INSIDE THIS ISSUE
ALUMNI TELL THEIR STORIES

KEVIN DECKER
Head of Research
Dupla Studios

MELISSA TEHEE
Assistant Professor
Utah State University

FAREWELL TO DR. DINNEL

REFLECTIONS FROM FORMER CHAIR

WELCOME NEW CHAIR

FACULTY
CLUBS
ALUMNI
Reflections from our Former Chair

It has been an honor serving as Chair of the Psychology Department for the past eight years. We have grown as a department during my tenure and have expanded our curricular offerings. A number of faculty and staff have moved on, but we have been fortunate to be able to replace them and hire new lines to strengthen our department.

Each year, I was asked by the Dean to provide a report of the department’s scholarly activity. The Psychology Department is highly productive. In any given year, we produced between 35 and 50 peer-reviewed papers, dozens of book chapters and hundreds of conference presentations. What was particularly inspiring about this output was the inclusion of students in conducting the research, writing the papers and presenting the data at conferences. This was especially exemplified at our annual celebration, PsychFest, where students present their research to the faculty and students of our department.

The psychology major is one of the most popular majors on campus. One of the difficulties I encountered as Chair was trying to accommodate the demand for the major. Over the past few years, we have increased the number of faculty teaching and have modified our curriculum to try to reduce bottlenecks in the major. These should improve things over the next few years.

I am grateful to have had this opportunity to serve the faculty, staff and students of the Psychology Department. I look forward to continuing my service in other ways and am happy to hand off Chair responsibilities to Dr. Jim Graham.

Sincerely,

Larry Symons
I am honored to have been chosen as the incoming Chair of the Psychology Department. I am grateful for Dr. Symons’s leadership over the past eight years and have appreciated the opportunity to work closely with him as I prepared to transition into my new role.

For those of you who do not know me, I first joined the faculty at Western in 2006. I got my start in psychology as an undergraduate at Purdue University, where I studied predator-prey interactions between wolves and bison. While I found animal behavior fascinating, I fell in love with human psychology once I started working at a local inpatient psychiatric hospital. I received a Masters in Couples and Family Therapy degree from Pepperdine University and my doctorate in counseling psychology from Texas A&M University while studying resilience and adaptation to stress in romantic relationships.

Since coming to Western, my primary research and teaching interests have focused on romantic relationships, statistics, and psychological assessment. I have had the opportunity to teach across a wide variety of programs and levels within the department, including a large 100-level lecture, upper division courses in statistics and romantic relationships, and graduate courses in counseling assessment and advanced multivariate modeling. My research focuses primarily on adaptive processes in romantic relationships. I study the characteristics of romantic relationships that prosper and thrive, and how shared activities contribute to the success of a relationship. While I regret that I will have less time for teaching and research as Chair, I am excited for the opportunity to help the department grow and adapt in the face of changes across the university.

Last year (2017-18) was a productive year for the department. The psychology faculty authored one book, 37 papers, 16 book chapters, and 144 conference presentations, most of which included student co-authors. In the case of student conference presentations, the department was able to provide funding from donations to help students travel to conferences and present their work at regional, national, and international conferences. Over the course of the year, the Department of Psychology launched 241 new graduates.

The coming year should be an exciting one. We have five new faculty joining us for the 2018-19 academic year, with expertise in best practices in school counseling, children’s social and moral development, the medicinal uses of cannabis, attachment in close relationships, and the effects of intergroup bias on children.
Several important curricular changes for the Behavioral Neuroscience program will give BNS majors access to specialized classes in cellular, molecular, and systems neuroscience. The department has also been working with the university to increase student access to the undergraduate psychology major. With curricular changes, the addition of a new staff position focused on advising undergraduates, and with the addition of several new faculty, we hope to reduce the wait times to enter the psychology major and to increase the number of undergraduate psychology graduates. In increasing the sizes of the majors, we are being thoughtful to do so in a way that does not diminish the student experience. We plan to continue placing a strong emphasis on student involvement in research while working to create opportunities for traditionally underserved students.

