The History of IIT and the Importance of Graduate Student Fellowships

In 1890, Chicago meat packer and grain merchant Philip Danforth Armour heard a sermon by minister Frank Gunsaulus in a South Side Church that inspired him to donate $1 million to establish the Armour Institute. His goal was to create an institution to educate men and women of all backgrounds preparing them for meaningful roles in society. IIT was created in 1940 by the merger of Armour Institute with Lewis Institute (est. 1895), a West Side Chicago college that offered liberal arts as well as science and engineering courses.

The generosity of an individual established an institution and that generosity sustains IIT today. Gifts from alumni and friends allow students from all backgrounds to innovate, inspire, and change the world on the IIT campus and beyond.

IIT is a private, Ph.D.-granting technological university dedicated to advancing knowledge through research and scholarship, to cultivating invention, improving the human condition, and to educating students from throughout the world for a life of professional achievement, service to society, and individual fulfillment. IIT awards degrees in psychology, design, business, the sciences, mathematics, engineering, as well as architecture and law.

The College of Psychology is a unique part of this university that focuses on the human side of technology. This year, Psychology was able to encourage new opportunities for 34 graduate students by providing over $35,000 in need based tuition funding through Mary Vermillion Graduate Fellowships.

The Vermillion Fellowship was founded in 2000, thanks to a generous bequest from IIT alumnus and faculty member, Dr. Mary Vermillion. During her 26 years of service Dr. Vermillion showed a strong devotion to Psychology’s programs and students. In keeping with that tradition, many alumni continue to support this fellowship program to offer need-based funding to our students.

Jody Copper-smith, a 2014 Doctoral Candidate in Clinical Psychology has received fellowship funds from Dr. Vermillion’s generosity and shares:

“Receiving financial aid from IIT really allowed me to focus on becoming acclimated to graduate school my first year without the added pressures of financial worry. This has had long-lasting effects on my ability to navigate graduate school successfully.

It is amazing that former students still feel ties with IIT and are willing to help us in our educational journey. I think they can really empathize with what we are going through and understand that each dollar helps! It means a lot to us that they are willing to give back.

I feel so honored to have been granted this fellowship. Not only did it give me added confidence as I began my journey through graduate school, but it allowed me to really focus on school instead of worrying about my finances.

I do not think that donors really know how much we appreciate what they do for us! Thank you!”

IIT and the College of Psychology are so grateful to the many benefactors we have had over the years. Supporters of Psychology are vital to student and program success! Please give to support the College of Psychology at http://www.iit.edu/psych/.

— All photos courtesy the IIT Archives and the College of Psychology.
Psychology has been re-named! We are now the College of Psychology. This is a small but important change as it clarifies our status and role within the university. Moreover, it reflects the growth and evolution of the profession. Psychology has many sub-disciplines that are maturing and differentiating. While we all know that I/O psychology is fundamentally different from social and clinical psychology, for example, this is not transparent to the world. This new appellation reflects the development of the field and the diversity within psychology at IIT.

We have much to be thankful for as we mark the end of 2010 and enter a new year. We welcome Nikki Ditchman to the faculty of rehabilitation and Tess Hallinan to our development staff. I hope that when Tess calls for a visit or an update that you will accept her calls and spend a bit of time with her so that we can be updated about all that is new with you.

Outreach to our alumni is a priority. We are open to a variety of ideas for joint activities and hope to forge better connections and networks as we go forward. One example of this was the recent lecture by alumnus Bill Schiemann (PSYC ’71 MBA ’73), jointly sponsored by CIOP and psychology. Bill spoke about reinventing talent management in a forum at our Downtown Campus attended by roughly 75 people.

The accomplishments of the psychology faculty and alumni, particularly in the area of grants and recognition, have been stupendous. In addition to the items noted on other pages, Zach Boukydis, who has been on leave in Hungary, was awarded a Fulbright. Wilhelmina Shoger, graduate of the clinical Ph.D. program, was one of 38 psychologists nationally to be honored with the prestigious Early Career Psychologist (ECP) Credentialing Scholarship by the National Register of Health Service Providers. Tamara Goldman Sher, clinical faculty, appeared at the ‘Ask Amy Live: Relationships 101’ event held in December, where the nationally syndicated advice columnist and author, and expert panelists, spoke about life, love, and the problems that come with them any time of year.

