

# Psychology

## csula

### SPOTLIGHT ON.... Dr. Pamela Regan

**Pamela Regan** is Professor of Psychology at California State University, Los Angeles. She received her Ph.D. in Psychology and her Ph.D. Minor in Statistics from the University of Minnesota and her undergraduate degree in English from Williams College. Her research interest is in the area of interpersonal relationships, with an emphasis on the dynamics of human mating (particularly passionate love, sexual desire, and mate preference). She has published more than 100 journal articles, book chapters, and reviews (and has given over 75 professional presentations), and she is the author of *The Mating Game: A Primer on Love, Sex, and Marriage* (Sage, 2008) and the co-author (with Ellen Berscheid) of *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relationships* (Pearson, 2005) and *Lust: What We Know About Human Sexual Desire* (Sage, 1999). In 2007, she was honored with the Outstanding Professor Award by her university for excellence in instructional and professional achievement.

**Questions - If you could be any character in fiction, whom would you be?**

I love my own life too much to want to be anyone else, but there are many fictional worlds I'd like to visit. Right

now, if I had to choose, I'd say it's a toss-up between the world of Harry Potter (because magic is wonderful, and the books remind us that life really is about friendship and making choices - and living with the consequences of those choices) and the world of the Narnia Chronicles (especially "Voyage of the Dawn Treader," which is a rip-roaring adventure from start to finish). **If Hollywood made a movie about your life, whom would you like to see play the lead role as you?**

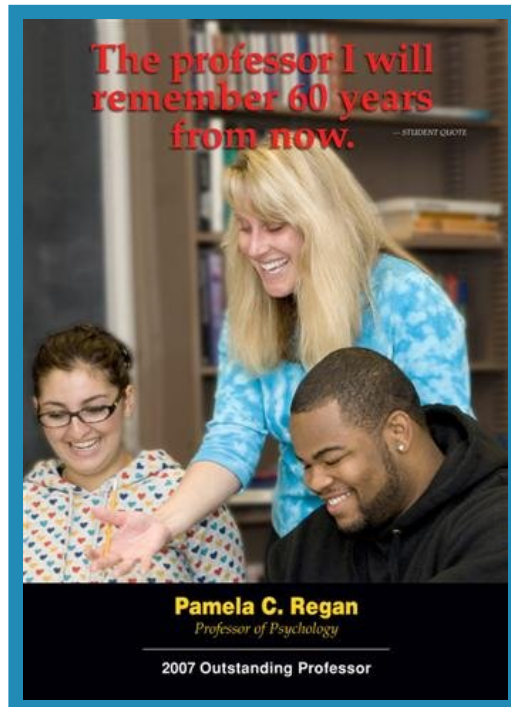
Well, my current favorite actress is Jill Scott, who plays Precious Ramotswe in the HBO series based on Alexander McCall Smith's "No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency" book series, set in Africa. We don't look much alike, but I admire her greatly and would love to see her play me in a movie about my life.

**What will be your first thought when you learn that you won a lottery?**

Yippee - no more furloughs for me!

**What will you do if you have a time machine?**

Okay, that would be fantastic! I'd go back in time and visit major historical events or periods - how amazing would it be to see if our guesstimates about how early humans lived actually are correct? *CONTINUED PAGE 4*



## Opening Message - Welcome to first Issue!

You are reading the first edition of the Psychology Program's Newsletter. In order to keep our students, alumni and friends informed about our program, we have decided to do a newsletter once a quarter. In this newsletter, you'll find out about what's been happening in the department. It is also a good way to stay in touch with your classmates and faculty members. If you haven't checked in with us lately, I think you'll be surprised and excited about all the wonderful things happening in the Psychology Program. We hope to hear from you soon, and we welcome your feedback!

In every issue there will be a "Spotlight" article of a faculty member in order to get know the faculty better, as well as a section on "What the Faculty Have Been Up To" during the last quarter. There will also be a Student Spotlight article to highlight a current or former student to explore student life at CSULA and the different career paths in Psychology. Throughout each issue will be descriptions and photographs of events within the Psychology Department during the previous quarter, as well as announcements of upcoming events for students and faculty. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please address them to the editors - Doug Stenstrom at [dstenst@calstatela.edu](mailto:dstenst@calstatela.edu) and/or Heidi Riggio at [hriaggio@calstatela.edu](mailto:hriaggio@calstatela.edu).

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## Victor Cazares wins Research Symposium Award

At this year's annual CSU Student Research Competition, Psychology Masters student Victor Cazares took home first-place honors for his research talk entitled "Orbitofrontal Cortex Lesions Impair Responses to Cue Predicting Shifts in Work to Reward in Rats."

