

AUGUSTANA

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

NEWSLETTER



AUGUSTANA
COLLEGE
SIOUX FALLS, SD
57197
www.augie.edu

Greetings from the Psychology Department at Augustana College! We hope this letter finds you well. We are writing to share some of the recent developments in Augie's Psychology program.

What is new with our faculty? 2007 and 2011 saw the retirements of two long-time faculty: Dr. Denny Larson and Dr. Michael Nedelsky (Father Michael). Meanwhile, we have welcomed four new members of the faculty: Dr. Anne Zell (Social Psychology), Dr. Lisa Babcock (Cognitive Psychology), Dr. Olivia Lima (Developmental Psychology), and Dr. Casey Trainor (Clinical Psychology). One more long-time faculty member, Dr. Christina DeVita (Counseling Psychology), will retire at the end of this school year, which means that the department will soon be welcoming another new faculty member.

What's new with our students? It has been exciting to see increasing numbers of students drawn to major in psychology. Our majors have recently organized a Psychology Club, hosting activities such as movie nights and community service events, and we look forward to seeing what they will tackle next. We are also proud to report on new evidence of our majors' outstanding achievement: Our seniors have consistently scored above average on the ETS Psychology test over the past two years!

What are new ways for you to stay connected and continue supporting Augustana's Psychology majors?

- Please email our department chair, Dr. Lima (olivia.lima@augie.edu) if you would like to stay connected with our department and our students in any of the following ways. These experiences are so valuable to our students, helping them to learn about different career options and discover what would be a good fit for them. We are grateful for our alumni's participation and support!
 - a. Be a panelist: Every year, we welcome alumni to come back and participate in a career panel (Fall) and in a graduate school panel (Spring).
 - b. Meet with a student one-on-one: We're always looking for alumni contacts that we can pair with students seeking information about their future careers. If you are available to talk with a student to answer questions about your field, or be job-shadowed by a student, please let us know!
 - c. Connect students with internships: Do you know of an internship opportunity that would be a good fit for our students?
 - d. Be a speaker for the Augie Psychology Club.
- Another way you can stay connected is through the Psychology Department's Facebook page. To see our occasional news update or interesting psychology link in your Facebook feed, just go to www.facebook.com/augiepsyc and click "Like".
- Keep an eye out for an alumni survey coming soon
- Finally, if you would like to make a donation, whether to the College as a whole, or specifically to support student research in the Psychology Department, you're welcome to do so at www.augie.edu/gift.

DR. DEVITA RETIRING!

Congratulations to Dr. DeVita on her retirement! At the end of this spring semester, we will be saying goodbye to beloved professor Christina DeVita, who has announced her retirement. Dr. DeVita's courses have included Counseling and Psychotherapy, Human Relations, Self and Others, and Christian Counseling. Some of the other things Christina is fondly known for include her blunt "New York" style of communication, her messy office, her incredible generosity with her time to meet with students, and her laugh. We gave Christina a list of questions; here are her responses.

Q: How many advisees have you had?

A: Too many to count! But every single one has been a gem: precious and unique!

Q: What is your favorite thing about teaching Human Relations?

A: Telling students to "Jump off the cliff!" (i.e., self-disclose who they really are, in a genuine, gut-level way, to a group of students whom they barely even know.)

Q: What is the single most important concept that you teach students in PSYC 110?

A: People believe lies which hinder them from leading healthy, satisfying lives. That's one concept but I can't stop there! This material comes from a book by Chris Thurman called "The Lies We Believe." My recommendation: If you have never read it or have not read it lately, please do so! Here is my "Top Ten Lies List" which students hopefully stop believing:

- I must be perfect.
- I should have everyone's love and approval.
- My worth is determined by my performance.
- It is better to avoid difficulties and responsibilities than to face them.
- I should not have to change anything about myself to relate to you.
- Other people must live up to my expectations or it is terrible.
- My unhappiness is somebody else's fault.
- My relationship partner can and should meet all my emotional needs.
- When I sin or do moral wrong, I must avoid God because God hates sin.
- and my favorite, worst lie of all . . . People are basically good!

Q: Tell us about one of your funniest teaching moments.

A: I was teaching a class and felt something slip down my neck into my bra. I automatically looked down in that direction and fished the necklace out of my bra, amidst peals of laughter from the students and myself.

Q: What is something that you tell students over and over?

A: Correlation does not equal causation.

Q: What is a piece of advice for our alumni?

A: Personally and continuously, develop your relationship with God through knowing Jesus as your Savior and Lord of your life. I believe this is the single most important thing that any of us can do.

Q: What has surprised you most about teaching at Augie?

A: How 34 years flew away in the blink of an eye. The saying is true: When you love your job, you never work a single day in your life (except for grading papers).