I would like to thank all of you who have so generously donated to the Department of Psychology in the past. Your contributions to the Western Washington University Foundation have helped us support students in both the undergraduate and graduate programs by providing funding for student scholarships, conference registration fees, travel to conferences, computer software to help support instruction, and computer lab maintenance. We appreciate your support in the past and look forward to your continued support in the future.

I hope you will consider visiting the department during some of the events we have this year. Your invitation to PsychFest, our annual celebration of student research, stands. If you would like to join us, PsychFest will be held on Friday, June 7, 2019. We will also be hosting several research talks throughout the year, including the Center for Cross Cultural Research speaker series and a series of lectures put on by our faculty who have recently returned from sabbatical. Please contact psychology@wwu.edu with questions.

I am thrilled to be able to step in as chair during this pivotal time and am excited to help facilitate the environment and conditions that will allow faculty, students, and staff in the department to flourish.

Warmly,

Jim Graham
Professor and Chair, Department of Psychology
Alumni Spotlight

Melissa Tehee
Assistant Professor
Utah State University

Getting Started

In 2007 Melissa Tehee was a recent Western Washington University psychology master’s graduate and just beginning the American Indian-focused research that would drive her future education and career. A proud member of the Cherokee Nation, Melissa’s thesis focused on assessing attitudes and bias toward American Indians. That research—completed with current and former Western professors, Dr. Joseph Trimble and Dr. Deborah Forgays—as well as her volunteer work with the Whatcom County District Court, led Melissa to examine intimate partner abuse and law enforcement in Indian Country. Today, Dr. Tehee holds a J.D. and Ph.D. in clinical psychology, policy, and law from the University of Arizona.

American Indian Support Project

During her 2018 WWU PsychFest keynote address, Dr. Tehee painted an explicit picture: she is one of fewer than 300 American Indian psychologists in the United States. As director of the American Indian Support Project (AISP), Dr. Tehee advocates the need to invest in American Indian students pursuing mental health professions. Established at USU in 1986, AISP is a native-run program what provides a diverse community of students and faculty, financial support, and frequent social events. Additionally, AISP promotes the annual Society of Indian Psychologists (SIP) convention, where Native American psychologists and students from across the states share research, explore the outdoors, and connect. Dr. Tehee attended SIP many summers before joining USU’s Psychology Department, which cultivated a distinct passion and purpose to increase the number of practicing American Indian psychologists every year.

Research

In addition to increasing mental health education and community for underserved American Indian students, Dr. Tehee facilitates a USU doctoral student research lab. Tohi Lab studies the physical, spiritual, and psychological wellness of American Indians, including traumatic stress among elders, intimate partner abuse, and missing indigenous women. Dr. Tehee was a recent recipient of a Native Investigators Development Program award to help further this research and implement the Tohi Lab’s findings in future studies. Specifically, Dr. Tehee will utilize connections made through her work in the competitive GUMSHOE project to investigate the symptoms that may still be present in elders who experienced past trauma. To learn more about Dr. Tehee’s multicultural research please visit her faculty website at https://psychology.usu.edu/people/department-faculty/melissa_tehee.
Alumni Spotlight

Kevin Decker
Head of Research
Dupla Studios

Getting Started
I graduated from Western Washington University with my bachelor’s degree in 1996 and immediately enrolled in graduate school. After two years I dropped out in search of a career. I knew that I was not going to be an academic, so I had to find something I could do with the degree that I had.

My first job out of college was selling exercise equipment, specifically “NordicTrack” brand. After a year, the company shut down most of its brick and mortar shops in lieu of increased online shopping. I mentioned my career search at a dinner party where the wife of a friend told me that Microsoft hired psychologists. My first thought was, “Well, of course, they do, have you tried talking to a software engineer?” I honestly thought that they had counselors on staff to help the people building software with their social awkwardness or something. I was wrong, of course. Microsoft was leading the way in hiring people for a fairly new discipline now called User Experience. At that time, I was hired as a usability engineer, which my engineering father and uncle found hilarious since the only engineering-type class I had taken was Drafting in high-school.