The CSU Student Research Competition is an annual event currently in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year that provides a forum for undergraduate and graduate students across all 23 CSU campuses to present posters and talks to showcase their activities and achievements in research, scholarship and creative endeavors. Held this year at CSU Los Angeles, the event hosted about 200 students across all the CSU Universities.

Winning for his talk within the Behavioral and Social Sciences division, Victor Cazares explained "The research I conducted was an investigation of the involvement of the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) in decision making. Specifically, I tested whether the OFC was involved in responding to a stimulus associated with reward devaluation."

Mentored by Alicia Izquierdo, Assistant Professor within the Psychology Department, Victor Cazares went on to explain that "Winning the competition, that was definitely exciting! I definitely wanted to win and make my advisor proud. It was nice to see what everyone else was doing, to interact with them and talk about issues in the field. And it was also nice, in terms of winning, to see the University recognized for its research; and for others to see that research done here is valuable and will contribute to the field."

Victor earned his Masters degree from the Psychology Department last Spring, and is now at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor pursuing a Ph.D. in Behavioral Neuroscience.



## Psi Chi Presentation:

The Department of Psychology and Psi Chi hosted a talk last Spring by Dr. Ron Riggio entitled, "Why you should be glad you are a psychology major". Dr. Ron Riggio is the "Henry R. Kravis Professor of Leadership and Organizational Psychology" at Claremont McKenna College where he is the Director of the Kravis Leadership Institute. As you can see from the pictures below, the Psi Chi event was a rousing success! To a packed room of students, Dr. Riggio discussed the many advantages and benefits stemming from a higher education in psychology.



Pictured is Dr. Ron Riggio and Dr. Heidi Riggio (center) surrounded by students and Psi Chi members after his talk.

## To learn more about Psi Chi events:

Every year the Psi Chi chapter at CSU Los Angeles hosts educational events for undergraduate & graduate students in Psychology, as well as events designed for students to interact and get to know each other. To learn more about Psi Chi, see the article on page 5, and the Psi Chi bulletin board on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor hallway in King Hall.

# Neuroscience Seminar Series

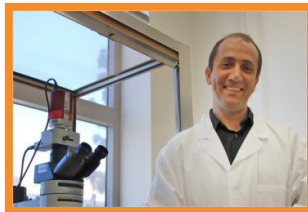
The Neuroscience Seminar Series is designed to open the eyes and ears of our students to Neuroscience. Neuroscience is not an interdisciplinary field so much as it is an integrative one - encompassing psychology, biology, computer science, philosophy, mathematics, biochemistry, you get the picture... So no ONE department owns it, which is why students from all disciplines have been attending! This is my small way to try and get our students to begin to think of their education in this "no barrier" way. The seminars are 50 minutes with 10 minutes for questions. Featured are engaging, local speakers conducting exciting, cutting-edge neuroscience research. --- Alicia Izquierdo-Edler

## Neuroscience Symposium Talks from last Spring:

Previous talks for the Neuroscience Seminar series for last Spring included **Dr. Annabelle Belcher** (now at NIDA in Baltimore MD) who spoke about "Enduring cognitive and neurochemical consequences of methamphetamine in rodents.

**Dr. Bernard Balleine**, Professor of Neurobiology of Learning and Memory at the UCLA Department of Psychology who spoke on "The role of cortical-basal ganglia circuits in choice and decision-making".

**Dr. Alcino Silva**, from the UCLA Psychology Department, who spoke about "How we learn and remember: from mechanisms to treatments".



## Talks Scheduled for Fall:

There are two talks scheduled for this Fall for the Neuroscience Seminar series:

**Dr. Ralph Adolphs** will be speaking on **Tues Nov 3** in **PS 158** at **1:30-2:30pm**. Dr. Adolphs is the "Bren Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience and Professor of Biology" at California Institute of Technology, and also the Director of the Caltech Brain Imaging Center. Dr. Adolphs studies the neural and psychological basis of social behavior and how we recognize emotional facial expressions in each other. He uses functional magnetic resonance imaging and other techniques to study healthy, neurological, and psychiatric populations.

**Dr. J. David Jentsch** will be speaking on **Thurs Dec 3** at **1:30-2:30pm, location TBA**. Dr. Jentsch is a Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience at the UCLA Department of Psychology and the Brain Research Institute at UCLA. Dr. Jentsch studies the genetic and neurochemical factors in cognitive-executive function and uses an animal model of neuropsychiatric disease states such as schizophrenia, addiction, and ADHD.