Q: If you had a superpower, what would it be?

A: I would have the power to show each individual the absolute fullness of God's love for that person which, more than any nails, held Jesus on the cross.

Q: When you were a little kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

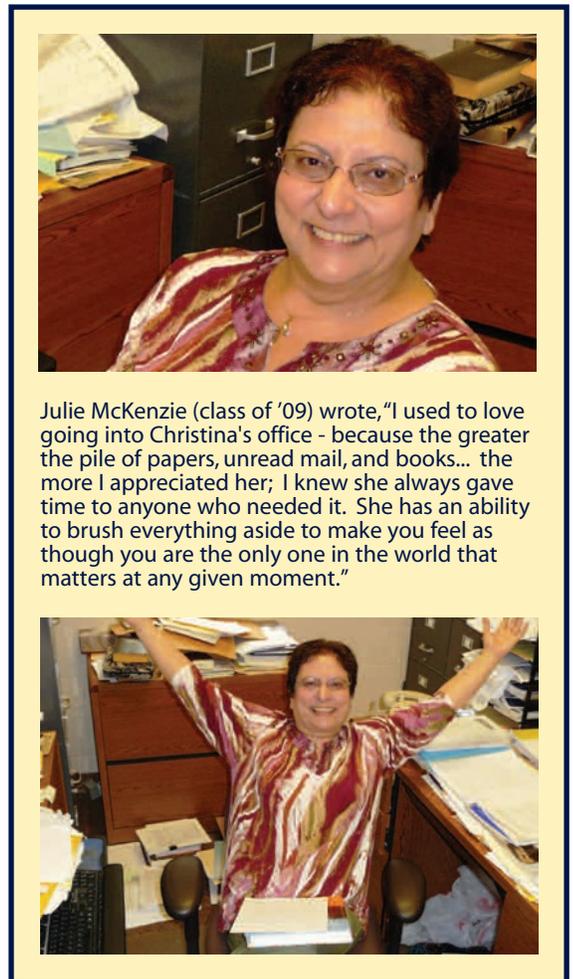
A: I wanted to be a teacher ever since I was five years old. Honestly!

Q: What is one word that your students would use to describe you?

A: Weird!

As it turns out, we also asked some of Christina's current and former students what one word they would use to describe her. The responses they gave included "ebullient" (Julia Torgersen), "JOY" (Julie McKenzie), "genuine" (Jon Wagner), "spunky" (Jesi Palank Hendricks), "sprightly" (Adam Kost), "animated" (Hayley Burggraff and Ali Goers), "caring" (Madison Hilt), "enthusiastic" (Sydney Fleming), and "inspirational" (Ryan Miedema).

((Shhhh! We invite people to share more stories and remembrances and words of appreciation for Christina - send them to Anne Zell (anne.zell@augie.edu), and we will surprise Christina with them at her retirement party on May 19th!))



Julie McKenzie (class of '09) wrote, "I used to love going into Christina's office - because the greater the pile of papers, unread mail, and books... the more I appreciated her; I knew she always gave time to anyone who needed it. She has an ability to brush everything aside to make you feel as though you are the only one in the world that matters at any given moment."

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ZACK TRUELSON

It seems safe to say that Zack Truelson, class of 2014, has made the most of his Augie education. He is a psychology major with many diverse interests. Zack has studied abroad three times – in Ireland, Greece, and Cuba. Not only did he learn a lot, but he says these trips were “a great way for creating friendships, as you get to know a person quite well by traveling with them.” Zack says that his involvements with theatre productions (both technical and performing roles) were among his best experiences at Augie and that he learned a lot of practical skills in the process. Another one of the great things about Augie, Zack says, is the small class sizes and the access to



(photo credit to Alexis Vana)

faculty, because he’s found discussion to be “invaluable for broadening and testing one’s ideas”. Zack somehow also made time to co-found the Augie Psych Club and the Augie Quiz Bowl (students vs. faculty!). Zack collaborated on research both in Dr. Babcock’s Cognitive Psych lab and in Dr. Zell’s Social Psych lab. Designing and conducting a study on responses to political fact checking (findings from which he presented at the Midwest Psychological Association conference with his student co-authors Aaron Entringer and Josh Goodwin) sparked his interest in the psychology of politics. Now in the fall, Zack will be starting a PhD program in political psychology at Stony Brook University. Zack is broadly interested in how people think and hopes to bring an interdisciplinary perspective (e.g., drawing upon neuroscience, history, philosophy of mind, and more) to his research. We look forward to seeing what creative contributions he will make to the field!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: JILL (ADAMS) JOHNSON, CLASS OF ‘05, PSYCHOLOGY AND SPANISH DOUBLE MAJOR