Finally, the university achieved a first-year retention rate of more than 90 percent for the first time in more than a decade. I would like to recognize the contributions of Dror Ben-Zeev, Aggie Niemiec, Mary Lee Sommers, and a number of psychology faculty and graduate students to the delivery of the Kedge program. The program is in its fourth year and has made a substantial impact on retention.

Thursday, April 7, 2011 is the date for our Psychology gala at Chicago’s Goodman Theatre. We are seeking corporate sponsors and would welcome all help and suggestions to make this a stellar evening for all. I hope to see each and every one of you there. Please stay in touch.

Wishing you the very best for 2011.

From the Dean

M. ELLen MITCHEll
From the Chair

While my introductory year as chair of the College of Psychology Board of Overseers has quickly come and gone, I am excited about the significant opportunities we have in the year ahead. This year, Psychology’s 11-member board, with whom I have greatly enjoyed working, will have an increasing focus on advocacy. The board has developed specific areas of interest and has agreed to participate in advocacy activities that will make a significant difference. Critical areas identified to improve IIT’s visibility and the college include student relations, alumni networking, fundraising, and recruiting additional board members and volunteers. We know that many of you advocate for Psychology on a regular basis, and we invite you to send us stories and reports of those activities so that we can be more aware of your many contributions and efforts.

During the summer, university trustees approved and announced a multi-year campaign and recruited two highly committed trustees to help. Representative of the emphasis the campaign will have on IIT alumni, both co-chairs are alumni. We know from past experience, and from the success of other universities, that a key factor in Psychology’s future rests with our alumni and friends. With Psychology alumni numbers totaling more than 2,000, of which 1,500 we are able to reach, we hope you will join us in these efforts. The university has gratefully received generous support from friends over the years, and this campaign will challenge alumni to join them at similar levels.

In closing, I would like to recognize and thank two exceptional individuals who resigned from the Board of Overseers this year. Ron Bliwas, president and chief executive officer of A. Eicoff & Company, first became involved with IIT as a trustee and then joined the Psychology board. His contributions of time and talent were numerous and included working with undergraduate marketing, fundraising for the Rehabilitation Faculty Endowment and the David Boder Voices of the Holocaust project, as well as sponsoring events and displaying wonderful hospitality in hosting board meetings at his offices. Linda Jeleniewski Liang (PSYC MS ’75 Ph.D. ‘85), an I/O alumna, was a charter member of the then-Institute’s board, serving since its inception in 1996. She added immense talent to the group, helping to form the I/O Faculty Endowment committee and fundraising for the Nam Raju Faculty Endowment. Most recently, Linda served on the National IIT Alumni Board’s Nominating Committee and served as its chair. We thank them both for their dedicated service.

I look forward to seeing you in April at the Goodman Theatre for “An Evening for Psychology.” With much gratitude, I wish you a new year of good health and much happiness.

Images from Psychology Events

An annual favorite event held in September during IIT’s Homecoming weekend, the Golden Alumni Luncheon honored all graduates from 1960 or earlier. Psychology guests included (left to right) Robert Grassl (PSYC ’50) and son Peter, Tess Hallinan (Psychology Development), Gloria Yufit, and Robert Yufit (PSYC ’51, M.S. ’52).
The Center for Research and Service Updates

The Center for Research and Service offers professional consulting and research services through the College of Psychology. Its staff partners with clients to assess and improve individual, team, and organizational performance. The Center presents expertise in areas related to human resource measurement, including design and administration of organizational surveys and 360-degree feedback instruments, test development and validation, and training needs analysis and evaluation.

During the past year, the Center for Research and Service has continued to stay busy and has funded a number of students, including Project Director Brendan Neuman (PSYC MS ’10), Consultant Anna Brown, and Associate Consultants Kevin Franke (PSYC & HUM ’09), Jonas Neuhengen, Samantha Paruchuri (PSYC ’06), Stefanie Pugliese, DJ Sergent (PSYC MS ’10), Rodney Vallejo, Jeremy Watson, and Megan Wheeler. Additionally, the Center has employed 12 project workers, five to seven of whom are working on a consistent basis.

