Welcome Back!!

This year promises to bring all new stories about Ken Kotovsky’s exploits of squirrels (Squirrel Beer Koozies?), David Rakison’s hair grooming tips, and department gossip of all kinds. The PLB will once again be your first source for departmental news, events, and stories. Welcome back to an exciting 2010-2011 school year— please send us your stories and news!

Sincerely,
PLB Editor David Creswell (creswell@cmu.edu)

Grad Talk Editors: Colleen Davy, Alan Jern, and Matt Wood

this issue
Advisory Board News P.2
Grad Talk P.4
Department News P.7
Staff Council Report P.9
President’s Advisory Board to Visit October 20-21

Scheier crafts new plan that will catapult CMU Psychology back on top

Next month the Department will undergo a major review by an external advisory board. A panel of distinguished psychologists will spend two days observing, interviewing, and eating their way through our departmental affairs. A formal schedule has been mostly finalized, the advisory board members are booking their flights, and David Rakison has even selected a special hair product he will use for the visit. The advisory board visit serves many important purposes—we can finally learn who is the best racquet ball player in the Thiessen-Kotovsky-Scheier duals, someone will finally count all of David Klahr’s publications, and perhaps most notably, the advisory board members will draft a report of our strengths and weaknesses for CMU administrators.

The advisory board visit provides a platform for letting our administration know about our departmental needs and long-term mission. You might be saying, how could the department get even better? Do we really have any needs? Well, our fearless leader and Head Michael Scheier has been tasked with creating a broad mission statement for the advisory board visit. The faculty met regularly this summer to offer suggestions about where the department should go in terms of its research focus, graduate and post-doctoral training, and PsyCoke services. As you might guess, these discussions were fruitful¹ and have resulted in the Scheier Plan. There have been some whispers from folks who have read the 150 page mission statement, saying that the Scheier Plan is ‘revolutionary’, ‘kind of Herb Simon-ish’, and ‘just like Jerry McGuire.’ We here at the PLB have not read the plan in detail, but we provide some of the likely highlights (right). The bottom line, the future of CMU Psychology is bright². The PLB will carefully track the advisory board visit in the coming month and offer commentary—stay tuned.

— PLB

¹ We use the term “fruitful” loosely.
² Of course, this depends on whether the advisory board actually reads and endorses the plan, makes this plan known to the CMU administrators who then have to read said plan and then make explicit behavioral intentions to implement some part of the plan... and then deposit money into departmental coffers.

Overview of the Scheier Plan:

• Increase the budget of departmental newsletters
• Hire more people like Ginger
• Open up psychology satellite classroom, CMU-Kauai
• Improve our understanding of psychological phenomena
• We need more money
• Seriously, just give us more money, that’s really all we want
• Mandate Hawaiian shirt Friday’s
• Publish more

Department Mastermind Michael Scheier takes a break at our recent happy hour
September Faculty Senate Report

Senator Charles Kemp and I attended another exciting faculty senate meeting on Tuesday September 7th. This was my second faculty senate meeting, and frankly it’s not living up to its hype—what happened to the days of Anna Fisher and Erik Thiesen getting themselves reprimanded for unsenator-like behavior? I promise to be more contentious in future senate meetings. Here are the highlights:

- Mark Kamlet will be at the next faculty senate meeting (Oct 5 at 4:30pm) to discuss concerns about handling more students despite no changes in our campus infrastructure (i.e., our carrying capacity has increased). This event was touted by our Senate Dictator as an exciting showdown, not to be missed.

- Human resources presented on new changes to our benefits. In brief, there are no major changes. They do not expect health premium rates to rise significantly for 2011. The HealthAmerica PPO and Highmark HMO programs will be dropped due to low participation rates. Open enrollment will be from Oct 30-Nov 23.

- Our Senate Dictator asked the HR directors an interesting question. What is our long-term HR strategy at CMU? Their answer, “we want to have the right kind of people doing the right type of jobs.” There was a collective gasp as all of the senators absorbed the meaning of this statement. Then one senator asked, “are you HR folks the right kind of people?”

- We then discussed the results (again) of last year’s faculty survey. Remember this survey? It’s the one that had a 20% response rate across campus, and showed that of these 20%, only a small percentage are aware of who their faculty senator rep is for their department. Our Senate leader was quite concerned about this finding...how can we get the word out about the faculty senate? Senators raised various ideas: improve access to senate minutes, and/or write funny descriptions of senate proceedings (how preposterous!). The idea of improving senate activities and work, such that we solve practical problems, was not discussed.

- Remember that all faculty, staff, and students are welcome at Faculty Senate meetings.

- Senator Creswell

New PhD grad class is small, departmental research comes to a grinding halt

We are excited to welcome four new PhD students in our first year class. They include: Eva Dundas (Advisor: Behrmann), Xiaonan Liu (Reder), Melanie Sandoval (Siegler), and Lucy Erickson (Thiessen/Rakison). This is an unusually small class for our department, but our new grads make for this in talent and class. The PLB will make sure to interview each of these grads in the coming year.