Jill kindly agreed to chat with us about her path from Augie to her career as a Victim and Family Advocate at Ralston House. She traces her start back to her undergraduate practicum experience at Children’s Home Society in Sioux Falls, which then turned into a job after she graduated. After a couple years there, Jill started feeling ready for a change and consulted with Christina DeVita about going back to school. Dr. DeVita suggested that social work might be a good fit. Sure enough, a couple years later, Jill had earned a Masters in Social Work from the University of Denver. Upon her graduation, another Augie grad who had moved out to Denver recommended her for a job. Jill recalls that the job was so competitive that there were a couple hundred applicants. So what gave her the edge? Her experience at the Children’s Home, her knowledge of child development from her psychology background, and her bilingualism certainly played a role. Jill also felt that her liberal arts education and diverse experiences enabled her to think on her feet and to come across as a well-rounded individual.

What does a Victim and Family Advocate at a child advocacy center do? “I wear a lot of hats in my job,” Jill said. Jill explains that advocates help in cases where there has been an allegation of child abuse or if a child has witnessed a crime. Advocates ensure that the kid feels safe and also work with the kid’s caregivers, doing crisis interventions, connecting them with resources and referrals, and explaining what to expect from the criminal justice system. Jill also analyzes data so that they can report statistics regarding how many kids they serve. She supervises interns from social work programs. And she particularly enjoys giving presentations about prevention of child sexual abuse to moms groups,



church groups, and other community groups. Jill considers herself an introvert and mused that her former high school self never would have imagined that she would end up doing this sort of thing. However her involvements at Augie – e.g., being on the outreach teams, giving sermons, and being in leadership roles–helped her to develop her public speaking skills and her confidence.

Another aspect of her Augie experience, singing in the Augie choir and touring internationally, helped Jill to develop a more global perspective. “The liberal arts education shows you that there is a world out there,” Jill said. She hasn’t left her love of singing behind either; singing in a community choir is one of the ways she takes care of herself. She’s also grateful to have a great community, with wonderful friends from work as well as a group of Augie folks out in the Denver area who get together, bonded by their shared background.

What lies ahead? Who knows, but Jill mused that she “really like[s] speaking to groups and connecting to people in that way”. She is also interested in policy around issues like safety for kids and abuse.

Thanks Jill for sharing a bit of your story!

Please share with us your own updates for the next newsletter!

We always love to hear from you, so send us a note and let us know how you're doing and what you're doing! Also, please let us know when you have a change of address so that we don't lose touch with you. You can find all of our email addresses on the department website at <http://www.augie.edu/academics/psychology/faculty>.

Or write to us at: **Augustana College - Department of Psychology**
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AUGUSTANA PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT



RECENT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

* = AUGIE STUDENT CO-AUTHOR

- **Helder, E.** (2013 May). Extra practice improves memory for names in older and younger adults. *Poster presented at the Association for Psychological Science convention, Washington, DC: May 23-26, 2013.*
- **Lima, O. K.** (2013). Hearing children's voices: True empathy in child psychology. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 22(3).*
- Rives-East, D. & **Lima, O. K.** (2013). Designing interdisciplinary science/humanities courses: Challenges and solutions. *College Teaching, 61(3), 100-106.*
- **Lima, O. K.** (2013, April). Toward a better world for children: Helping students practice real world applications of developmental science. *Workshop presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development Teaching Institute, Seattle, WA.*
- **Trainor, C. D.**, Beech, K.*, Erhardt, M. L.*, Bortnum, K.*, & Goers, A. M.* (2013, November). The Relationship between Distress Tolerance, Pre-Sleep Arousal, and Sleep Difficulties. *Poster presented at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Nashville, TN.*
- Goers, A.M.*, Erhardt, M. L.*, Beech, K.*, Walker, L.*, & **Trainor, C. D.** (2013, November). The Role of Perceived Control over Anxiety in the Relationship between Pre-Sleep Arousal and Sleep Difficulties. *Poster presented at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Nashville, TN.*
- **Zell, A. L.**, & Jerke, M.* (January, 2013). Outperforming a narcissistic, sociotropic, or autonomous friend: Strategies people use to handle this sticky situation and their associated outcomes. *Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, New Orleans, LA.*
- Entringer, A.*, Goodwin, J.*, Truelson, Z.*, & **Zell, A. L.** (May 2013). Lie Hard: Predictors of Responses to Presidential Candidates' Deceptive Claims. *Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.*
- Exline, J. J., **Zell, A. L.**, & Lobel, M. (2013). Sidestepping awkward encounters: Avoidance as a response to outperformance-related discomfort. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 43, 706-720.*
- **Zell, A. L.**, & Baumeister, R. F. (2013). How religion can support self-control and moral behavior. In Paloutzian, R. F. & Park, C. L. (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.