This fall, everyone stayed busy with both startup projects and ongoing projects from last year. Some of the current projects include Item Development and Validation tasks, with 12-plus project workers joining the Center to complete assignments. In addition to employing and supporting I/O graduate students, the Center is also able to fund first-year Clinical graduate students who assist with placement testing for Chicago Public Schools students. This year (2010–11), Stefanie and Anna will oversee the CPS project, which started last winter. Rodney will work directly with Dr. Sandy Marcus (PSYC MS ’68 PHD ’69), project leader, psychology assessment in career and educational services, scoring individual assessment tests.

Brendan was recently promoted to Project Director and continues to work closely with Dr. Bruce Fisher (PSYC PHD ’87), center director. Together they offer a new suite of services to their bank and credit union clients. New services consist of an employee engagement survey, 360-degree instrument, and a selection tool tailored to jobs in financial services institutions. All of these services were created with frontline sales employees in mind. Currently, the Center is in the process of developing norms, conducting criterion-related validity research for its proprietary engagement survey. Megan has assisted in the development and norming of the 360-degree instrument. Anna’s responsibilities continue to expand her project management duties with her recent work with the Center’s largest bank client. DJ has joined Brendan and Anna’s team in serving banks and credit unions. DJ has also begun to work on university survey initiatives, such as Students Speak. She has also helped to develop and validate a simulation for selecting call center employees.

Kevin and Samantha remain occupied with the many large survey projects that the Center undertakes annually, handling the tasks of survey design, administration, reporting, and follow-up. Samantha has also conducted a content validity study for a simulation test. Kevin has also been working closely with Anna on a fully customizable online survey system to assist in employee feedback for organizations. Jeremy was recently hired as an Associate Consultant and has learned several roles quickly, assisting with various projects. The Center’s scientific consultant, Dr. Alan Mead, works with on programming development and server management to fulfill the Center’s IT needs. The whole team also has been occupied developing personality tests to help clients select managers and staff.

Overall, the Center and its many dedicated workers continue to successfully impact the organizational effectiveness of companies across the United States and to uphold the professional reputation of IIT’s I/O program, with the guidance and support of their Director, Dr. Bruce Fisher. To learn more about the Center, please contact Bruce at fisherb@iit.edu or 312.567.6471.
Presentations:


Publications:


 Awards:
Diederoff and Ellington (2008; Journal of Applied Psychology) was selected as one of the “Twenty Best Articles of 2009” as part of the Annual Competition for the Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence in Work-Family Research.

Corrigan was in Amsterdam in October to join the leadership of an International Campaign to address the stigma of leprosy and other health conditions.

Corrigan was in Israel last June and lectured across the country on stigma and empowerment, including in Jerusalem and Haifa.

Corrigan is director of research for a five-year, Northern California Anti-Stigma Program; the award exceeds $3 million.


Program Updates:
Jennifer Duffey (Ph.D. Clinical ’06) received a loan repayment grant from the National Institutes of Health.

Tumara Goldman Sher, Ph.D., professor, was a panelist for the Chicago Tribune event “Relationships 101.”

Advice columnist Amy Dickinson (“Ask Amy”) and a panel of experts hosted a live audience event where they discussed relationships between family members—how to have a happy family, or how the heal the family you have. They discussed stresses caused by the economy, social media, and the challenges of relating between generations.

Kemp Ellington’s article (co-authored by Erich Diederoff) entitled “It’s the nature of the work: Examining behavior-based source of work-family conflict across occupations” was chosen as one of the top 20 articles out of more than 2,000 articles in the annual Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence in the Work-Family Research competition. The Kanter Award is given by the Center for Families Purdue University along with the Boston College Center for Work and Family in order to promote and enhance work-family research.

Assistant Professor of Psychology Jon Larson is a co-principal investigator with Ted Testa, director of behavioral health services in Lake County, Ill., on a five-year Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration grant totaling $3,672,500. This collaborative grant focuses on improving services for veterans in Lake and McHenry counties. Specifically, the project will focus on reducing homelessness, improving suicide prevention, and training the professional community on clinical interventions for war trauma.

Frank Lane received an award from the United States Department of Education for the project entitled “Rehabilitation Counselor Long Term Training.” The first installment is in the amount of $300,000 and to cover budget period October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011. This grant performance period is October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2015. The total award is roughly $750,000.
As university recruiting efforts become more competitive nationwide, we ask you to advocate for the IIT College of Psychology when talking with colleagues and friends who are making education decisions with their families. Your experience and positive comments can make a difference. Contact Jack Spani at 312.567.8945 or spanij@iit.edu for admission information.