Welcome new students!
New and Returning Grad Students Discuss Assortment of Davids, Beer

Last Monday, graduate students in the department held an event to welcome new students, as well as share and clarify opinions and misperceptions of the department, the University, and the city/region in general. Given the mounting opinion polling for this year’s gubernatorial election cycle (39 states with races this November), Grad Talk decided to run a straw poll of our own, tapping into rookie and veteran student beliefs of life as a grad student at CMU compared to other occupations and other universities.

A summary of notable responses follows. Our readers should note that while we have not fabricated this data, a la Mark Hauser, neither have we made any attempt whatsoever at presenting it in a complete and unbiased fashion. So, we’re more like Fox News. -GT

"I was attracted to Pittsburgh by...."

Answers to this item were quite diverse. Some cited the Steelers, with their Super Bowl six-pack, others the “super-cheap” beer prices (making good six-packs affordable), and still others the “exceptionally poor weather” (leaving one in want of a six-pack). The University also had some features that makes Pittsburgh attractive to grad students. In terms of aesthetics, the “Walking to the Sky” monument was cited as inspirational by some in our poll because of what it represents (GT staff speculates sculture's inspiration in Feb ‘10 issue).

One of our department’s Davids was also described as an attractive feature, an opinion consistent with past polls. We would tell you which David we are referring to, but we are running low on article ideas and are confident that not disclosing this information will spark an epic Battle of the Davids that will keep us from having to come up with anything until at least 2011.
“For fun on the weekends, I hear students at CMU...”

Sentiment here centered around a “work hard, play hard” philosophy. This is a refreshing change of pace from the introverted, technology-focused stereotypes that CMU is sometimes known for. Though some believe CMUers sit around on Saturdays recompiling their Linux kernels, others agree that students here are much more likely to train for the Great Race on a boat while walking dogs, watching Steelers, and getting all drunk. The accuracy of our poll participants’ beliefs is validated by eyewitness accounts of these training sessions. One Greenfield resident noted “It sure is odd, what they do out on that river. But, I hear they have science behind it, and they’re the best at what they do, so it must be good.”

“I was surprised to learn that the department...”

... has two flourishing business divisions! The social focus area’s stress management enterprise, including manufacture of a variety of balls and other stress relief novelties, was cited as provocative and one of the most notable in the country (see Feb ’10 & Apr ’10 issues). Poll respondents were also surprised to learn about student-managed PsyCoke’s business model of facilitating faculty and staff caffeine addiction to raise capital for investment into new advisor mindreading technologies and for avocation field research (read: beer money).

Grad Talk Editors Looking for Contributors, Not Afraid To Beg

An anonymous source has confirmed allegations that the grad talk editors would prefer to not have to come up with content for the PLB Grad Talk section every single month, and are on the lookout for guest editors/contributors to take on some of the responsibility.

"It's not that we're incapable of coming up with brilliant and thought-provoking ideas month after month", our source says, "I mean, we are clearly the most hilarious and clever of the all grad students, ever, not to mention the most attractive. We definitely could keep on entertaining the department with our unparalleled wit and creativity. It's just that we don't want to."

Our sources have suggested that if anyone is interested in contributing, they should e-mail gradtalk@gmail.com or mention something to one of the editors.
Special Feature: Post-Graduation Job Advice from Faculty Members!

Hey grads. As you well know, it's never too soon to start thinking about finding a job after graduation. That's why Grad Talk conducted an exhaustive pretend survey of the psychology department faculty in order to solicit their invaluable job-hunting wisdom. The table below summarizes the totality of faculty member's advice for finding a job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Job</th>
<th>Faculty Wisdom</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-track faculty position</td>
<td>Publish as many papers as possible in the best journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College teaching position</td>
<td>No advice provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry research scientist</td>
<td>No advice provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical or methodological consultant</td>
<td>No advice provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human factors engineer</td>
<td>No advice provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management consultant</td>
<td>No advice provided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enjoy your PhD!

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Next Time in Grad Talk: Our Annual Fitness Edition!

Featured articles include:

- "Powerlifting for strong body and mind" by David Klahr
- "Dr. Atkins may have died of a heart attack, but his diet is alive and well" by David Rakison
- "Sheier smash!: Taking your racquetball game to the next level" by Mike Scheier
Our first department happy hour! Thanks for organizing Emilie and Erin!

The open house and dedication of the new SIBR center. Marcel now has all sorts of free time on his hands.

Some members of the faculty lunch group were determined to find the best hamburger in Pittsburgh this summer. The results of this event? Walnut Grove has an above average hamburger, Erik Thiessen is training for the Gay Games, and Anna Fisher easily confuses hamburgers with crab cakes.

The department said goodbye to IT staff member Matt Costa (right) this summer—Matt is on to get his master’s in Information Systems. Thanks for all your great work and best of luck Matt!
Marlene Behrmann, David Plaut and family went to Victoria Falls in Zambia, Africa (photo left) and to Soccer City in South Africa to watch South Africa play Ghana (photo right).

Sarah and Sam got married July 10th on a riverboat in front of downtown Pittsburgh. The ceremony was performed by former post-doc Chantel Prat. The couple then honeymooned in Belize.

David & Kasey got engaged in Bar Harbor, Maine in early June!

