Psychology Happenings:

The Psychlone has been in existence longer than any other departmental newsletter at Goshen College. However, it has been two years since the last issue, an unintentional hiatus. On April 26, 2011, I received the shocking news that I had breast cancer. After a double-mastectomy and a definitive diagnosis of stage 2B triple negative breast cancer, I underwent 5 months of harsh chemotherapy and over 6 weeks of radiation. This necessitated that I take off the entire 2011-2012 school year. (You may read more about my story on my faculty webpage http://www.goshen.edu/juliecr/). I was so thankful to move through the 9 months of treatment with very few negative side effects. I joyfully returned to teaching last year and discovered that I had limited energy after teaching a full load, some of which were new classes, and maintaining a stable family life. As such, I never found the time to write the newsletter last year. I think we can still claim that it is the longest running departmental newsletter even with the two-year break!

- Julie Reese, Department Chair

In other news, the 2015 MCAT will add a psychology section that is second in size only to the biology section. This means that many pre-med majors are in general psychology classes, adding their knowledge and industry to the mix.

Psychology Department Updates:

We are proud to be able to celebrate with Christine Noria the publication of her collaborative research in a forthcoming issue of Developmental Psychology. The publication is entitled "My Baby & Me": Effects of an early, comprehensive parenting intervention on at-risk mothers and their children and is co-authored by are: Guttentag, C.L., Landry, S.H., Baggett, K.M., Borkowski, J.G., Swank, P.R., Williams, J.M., Farris, J.R., Crawford, A., Lanzi, R.G., Carta, J.J., Warren, S.F., & Ramey, S.L. This paper includes the major findings from a home visitation parenting intervention program and documents higher levels of verbal stimulation from mothers who received intervention and greater environmental and social engagement as well as greater levels of expressive language in 2-1/2-year-old children whose mothers were in the intervention group as compared to those in the minimal intervention control group.

This year, the department has decided to work towards establishing a chapter of Psi Chi on the GC Campus. Fulfilling one of the requirements, we have decided to hold regular monthly department meetings in which we discuss relevant
information, new research, and hear speakers from the community. So far, we have held two of these meetings, the first led by Julie Reese and Christine Noria on how to get through college and be marketable to grad schools, and the second a brief presentation from Scott Dueker, the clinical director at the Behavior Analysis Center for Autism. We are grateful for the input of our community members, and look forward to hosting more in the coming department meetings!

**News of Grads:**

Currently, many Goshen grads are in the process of applying to grad schools in the fields of social work and psychology.

**Greg Koop ('06),** a doctoral student at Miami University, is the lead author of a recent publication “The response dynamics of preferential choice” in *Cognitive Psychology,* 67, 151-185.

**In the Literature:**

Priming is a process that has been in the minds of psychologists for many years, but recently the effects or priming and its possible uses have been the subject of debate. Some very conclusive evidence was produced by studies in the 1990s and early 2000s, but these results have been difficult to reproduce. Recently there has been an upsurge in interest in the effects of priming and the ways that this can be used.

The effects of the client-therapist relationship have been shown with significant empirical evidence. Many studies have shown that a good client-therapist relationship is vital to the success of the therapy.

Recently, an experiment conducted at Arcadia University has attempted to illuminate the possible interplay between priming and the client-therapist relationship. In this experiment, Grecco, Robbins, Bartoli, and Wolff studied the affects of priming for disclosure or non-disclosure on the willingness of the participant to share thoughts and emotions with a stranger. The purpose was to find out if it is possible to, and in what ways a therapist can, maximize the initial meeting with a new client.

The 50 participants were led to believe that they were participating in a study to determine their readiness for therapy. In actuality, they were primed either for disclosure or non-disclosure and then evaluated by essays. Each person was given an envelope with four sections of material:

1. a word scramble containing words pertaining to either form of priming
2. a set of descriptive statements about the openness or lack there of, of the participant’s conversations with a stranger. These were framed vaguely with intent to produce agreement in the participant.
3. open-ended questions about the participant’s self-evaluated readiness for therapy
4. two essays prompts: the description of a recent event, and the participant’s best personal quality. These essays were then judged on the basis of word count, and the disclosure of feelings statements and self quality statements.

This study found that those who were primed for disclosure produced longer essays and used more feelings statements. They also used more statements of feelings than those primed for non-disclosure, however the design of the experiment does not indicate causality between word count and number of feelings statements.

These findings suggest that it could be beneficial for therapists to use words more representative of disclosure than non-disclosure. This might lead to more
talkative clients, and a stronger client-therapist alliance.