Early Career
I started as a contractor in 1999 where I learned how to translate the skills I learned in school, such as setting up a proper experiment and how to gather qualitative data without contaminating the source, into business research methods. For the next eight years, I honed my craft working for several different groups at Microsoft including Xbox and Microsoft Hardware. Joining the Microsoft Server and Tool team, which built the server software where everything was stored before the cloud was a thing, was a natural next step. It was a highly complex domain with many different users of unique skill and knowledge. Over the course of seven years, I learned everything I could about the IT profession as well as the business of creating software products. Near the end of my time at Microsoft cloud services were becoming the trend, so I observed first hand the way organizations transitioned from having a physical server at their place of business to having “virtual servers” remote to their organization and in the cloud.
Alumni Spotlight

Kevin Decker, cont.
Head of Research
Dupla Studios

Founding Agency
After my seventh year on the same team it was time to expand my knowledge of consumer products. I wanted a larger set of experiences, so I took a position as a Senior Design Researcher for Amazon. At the time Amazon practiced an agile software development (or lean engineering) process that is extremely fast-paced and exciting. I learned how to trim the fat from my research techniques so that I could deliver research faster. About that same time, my friend and soon-to-be-business partner contacted me to find out how Amazon compared to Microsoft, where she was still working. We ended up talking quite a bit about her next career move.

Early in 2015, she asked if I had any interest in opening a design agency. We decided to give ourselves nine months to research the idea and determine whether we could succeed on our own. We talked to other agencies in the area, saved money, and ultimately decided to take the plunge. We were fortunate to land a couple of key partnerships through our network and began to build a clientele.

How We Work
For every client we leverage a process that has many parallels in the scientific method. We observe/discover problems, question why it is happening, hypothesize the cause, then test our hypothesis through research. Finally, we form a conclusion based on the results. The most exciting part for me is that we don’t stop there. Dupla Studios gets to explore ways to solve the problem through technology. We then spend considerable time imagining innovative solutions, use the research findings to evaluate each possible solution, and find the best fit. Finally, we build the ideal solution to our client’s problem.

Going Beyond Products
The Dupla Studios design process has helped solve more than software product issues. We have also applied this thinking to social issues. Recently, we helped one team connect civic engagement projects with volunteers and another company to ensure elderly age-in-place longer. After our third year, we have several return customers and a rapidly expanding portfolio. Our agency has been fortunate to work on autonomous driving, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT) and more. We are excited about moving into the next chapter of our business. It has been an amazing opportunity to look over the horizon and help shape the technology of our future.
ALUMNI NEWS

JEREMY BECKER

Jeremy Becker (2016, M.S. Experimental Psychology) works as a lab manager at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. He manages projects involving dysphasia, which look at the biological factors of dysphasia, compensatory strategies, and treatment outcomes. Many of the studies are funded by national sources, including the NIH and the VA.

EMILY STAFFORD

Emily Stafford (2017, M.S. Experimental Psychology) is a Research Assistant on the Rapid Research Team within Google’s Communications organization. She works with user experience researchers across multiple products and supports their research activities in developing innovative, user-friendly mobile products. As a research assistant, she conducts primarily in-lab usability sessions, analyzes and interprets both qualitative and quantitative data, and drafts findings, recommendations, and reports based on user research.

HAVE AN ALUMNI STORY TO SHARE? CONTACT US AT PSYCHOLOGY@WWU.EDU
**Faculty News**

**Dr. Sattler conducts climate change research in Fiji**

Dr. David Sattler conducted a research project in coastal villages in Fiji to examine variables that influence behavioral intentions to prevent climate change and climate change risk perceptions. The project was conducted in the wake of Cyclone Winston, the strongest storm to make landfall in Fiji in recorded history. The participants were 274 persons who experienced life threat and extensive resource loss as a result of the cyclone.

The project developed a model that shows how posttraumatic growth in response to the hurricane influences behavioral intentions to prevent climate change. The model also shows that loss of resources as a result of Cyclone Winston makes social norms concerning climate change action salient, which in turn leads to behavioral intention to prevent climate change.

The findings have important implications for climate change adaptation and education. A book chapter based on the project is published in W. Leal (Ed.), *Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Strategies in Coastal Communities* (Springer). Collaborators on the project include Dr. Jim Graham (WWU) and Albert Whippy and Dr. James Johnson (University of the South Pacific, Fiji). Dr. Sattler also presented a paper examining factors influencing climate change risk perceptions at the International Conference on Environmental Psychology.

