institutional settings, and traumatic life experiences. His work has provided important insights about the developmental processes underlying socio-emotional learning, as well as shed light on the mechanisms through which children acquire emotions. The title of Dr. Pollak's talk was, "The Emergence of Human Emotions: Learning, Development and Biology."

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