Advisory Board Update: CMU Central Caves to Board Demands

We did it. The plan was executed. Michael Scheier had a vision, the AB members saw that vision, and Kamlet and Cohon simply buckled under the pressure of our demands. Here's what we requested, and what we are getting:

AIM #1: Grow our graduate program with more graduate student funding.

Result: This one was easy. The AB members hammered this one home, claiming that we need more money to bring in more graduate students. Kamlet and Cohen agreed—they said we can have more graduate students if we find a way to generate the funding for them. Great news!

AIM #2: Hire more faculty.

Result: We made a very convincing argument for hiring a new faculty member who studies clinical social cognitive developmental neuroscience, with a focus in genetics and education/learning science. When we find this person, consider them hired.

AIM #3: We need to increase our Psychology Department space.

Result: AB members were seen climbing up into Baker Hall attics, and entertaining thoughts about groundbreaking for a new life science mega-building. Is this really possible, they asked? Of course. Who's going to pay for it? CMU Central! When will it happen? Sometime in the future.
Caption Contest Results!

We asked you to write captions describing this picture of Klahr... you delivered.

1. “A bird on David Klahr’s head is worth two squirrels in Ken Kotovsky’s bush.”
2. “Someone needs to fill this dang feeder”
3. “Klahr shares his seeds of wisdom”
4. “We always knew Klahr was a bit of a birdbrain”
5. “Sure beats shampooing”
6. “At the end of the day, David likes nothing more than to sit back and relax while a colorful bird pecks at his head.”
7. “Turns out the original version of the famous statement about assimilation and accommodation compared them to Batman and Cockatoo.”
8. “Once the nest is made, the African Greeble adopts the mating position and waits for a mate.”
9. Step 1: place bird on head
   - Step 2: ??????
   - Step 3: profit!
PLB: Where are you from and why did you decide to pursue a PhD in psychology?

DP: I am originally from Syracuse, NY, but I’ve lived all of my post-college life in Dallas, Boston, London, and Atlanta, so I guess I really don’t think of myself as having New York roots as much as I have in the past. I decided to become a psychologist when I was 16, but my parents and guidance counselors felt it would be a waste of my time and “talents” and convinced me to go to school for engineering instead. (I think they were subtly telling me that crazy people should not be therapists.) Engineering never felt right - not from the moment I started my undergraduate degree. Here I am, though, decades later, “wasting my time” becoming a psychologist! I showed them, didn’t I!? Hmmm...that doesn’t sound quite right. I could write a book about why I decided to pursue a PhD in psychology, but, above all, I want to live a life with no regrets, and I realized that I had clung to the same dream for over 20 years, so it must be my path. I was correct about that, by the way. I have never been as happy in my entire life.

PLB: What are your current research interests?

DP: I am interested in the psychosocial factors that impact adjustment to chronic disease. In particular, I am fascinated with what contributes to/impedes the ability of individuals to adhere to their medical regimens. Self-regulation can be difficult for all of us, but for people with chronic disease lack of adherence can be a matter of life and death. I currently work with adolescents with diabetes. Since diabetes self-care is extremely behavioral in nature, it is a perfect context in which to study adherence. I currently am working on studies at various stages of implementation that explore the connection of social networks/integration, peer relationships, and mindfulness to adolescent health behaviors and outcomes. The purpose of my second year project is to explore models of adherence for adolescents with diabetes, their parents, and their physicians.

PLB: What’s your favorite thing to do when you’re not working on research?

DP: Don’t you mean to ask “What do you do that distracts you from your research, which is certainly the only worthwhile and most important thing in your life?” (My advisor and committee members are reading this and it’s eval time - hello?!?!) Seriously, though, when I do have time to see the outside of our overheated penthouse offices here in Baker, you are likely to find me hiking - including at night and in the snow. I also spend much of my time obeying my two cats: Malyka and Lyvingston (don’t ask about the names - long story), and watching football and hockey with my wonderful friends.