Ken mentors Matt in how to smoke a cigar at happy hour. One of the many skills Kotovsky’s students learn in grad school.
Staff Council (SC) Notes--- SUMMER WRAPUP 2010

By Ellen Conser, H&SS Staff Council Rep 2006-2012
conser@andrew.cmu.edu

Sept. 7, 2010

THIS ISSUE:
- Staff Awareness Survey results
- Discount to Renaissance Festival
- Elections
- Amendments to SC Constitution
- New staff dining plans
- Warner Hall patio renovation
- Save the Date & SC meetings calendar
- Attachments list

SC Awareness Survey results
Staff Council did a survey of non-union staff to gauge awareness of its roles and responsibilities to the campus community. The results were released & are attached. Open-ended comments haven’t yet been released.

Discount: Renaissance Festival
CMU students, faculty, and staff can get discounted Renaissance Festival tickets. Buy adult tickets for $12.95 (a $3 savings) and kids’ tickets for $6 (a $1 savings) through Sept. 17 by fax, mail or online at http://www.pittsburghrenfest.com/groupdiscount.html. The form is also attached here. Festival dates are Aug. 21 – Sept. 26 (weekends & Labor Day only).
Questions: John Lanyon, at jlanyon@

Elections and Appointments
I was re-elected in the recent Divisional election for SC reps. Thank you to all who took the time to cast a vote. Tepper rep Barb Price was appointed to the university’s new task force on reimbursement policies. If you have any suggestions for the task force, feel free to email them to Barb at bp09a@andrew.cmu.edu

Constitution Amendments
Two amendments were voted on in June. The first was a minor clarification to language specifying who (reps and officers) is allowed to vote during officer elections. It passed. The second amendment proposed allowing any rep to head the Elections Committee & conduct elections (current wording allows only the Vice Chair to do these). It failed, for a number of reasons arising in discussion. For example, allowing any rep to do it would risk more frequent turnover and less commitment to this critical role.

New Dining Plans for Staff
See attached flyer for more details. Accrued points expire at the end of spring semester. There are no refunds if a staff member with money on the plan card leaves employment with CMU prior to spending the funds, although you still can eat at the facilities so as to spend down the card. Check or credit card only—no payroll deduction allowed.

Warner Hall patio construction
I went to a (non-SC) presentation on June 30 about the renovations. Tidbits you may not have heard in other communications: The big sugar maples out front that turn bright red in the fall will NOT be cut down; attractive materials like granite weren’t chosen for walkways because it’s 3x more expensive than concrete; texturing will be applied to new concrete to make it look more attractive than other campus concrete; and replacing the current waterproof membrane is urgently needed because it’s composed partly of horsehair (!!!). Green features include greater permeability for rainfall and a higher proportion of vegetation to concrete. Additional details and updates: http://www.cmu.edu/cdfd/ and click on tab box called Warner Plaza Project.
Save the Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb Renaissance Festival</td>
<td>8/21-9/26</td>
<td>Near West Newton, PA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pittsburghrenfest.com/groupdiscount.html">http://www.pittsburghrenfest.com/groupdiscount.html</a> Questions: John Lanyon, jlanyon@  Also see flier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Council Meeting</td>
<td>Thurs 9/16, noon</td>
<td>UC McConomy</td>
<td>Barbara Smith (HR) is scheduled to speak about 2011 healthcare benefit changes &amp; how they'll be affected by Obama legislation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits Open Forum / Q&amp;A</td>
<td>Tues. Oct. 26 at noon</td>
<td>UC Rangos 1</td>
<td>Open Q&amp;A forum to ask questions about changes in healthcare &amp; other benefits for next year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Fitness Fair</td>
<td>Wed. Nov. 3 from 11-4</td>
<td>UC Rangos</td>
<td>Healthcare insurance vendors, other vendors providing benefits to staff, will answer questions about plans and there are always plenty of freebies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Staff Council Meeting Locations – 2010-11
All welcome; Only reps can vote
(Dates and Locations are subject to change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Body</th>
<th>Third Thursday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 19</td>
<td>Gates Hillman Center 4307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 16</td>
<td>McConomy Auditorium, UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 21</td>
<td>McConomy Auditorium, UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 18</td>
<td>Rangos 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 16</td>
<td>McConomy Auditorium, UC (may change to GHC 4307)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Rangos 3, UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Rangos 3, UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 17</td>
<td>Rangos 3, UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 21</td>
<td>Rangos 3, UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 19</td>
<td>Rangos 3, UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 16</td>
<td>Rangos 3, UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 21</td>
<td>Connan Room, UC</td>
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</tbody>
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***Attachments***

- June, July, August 2010 agendas
- May, June, July 2010 official minutes
- Unofficial August minutes
- Updated list of SC reps
- Staff Awareness Survey results (sans open-ended comments)
- Renaissance Festival flier
- Flier: Dining options/ meal plans for staff on campus
- Green Canteen Zero Waste Catering handout (Questions, contact Vanessa Schweizer @ vis@andrew)

Visit and bookmark [http://www.cmu.edu/staff-council/](http://www.cmu.edu/staff-council/) for more about Staff Council