Psychology Happenings:

This fall semester has been a busy time for our psychology seniors. Several are busy applying to graduate school and discovering the importance of writing and rewriting personal statements. Others are examining options for service next fall. Although the incoming first-year class was fewer than the institution had hoped, the department is excited to welcome 10 of those as psychology majors!

Psychology Department Updates:

Last spring the department received a grant from the Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning (CITL) to review the department curriculum and more actively engage international students in psychology. To gather more information for this revision, Julie Reese and Christine Noria travelled to the annual APA conference in San Diego, CA in August where they attended presentations related to the teaching of psychology. One highlight of the conference was listening to Scott Lilienfeld talk about his book, 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions about Human Behavior.

This fall has been full of excitement as we anticipated the birth of Christine’s third child. Bianca Sofia was born Tuesday, December 7 at 1:48 a.m., weighing 7 lbs 6 oz. She joins her brother, sister, and father, Francisco.

News of Grads:

Currently there are no updates of graduates. Several are in the midst of applying to graduate programs, so anticipate the spring news of those beginning school in the fall.
In the Literature:

Remember Little Albert, the infant boy, who was the subject in the famous study by Watson and Rayner? He was first conditioned to fear white rats and then his fear was generalized to other furry objects. Beck, Levinson, and Irons (2009) recount a detailed investigation to discover the real identity of this famous infant. The discovery of the details proved to be a difficult task for multiple reasons: Watson’s resignation from John’s Hopkins University, shortly after the Little Albert study, due to his affair with Rosalie Rayner and publically-scrutinized divorce, Watson’s inconsistent reporting of details of the case, and the lack of laboratory notes about the case (he burned the all of his notes/manuscripts shortly before his death!). Here are the findings which seem to be legitimate given the current available information:

- Little Albert’s mother was a wet nurse at a pediatric facility at John Hopkin’s University.
- He was born March 9, 1919.
- His mother, Arvilla Irons, was not married at the time of his birth.
- He spent most of the first year of his life at John’s Hopkins.
- His real name was Douglas.
- Wet nurses were considered among the lowest social class at the university.
- Although no code of ethics existed to protect confidentiality, Arvilla may have insisted that Watson not use her son’s real name. She never told any of her subsequent children about Douglas. The name, Albert, may have been assigned by Watson who was names after John Albert Broadus, a well-known Baptist minister.
- No evidence supports any lasting negative impact from the conditioning.
- Douglas died of hydrocephalus on May 10, 1925.

The entire story of the investigation, the discovery of Little Dougy, is well worth reading.