**Dr. Trimble spends time in Scotland**

Dr. Trimble spent 10 months in St. Andrews Scotland on a sabbatical leave. He was a Visiting Scholar in the School of Psychology and Neuroscience, a prestigious position at St. Andrews.

In October, Dr. Trimble co-authored a book on culturally diverse leaders (Chin, J. L., Trimble, J. E. & Garcia, J. E. (Eds.). *The culturally diverse leader: New Dimensions, opportunities and challenges for business and society*. Bingley, United Kingdom: Emerald Group Publishing Limited. To learn more about his adventures visit: https://youtu.be/xVJBTO8XhSs
Dr. Lemm teaches in Singapore

Kristi Lemm spent the 2016-2017 academic year teaching at Yale-NUS College, a new liberal arts college in Singapore. In addition to teaching social psychology and statistics, she worked in the Centre for Teaching and Learning, where she studied students’ experiences with cultural diversity and developed policies regarding teaching evaluation and use of human subjects.

Dr. Ira Hyman & Applied Cognition

Ira Hyman and his students are expanding their work on inattentional blindness to explore how attention focus may cause failures to see crime.

Dr. Czopp works on diversity

Alex Czopp is on professional leave for the 2017-2018 year studying the ways in which individuals and institutions talk about (or don’t talk about) diversity, and the ways in which approaches that adopt cultural humility may lead to more favorable outcomes.

Dr. Riordan’s political lab

It is an exciting time in Dr. Riordan’s political psychology lab. Online surveys through Amazon MTurk gives us access to persons of various political parties who have gravitated to the Pacific Northwest. We’re studying polarization, which continues to grow and influence people’s preferences for forms of civic and social media engagement.
**Faculty News**

**Dr. Ciao designs body acceptance program**

Anna Ciao and the Eating and Body Image research team have been busy in the 2017-2018 academic year! One of our main research projects explores the effectiveness of the EVERYbody Project, a body image program designed to help college students of all identities move toward body acceptance. A team of Western psychology students are conducting EVERYbody Project groups and a comparison intervention each quarter in collaboration with Peer Health Educators in Western’s Prevention and Wellness Services.

In addition, our research team recently partnered with Common Threads, a school-based, non-profit organization that promotes a “seed to table” approach to food production, good nutrition, and environmental stewardship. We are developing several evaluation research projects with the long-term goal of understanding the broader impact of Common Threads programming on Bellingham children and families.

**The McLean Lab**

**Studies development in college years**

Over the past year the McLean lab has been involved in two major projects. The first has focused on personality and identity development in the college years—the Identity Pathways Project, funded by the National Science Foundation. In collaboration with colleagues at Haverford College, we are following several cohorts of students there and at WWU, measuring their adjustment to and through college, with a focus on academics and romantic relationships.

This work resulted in a presentation and chapter this past year. Dr. McLean has recently received a grant from the Templeton Foundation to examine post-traumatic growth, in a prospective design, with colleagues in the UK. Congratulations to Chelsea Fordham, who graduated with her MS this summer. Welcome to Lexi Lowe and Kristin Haraldsson, who joined the lab as graduate students in the fall. Finally, a highlight of the year was the McLean Lab v. Riggs Lab trivia competition, in which our lab prevailed.
Farewell, Dr. Dinnel

Long-term faculty member Professor Dale L. Dinnel retired in June 2017 and we wish our much beloved colleague of 31 years a vibrant and enjoyable retirement.

Dale began his academic journey with Western in Fall 1986 and became full professor in 2001. He taught classes in research methods and statistics, the psychology of sex roles, psychological tests and measurement, developmental psychology, learning and memory, adolescent psychology, positive psychology, and the psychology of wellbeing and happiness (a favorite Dinnel topic). Dale served on 47 master’s thesis committees and chaired 15, all the while finding time to publish numerous journal articles, book chapters, and several books, most notably Basic Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences with Robert Thorndike. He also co-edited two volumes: Merging Past, Present, and Future in Cross-Cultural Psychology and On-line Readings in Psychology and Culture.