I have a strong need for new...
experiences, and my latest activities are learning mindfulness meditation and teaching myself to play guitar. My aunt bought said guitar the year I was born, so it's...well...not new. I also love to write, and was hoping to pay off my student loans by going on Oprah to promote my planned future bestselling book, but she's shattered my dreams by going off the air...oh well! On to plan B.

Department News

Bobby Klatzky wins Kurt-Koffka Medal!

U.S. scientist Professor Roberta Klatzky receives casting Kurt-Koffka medal for research on human perception

25.11.2010 - CASTING

(Foto): It is considered a pioneer in the field of perception research. Has influenced several hundred scientific publications with their whole generations of researchers. Whether in the field of psychology or in the development of robots. And the Department of Psychology and Sports Science, Justus-Liebig University Gießen (JLU) Professor Roberta Klatzky, Carnegie-Mellon University engages in Pittsburgh (USA) high reputation for many years. "We are delighted to be able to give this year's Kurt-Koffka medal such an outstanding researcher," said Dean Prof. Markus Krauff, before yesterday, as part of a completely in English held ceremony in Philosopher. I handed the US-American, the prize.

The medal is awarded by the Department since 2007 in memory of Kurt Koffka, who had taught from 1911 to 1947 as a professor at the University of Gießen and Krauff, according to "one of the most famous German psychologists" was. The winners are each scientists who have greatly influenced the fields of perception and developmental psychology.

Roberta Klatzky you have selected a more than worthy recipient. Because it is a considered an important pioneer of research on haptic perception and spatial cognition. In the field of human perception and action, she has put her work with milestones, which "inspired countless subsequent researchers and inspire," as Prof. Krauff emphasized.

Then draw the winner by a broad and interdisciplinary spectrum of research, the log held both developmental and clinical and applied aspects. Examples of the high practical value called the dean Klatzky's participation in the development of navigational aids for the blind and their long collaboration with electrical engineers. "Is the modality of the spatial perception?" In her lecture, entitled (what is the modality of spatial perception?), Mediated Roberta Klatzky, who thanked you for the award and was visibly happy about it, then a fascinating insight into their field of research, that they echoed their words of thanks in German, was listened by her enthusiastic audience with a special spontaneous applause.
The staff visited the SIBR center as part of their retreat on November 5!

Psi Chi sponsored a Tea with Teachers Event, thanks to all who participated!

Our winners of the annual Holiday Party pub quiz! Thiessen did not share the prize.

Thiessen seen here angrily staring down his opponents in the cheeky monkey contest at the Holiday Party.
Colloquium Series Cursed?

CMU’s psychology department has always had its fair share of unexplained, spooky phenomena. A room in the Feeney Wing is rumored to contain an extradimensional portal straight to Yale. Faculty are so convinced that the head’s office is haunted that no one is willing to move in there. The fourth floor is full of eerie, unexplained bumps and moaning noises1. David Plaut has never revealed the strange and terrible contents of his abdominal pouch. But no mystery is currently more horrific and frightening than the series of terrible afflictions that have struck down people invited to speak at the department’s colloquium.

Each of the last two speakers has been unable to speak due to a seemingly unrelated series of calamities. Some have suggested that these unfortunate events are merely coincidental. However, the PLB’s own investigation has revealed that nearly every person who has ever been invited to speak at a departmental colloquium has subsequently had something bad happen to them (for a partial list, see Table). It strains belief to think that such a consistent pattern could simply be due to coincidence – the p-value of this pattern is far, far below .05!

Instead, it seems as though there is some sinister force at work. However, no one can agree on the underlying cause of this epidemic. One possibility is that Giant Eagle auditorium was built, Poltergeist-style, atop Native American burial grounds. Another is that Brooke Feeney hates colloquium speakers because they force her to stay late on Monday afternoons, so she has been sending her savage attack dog to give all of the prospective speakers tiny, tiny (but vicious!) bites before they can arrive. Ken Kotovsky has been heard to mutter that somehow the squirrels are to blame4.