## Upcoming event: SCCUR 2009

*SCCUR is the Southern California Conference for Undergraduate Research, held this year at CSU Dominguez Hills. For information specifically about SCCUR and their related activities, see [www.sccur.org](http://www.sccur.org)*

- **What is it?** SCCUR's cornerstone program is a one-day conference held each November on the campus of a college or university in the greater Los Angeles area. Its purpose is to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of the best research, scholarship, and creative work of undergraduates in the region, and thus to encourage excellence in undergraduate achievement.
- **Who Participates?** SCCUR is broadly multi-disciplinary, including the sciences, humanities, social sciences, arts, and performing arts. SCCUR typically draws 500-800 participants, mainly undergraduates and their faculty mentors, administrators, and community college and high school students.
- **Presentation Format?** Students present their work either in 15-minute formal panel presentations chaired by faculty members, in poster form, or in exhibition or performance. The conference seeks to replicate professional and scholarly meetings, and many undergraduate scholars participate in SCCUR as a "first conference" experience, going on to present their work at national professional meetings.
- **When is it?** The 2009 SCCUR conference will be held on November 21st at CSU, Dominguez Hills. The Conference's official website is <http://www.csudh.edu/sccur09/> where you can find information about the schedule.

# New Faculty Arrive!

## *The Psychology Department Welcomes a New Faculty Member*

We are pleased to welcome a new Assistant Professor to the Psychology Department who brings impressive talents and interests – Dr. Ji Son

My name is Ji Son and I'm thrilled to join CSULA's Psychology Faculty this year. I've had the opportunity to work with exceptional researchers and scholars through postdoctoral training at UCLA Psychology and graduate education at Indiana University. I'm excited to have the opportunity to work with the inspiring students and faculty of CalStateLA. My main interest, in both teaching and research, is



generalization: how do students and research participants generalize something they learned to new situations? My work examines how so-called "low-level" perception impacts how people come to understand "abstract" (relational, mathematical, scientific, general) ideas. I have this crazy notion that abstract learning may be deeply fueled by and intertwined with perceptual learning. I enjoy challenging students to think and see the world scientifically (as if we could actually collect data to examine any question we have!) and to see situations from multiple perspectives. I also enjoy challenging my husband to try all my crazy cooking experiments (grass flavored gelato anyone?) and making websites for any and every situation.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1:

## *SPOTLIGHT – Pamela Regan*

To be in Fleming's lab when he discovered penicillin? Or in the room when the decision was made to enter into one of the world wars (any war, for that matter)? Or to hear the Gettysburg Address spoken by Lincoln himself, during the American Civil War? There are so many amazing discoveries and events that have shaped our history - I think this would be the most wonderful opportunity ever. I'd also love to go back and spend some time just absorbing different eras of our history - 1900, 1920s, 1940s, etc. Seeing who we were then would give such insight into who we are today.

### **Why are manhole covers round?**

This is a question that Microsoft used in interviews, I think, so I'm not going to answer it! Anything I say will have already been said by someone else (and probably far more eloquently).

### **What one thing that has happened in your life has made the biggest impact on who you are today?**

In a general sense, reading has made the biggest impact on my life. Reading truly is the way out - of ignorance, of poverty, of boredom. It's my single biggest pleasure, and I take immense comfort in the fact that no matter how many books I read, I'll never read them all. There will always be one more out there...

In a specific sense, three particular interpersonal events continue to shape who I am today. The first was getting my first dog, when I was 11 - the relationship between a kid and a dog is unique and special, and my love of animals, and dogs in particular, remains one of the dominant themes in my life. I can't imagine a life without dogs in it.

The second is co-parenting my nephew, Miko - Miko came to live with me when he was just a baby, and it was a difficult and scary time for me, because I was not prepared to take on this role. I'd just moved back to California and started working at Cal State LA, and the timing was horrible. But you can't schedule life - it just happens and you have to deal with it. Looking back, I wouldn't change a thing - how many other aunts have the chance to be that intimately involved in their nephew's life?

The third event was losing my own aunt, Laurie, to cancer three years ago. She and I were incredibly close, and she allowed me to participate in her death the same way that she allowed me into her life - with total honesty and total love. Death is not pretty - it's slow and painful and ugly, and I think that most of us hide from those realities because it's easier that way. To allow me to be with her during her final months, fully and unconditionally, took incredible courage and was a real act of love and kindness from this special and unique woman.

All three of these events have taught me the value of family, and of friendship, and of kindness.

### **What was the most exciting moment of your life?**

Can't say - there have been so many! Some personal, some professional. Maybe the most exciting thing is yet to happen.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE ON...

## Dana Weiser

*In each issue we will highlight a current or former student to explore student life at CSULA and the different career paths in Psychology.*

I consider my current success as a third-year doctoral student in the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology PhD program at University of Nevada, Reno to be implicitly linked to my experiences at Cal State LA.