While serving as departmental Chair for eight years, Dale took action on several important programs and projects, including 17 new faculty hires and the expansion of tenure-track faculty from 23 to 29 members. He strongly supported the development of PsychFest and the interdisciplinary neuroscience major, as well as the teaching and funding of research among our faculty. As the Graduate Program Adviser, he actively participated in the redesign of the general psychology master’s program.

Dale’s commitment to education, to student and colleague growth and development, and to the profession did not go unnoticed beyond the walls of the Psychology Department. In 1994 he received WWU’s university-wide Excellence in Teaching Award and in 2003 the Susanna A. Hayes “Duine Uasail Cineálta” Award.

No retirement tribute for Dale would be complete without mentioning the much revered Dinnel cookies—those delicious, homemade, infamous cookies perfectly baked by Dale and generously hand-delivered at the beginning and end of every quarter—tangible (and tasty!) evidence of his truly generous spirit. In many more ways than we can count, Dale and his achievements and contributions to his many friends and colleagues at Western will be long and warmly remembered.

Compiled by Joseph E. Trimble, Professor of Psychology and Distinguished University Professor
NEW FACULTY & STAFF

**DR. CHRISTIE SCOLLON, SOCIAL**

Dr. Christie Scollon is a social psychologist whose research focuses on happiness and culture. Christie joins the faculty with over a dozen years of experience in higher education. Her last nine years were spent as faculty in the School of Social Sciences at Singapore Management University. She earned her Ph.D. in 2004 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. If she seems like a familiar face, that’s because Christie spent half of 2016 as a visiting scholar at the Center for Cross-Cultural Research.

This year, Christie is getting re-acclimated to American culture, including learning how to drive again. She is passionate about interactive learning and has taught classes such as Introduction to Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Personality, Research Methods, the Science of Happiness, and Health Psychology at her previous institutions. She will teach Health Social Sciences honors and Positive Psychology classes in winter quarter. Find out more about Christie at www.christiescollon.com.

**DR. BRIANNA DELKER, COUNSELING AND DEVELOPMENTAL**

Dr. Brianna Delker is an Assistant Professor in the counseling and developmental psychology areas. She earned her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Oregon and completed her predoctoral psychology internship at the University of Washington School of Medicine, where she was awarded the Joan C. Martin Ph.D. Award for Outstanding Contribution by a Psychology Resident. Dr. Delker’s research examines the psychological impact of trauma and abuse perpetrated within close relationships and the role of social contexts (family, community, society) in both perpetuating and preventing interpersonal trauma.

In her teaching, Dr. Delker is interested in the ways that social and cultural contexts shape lifespan development, psychopathology, and psychological treatment and recovery. She is delighted to work with Western students as a research mentor and welcomes four students who joined her trauma research lab as RAs in the winter quarter. As a clinician, Dr. Delker has provided evidence-based therapy services in campus, community, and residential clinics, as well as providing consultation-liaison and peer-supervision services at inpatient psychiatry and Level I trauma center settings. She looks forward to working with Western students in the clinical mental health counseling graduate program as a clinical supervisor. A former New Yorker turned enthusiastic Northwesterner, Dr. Delker feels fortunate to make her home here in beautiful Bellingham.
NEW FACULTY & STAFF

DR. AARON SMITH, COUNSELING

Dr. Smith runs the Warrior Wellness Lab, a mental health think-tank composed of undergraduate and graduate students that collaborate on a two-part mission: researching and identifying areas of need for veterans on campus and in the community, followed by development and testing of community-wide mental health interventions intended to aid in ameliorating some of their identified concerns.

As an eight-year Veteran of the United States Marine Corps, Dr. Smith’s primary research interests include understanding better the role of meaning-in-life in helping to better discern and facilitate posttraumatic growth in veterans that have survived trauma(s). He is also interested in developing and testing culturally-sensitive, existential-humanistic (meaning-based) counseling interventions intended to enhance wellness among a wider population of trauma-survivors, such as with survivors of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and/or sexual assault, among others. He serves as an Assistant Professor and Clinical Supervisor in the graduate program in counselor education (Theories of Mental Health, Counseling Ethics, Group Counseling, Crisis Counseling, and Graduate Practicum), while also serving as an instructor in the psychology undergraduate program (Psychology 301: Overview of Research Methods and Psychology 359: Introduction to School and Mental Health Counseling).