Because there is no agreement on the root cause of these difficulties the department has not formulated a plan to resolve them, other than recommending that Frank Keil should probably hire a team of bodyguards before he comes in the spring. But before we rush out and get an exorcist, maybe we should explore the possibility of using this phenomenon to our advantage. Do you think we could get Gary Marcus to come and give a talk?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Horrible fate that befell them</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yuko Munokata</td>
<td>Illness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Oakes</td>
<td>Terrible back injury2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurie Santos</td>
<td>Constantly surrounded by shrieking primates3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.F. Skinner</td>
<td>Now deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Smith</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
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Footnotes

1) These noises may be caused by graduate students. But the PLB editor has been too busy to check this out. Putting the PLB together takes a lot of work; the editor can’t be expected to do little things like ‘investigating’ or ‘fact-checking’ on his or her own.

2) The PLB has not been able to confirm the rumor that Lisa’s spine actually exploded out of her back like a tamping rod through Phineas Gage’s skull. But we have not specifically disconfirmed that rumor, either.

3) Seriously, Yale undergrads can be pretty pushy when they think they deserve a higher grade on that last exam.

4) For the sake of journalistic integrity, though, we should point out that it’s not entirely clear that Ken was muttering about squirrels in relation to this particular issue. That may just be something he mutters about fairly frequently.
At the November faculty senate meeting, CMU Director of Design Bob Reppe spoke about the CMU Master Plan for the next 10-15 years. A rough sketch of this plan will be submitted to the City of Pittsburgh in about a year. The broad plan is to grow the CMU campus (using recent real estate acquired, e.g., the Craig Street purchase last year), increase the connectivity of the various campus units, and increase the capacity and productivity of the campus. The specific ideas for the growth and connectivity aims seem exciting (described below), and have some endorsement of CMU Central, but there have been no funds earmarked/raised for them. The long-term strategy is to make Forbes Ave the center of campus and expand to the north and west of our current campus.

- Morewood Parking Lot (3 acres): this spot could house a mixed use academic building, and possibly a new Tepper School of Business. Tepper would need to raise 120 million for this project.
- Forbes/Craig Street area: there’s strong interest in developing this area with more academic buildings (including a new Nanotechnology Center for biomedical engineering), and in courting a developer to build a hotel!
- North side of the UC (before Forbes Ave): in order to improve the athletics and fitness facilities, the UC would be expanded to the north with a new fitness facility. Skibo would also undergo a significant renovation.
- The CMU tennis courts: there is a great deal of space at the center of campus occupied by tennis courts, and folks are considering whether this space could be better utilized with academic buildings. One idea is to build a low standing building and put the tennis courts on top of it.

President Cohon spoke at the December faculty senate meeting! Wow, the man has Obama-like charisma! He kept saying that he’s not going to be a “lame-duck president” in his final years, and then he’d hit the podium with his fist—very impressive. Summarizing some of the most notable points of his fire and brimstone talk: (1) we made back 55% of our endowment losses in 2009 (endowment is now 992 million); (2) we are on track raising money for our inspire/innovate/inebriate-procreate capital campaign; (3) we had a small 2010 budgetary surplus; (4) A new BARF website will be coming online in January 2011 explaining all of the barf-like regulations being handed down by CMU Central.

Senator Creswell

These guys must be brothers
Carny is the new psychology: A Response to Davy, Jern, & Wood (you guys are going down)

Bryan J. Matlen
Carnegie Mellon University

In a recent version of grad talk, suspicious photos surfaced of me at a Renaissance Fair, engaging in such perverse activities as biting into a turkey leg, practicing archery, and even talking to a pirate. I was accused of “spreading carny values to the department,” and my relationship with the so-called “carnies” was characterized as nothing less than a disreputable scandal.

First of all, I must admit, carnies intrigue me. Davy et al were correct to note my fascination of these people. Moreover, upon learning more about the carny way of life, it has become clear that 1) carnies are just really clever psychologists, and 2) psychologists secretly wish to be carnies. Allow me to explain.