I entered Cal State LA in the Fall of 2005 as a psychology masters student under the supervision of Dr. Riggio. During my time at Cal State LA, Dr. Riggio and I collected, analyzed, and wrote up our project entitled "Attitudes toward marriage: Embeddedness and outcomes in personal relationships" which was ultimately published in the journal *Personal Relationships*. Dr. Riggio also was chair of my thesis committee and my thesis "Family background and academic achievement: Does self-efficacy mediate outcomes?" is currently under review at another high-quality journal. I strongly believe my experience working directly with Dr. Riggio is one of the main reasons I was accepted to a doctoral program and am thriving at the PhD level (last spring I was honored as an Outstanding Graduate Student at UNR).

**What advice would you give to students thinking about graduate school in psychology at CSULA?**

A great resource at Cal State LA is

the number of wonderful professors in the psychology program who offer hands-on research training and I strongly encourage any graduate student to seek these opportunities out.

Another great resource at Cal State LA is the number of wonderful statistics classes offered. I cannot even begin to detail the huge advantage I possessed when beginning my doctoral program because of Dr. Weiss' ANOVA courses and Dr. Regan's multivariate statistics course. Any student who is interested in pursuing their education further or a career in research should take these classes and pay attention!

Another resource at Cal State LA which students should take advantage of is the Graduate Studies & Research office. I was extremely fortunate to receive the Graduate Equity Fellowship along with travel funding through this office. I was privileged to directly benefit from working at this wonderful office under the supervision of Associate Dean Muchlinski but there are a number of great opportunities for any graduate student to take advantage of there. In particular, I highly recommend any graduate student interested in going on to the doctoral level to apply to the Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Scholars



Dana Weiser

program. Overall, I feel Cal State LA gave me a number of distinct benefits that I was able to capitalize on during my matriculation. Cal State LA provided me with a great educational foundation which I have been able to build on in my doctoral program.

**Where do you see yourself in the future?**

I am on time to complete my PhD in Spring 2012 and after that I plan to apply for teaching and research jobs at universities and colleges.

## Psi Chi National Honor Society at CSU Los Angeles

What is Psi Chi? Psi Chi is a national Honor Society in Psychology, founded in 1929 for the purposes of encouraging, stimulating, and maintaining excellence in scholarship, and advancing the science of psychology. Psi Chi functions as a federation of chapters located at over 1,090 senior colleges and universities in the USA and in other countries abroad.

Why would I want to join Psi Chi? Advantages of membership involve becoming a member of a national honor society, finding a sense of community in psychology, access to applying for \$300,000 annual in grants and awards, and a forum for obtaining information about conferences, conventions, and other research opportunities at the local and national level.

How can I join Psi Chi? Membership is open to graduate and undergraduate men and women who are making the study of psychology one of their major interests, and who meet the minimum qualifications.

Where can I learn more? The Psi Chi bulletin board located in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of King Hall provides detailed information about upcoming events, membership qualifications, upcoming opportunities to get involved, and the chapters officers. The website is <http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/psych/html/PsiChi/psichi.htm> or <http://www.psichi.org>

# Is Graduate School for you?

In this column, we provide questions to help you answer the important decision about your interest in going to graduate school. **Taken from Kuther, 2006.**

1. Do you like to read psychology books or articles even if they are not assigned?
2. Does public speaking bother (or terrify) you?
3. Is writing term papers fun?
4. Do you hate library research?
5. Can you concentrate and study for hours at a time?
6. Are your grades mainly Bs or lower?
7. Are you comfortable competing with other students?
8. Do you frequently hand assignments in late or forget to do them?
9. Do you enjoy reading and studying?
10. Are you sick of school?
11. Do you read recent issues of psychology journals?
12. Are there other careers aside from psychology that you would like to explore?
13. Did you earn an A or B in statistics?
14. Does the thought of studying all the time make you ill?
15. Are you ready to live in near poverty for the next 2 to 7 years?
16. Do you put off studying for tests or writing papers as long as possible?
17. Will you give up a social opportunity (like a party) to study for a test or to finish a paper?
18. Does research bore you?

- Answer the following questions about yourself, being as honest as you can (you will thank yourself later for being honest with yourself today)
- Scoring: Assign 1 point for each odd numbered item to which you answered YES; assign 1 point for each even numbered item to which you answered NO. Sum the points to obtain the total score. Higher scores indicate a greater potential for successful graduate study.

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### WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[www.calstatela.edu/academic/psych](http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/psych)

Don't forget to check out our recently updated website to find information on our undergraduate program, graduate program, faculty, research labs, community service learning programs, and the Psi Chi Society.

We want to hear from you!  
Students and Alumni: What is going on in your lives now? Have funny stories or memories from graduate school? Have any opinions or suggestions for future issues, please let us know!

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