NATHAN LONG, INSTITUTION AND CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Nathan Long is the new Instruction and Classroom Support Technician for the behavioral neuroscience program at Western. He completed a B.S. in biology/physiology and an M.S. in biology at California State University of Long Beach. Nathan’s research focused on mechanisms through which the hormone estradiol turns off and on reproductive circuits in the brain and how this regulates female reproduction via sexual behavior.

He also studied the signaling interactions between estrogen receptors and Tamoxifen, a prominent breast cancer therapeutic, to understand how certain detrimental side-effects may occur. At Western, Nathan is assisting behavioral neuroscience faculty to introduce students to basic techniques in neuroscience, and is working to instill in students a research-oriented mindset necessary to contribute to the scientific community. An outdoor enthusiast, Nathan is excited to explore the many natural wonders of the Pacific Northwest.
Scholarships

For Diversity and Inclusion

Dr. Merle Prim was a tenured professor in the Department of Psychology from September 1969 to June 2010. At the time of his retirement, Dr. Prim was honored with emeritus professor status by faculty vote. Factors that contributed to his election as an emeritus faculty were the contributions Dr. Prim made to Western Washington University, the Department of Psychology, and the students who enrolled in his classes and/or were involved in his research lab. As one of two African American faculty members in the history of the Department of Psychology, Dr. Prim was particularly focused on mentoring students of color and first-generation university students.

Upon Dr. Prim’s passing in 2016, the Psychology Department started the Merle Prim Memorial Scholarship for Diversity and Inclusion, which reflects Dr. Prim’s values. The criteria for the scholarship includes (a) undergraduate students who are U.S. citizens and are members of an U.S. ethnic minority group, (b) demonstrated financial need, and (c) a declared psychology or neuroscience major. Preference is given to first-generation university students.

In the first six months of fund raising the contributions were large enough to award a $2,500 scholarship to Michael Ajeto for the 2017-18 academic year. Since that time, our fund-raising efforts have allowed us to offer larger scholarships. Recently, anonymous donors matched dollar-for-dollar, up a total of $40,000, which would pay for one year of tuition for the scholarship recipient.

If you would like to donate to this scholarship please contact Loran Zenonian (Loran.Zenonian@wwu.edu, 360-650-7647, or 360-255-1098). You can also write a check made payable to the WWU Foundation. In the check memo line please write “IMO Merle Prim.” Please mail the check to WWU Foundation, 516 High Street, Bellingham, WA 98225-9034.

Western psychology student Michael Ajeto receives the first Merle Prim Memorial Scholarship for Diversity and Inclusion.
**NERDS (Neuroscience Research Driven Students)**

NeRDS had a full slate of outreach efforts at local schools in Bellingham, visiting fourth and fifth grade students at Happy Valley, Carl Cozier, Parkview, Columbia, and Wade King elementary schools. In addition, during winter quarter, NeRDS participated in the Columbia Elementary School Science Fair. Club members also hosted informational tables at the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Whatcom County’s annual Stigma Stomp 5-K run, at the Brain Cancer Awareness walk at Civic Field in June, and at Western’s “Healthy Minds Fair”, which is an event to raise awareness about mental health issues. NeRDS also participated at both GEMS (Girls in Engineering, Math and Sciences) weekends.

**Psychology Club**

Members of Psychology Club took part in the Mental Wellness Fair as a means to inform students about mental wellbeing, as well as to recruit students to the major. The club helped organize a discussion with Dr. Czopp about how to have conversations regarding confrontations of bias. They hosted Dr. Graham, who spoke about his work in the field of relationships. The Psychology Club looks forward to having more experiences in 2019 and seeing new faces dive deeper into the world of psychology.

**Please share any news to include in the Psychology Newsletter!**

We are always interested in the paths that your lives have taken after you graduated from Western and we believe that your classmates will also be interested.

We encourage you to send news item at any time to Dr. Sampaio (Cristina.Sampaio@wwu.edu) or Dr. Sattler (David.Sattler@wwu.edu)