For one, carnies know more about the field of visual perception than Bobby Klatzky, Marlene Behrmann, and Michael Tarr combined. For instance, could you design a carnival game that looks tantalizingly easy to throw a ring over a bunch of bottles (when in actuality, your chances are close to zero)? Or how about a game where the prospect of breaking plates with a baseball looks so fun, you cough up tens of dollars only to whiff miserably? To put it simply, the future of the field of applied visual perception is in the hands of these everyday carnies, and this department would be smart to write more Renaissance festivals into their grant proposals.

In addition to owning us in visual perception research, carnies don’t even have to pay their participants. They make their participants pay them. Why haven’t we figured this out, social psychology researchers?

Finally, I believe that Carnegie Mellon is secretly repressing its desire to associate with Carnies. What other school has ‘carny’ in the pronunciation of their name? And why take random days off to celebrate an event called Carnival?

If you are not yet convinced of the enormous influence that carnies have on us, let me now provide some photo evidence: using none other than my fellow grad students as examples.
For starters, observe this picture of Crista Crittendon (pictured in pink shirt, laying on top of random guy in blue shirt, falling off his chair). Crista was hypnotized into thinking that she had won a fishing contest on a tropical island, as well as meeting an attractive male member of an alien species.

This was one of the more demure photos of the bunch – for more extensive coverage of this event, get in contact with Ran Liu.

Crista pictured here (with complete stranger), using each other’s body heat to keep warm from a ‘blizzard’ (even though it was about 70 degrees outside).
Next, check out Meredit VanFleet (pictured in black) engaging in medievel archery.

She has clearly been watching episodes of Lord of the Rings and the Last Samurai.

Unfortunately, I do not own pictures of Ran Liu being accosted by a pair of salacious German rappers. But there is plenty of photo evidence of carnies getting the best of our fellow grad talk editors.

For instance, take this picture of Alan Jern, falling for the classic Carny trick, “Are you taller than this Polar Bear?”

Unfortunately, he loses this game every year.
Alan typically does not react very positively to losing at the Polar Bear game, and much like little Albert, tends to overgeneralize his anger towards anything white – in this case, a stormtrooper.¹

Fortunately for Alan (and people wearing white shirts), he later redeemed himself at the game, “Are you taller than a Triceratops?”

¹ Given that we also saw pirates at this event, a stormtrooper was not out of the ordinary.
Colleen Davy was tricked into believing that Giants roamed the Renaissance Age.

To be fair, the renaissance carnes were quite convincing.
Finally, check out Matt Wood, who showed up at the Renaissance Fair expecting to experience it in 3D

They hadn’t invented this technology yet, Matt (but to your credit, I’m sure Leonardo Divinci had it on his queue)\(^2\)

In conclusion, it has been great fun exposing all of my fellow graduate student colleagues as inferior to the ordinary Renaissance carny. I can’t wait to see what exciting and lewd photos that come from next year’s Renaissance gathering.
Yours Truly, BM

\(^2\) Congratulations to Matt on his recent marriage to his significant other Missy (pictured) who was reasonable enough not to show up to the Renaissance Fair in 3D eyewear.
**Staff Council (SC) Notes**--- From November 18, 2010 meeting

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

Nov. 30, 2010

**THIS ISSUE:**
- Oct. meeting summary
- Constitutional amendments
- Food Drive
- Parking: ticket problems, etc.
- Expense reimbursement policy changes for travel & other expenses
- New task force: Pedestrian & bicyclist safety
- Shout out to HR
- December meeting canceled

**October Meeting**
This meeting conflicted with a presentation I attended about 2011 benefits changes, so I couldn’t go. There were initial votes on proposed Constitutional amendments about (1.) adding our webmaster & archivist to the executive committee, and about (2.) committee co-chairs and their voting privileges on the exec. cmte. The annual presentation by a representative of the Food Bank was given. Bob Reppe of Campus Design and Facility Development updated Staff Council on the master building plan for the next decade, which is being finalized. There will be town hall meetings this spring. Campus design meetings can be pretty interesting, having attended the recent one about the Warner Hall patio renovation.

**Constitutional Amendments**
The amendments described above passed a final vote at the November meeting. The Constitution now explicitly allows for co-chairs on committees, and specifies that only one co-chair gets to vote during exec cmte meetings. Both the SC archivist and webmaster are now required to sit on the exec cmte (and attend its monthly meetings).

**Food Drive**
The Food Drive had its most successful year ever, both in terms of pounds of food & cash. Thank you to those of you who gave or volunteered. This was my second year of volunteering at Cans Across the Cut; it’s fun and we totally lucked out on the weather. Thanks, Mother Nature!

**Parking Ticket Problems & Other News**
Staff have reported a handful of incidents in which incomplete recordkeeping by the Parking office led to their (paid) parking tickets being reported as unpaid to debt collectors or credit agencies. Partly due to these anomalies, it has been decided that tickets issued in 2006 & earlier will be forgiven/expunged. The Parking Advisory Board will work with Parking and the administration to improve recordkeeping and customer communications, including issuing warning letters before reporting to external agencies. The Parking Office may in future work with HR to dock paychecks automatically for unpaid parking tickets it issues.

In other news, Tepper School is eyeing the Morewood lot for an additional building, as they’re running out of space in their current building. This will reduce Morewood lot--for which there’s already a waiting list--from 700 spots to 400. This could present a problem if the Port Authority guts its system as is perennially threatened, forcing more staff and students out of buses and into cars. Contrarily the garages, whose passes cost a lot more, are undersold. Compliments were voiced about recent line repainting in the Morewood lot. Previously, the spaces had been too tightly packed, likely leading to hit and runs with associated damage. A ridesharing program is available through Parking’s website and may offer an option to some staff.
Expense Reimbursement Policy Changes
Guests representing the subcommittee charged with streamlining CMU’s travel & expense reimbursement policy updated us on their progress. Highlights include trying to do more approvals on the department level instead of central Accts Payable to reduce delays, and requiring receipts for $75+ transactions, vs. the current $25. Changes are set to roll out in March. Campus members who are not staff (grad students, postdocs, visiting employees) but who have purchasing privileges or travel on CMU-related business should be aware that the rules for their expense reimbursements will likely vary at times from those applying to regular staff.

New Task Force
A new task force on local pedestrian and bicyclist safety is being created by rep Suzie Cribbs and Michael Murphy, VP-Campus Affairs. This effort may be particularly timely given the problems with Port Authority, potentially leading to a lot more walkers/bicyclists near campus.

Shout out to HR
While healthcare costs for large U.S. employers are projected to rise roughly 8-10% for 2011, much of which is passed along to employees, CMU HR announced that its medical, prescription, dental & vision rates will hold steady. Largely this was due to lower-than-projected utilization of services, as explained in the benefits changes presentations this fall. The effort to keep rates affordable is nonetheless welcome, especially after two years of 1% raises. Lori Bell and HR staff do a terrific job with the open forums and supporting information online about any annual changes, and they frequently encourage people to approach them with any specific or complex problems with providers.

December Meeting: The meeting scheduled for December 16th has been canceled.

Save the Date
(Staff Council-related & other events of interest to staff)

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Take your Daughter or Son to</td>
<td>Thu April 28,</td>
<td>All over campus</td>
<td>Seeking programming ideas now. Contact Ken Chu at KCHU1@ if you’d like to offer a program or track. Theme in ’11 is INVENTING THE FUTURE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Day (TODSW)</td>
<td>2011</td>
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Staff Council Meeting Locations – 2010-11 –All welcome; Only reps can vote
(Dates and Locations are subject to change)

General Body

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 16</td>
<td>MEETING CANCELED</td>
<td>McConomy Auditorium, UC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Rangos 3, UC</td>
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<td>May 19</td>
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<td>Jun 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul 21</td>
<td>2011</td>
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Attachments:
- November 2010 minutes
- October 2010 minutes
- HANDOUT: Travel & Expense reimbursement policy changes (increase zoom in Acrobat to see fine print)
- Holiday Concert poster (THIS FRIDAY DEC 3 at the UC)

Back in January... Happy Holidays!

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