



"The science of psychology benefits society and enhances our lives. Psychologists examine the relationships between brain function and behavior, and the environment and behavior, applying what they learn to illuminate our understanding and improve the world around us."

- The American Psychological Association

Letter from the Editor

Hello to all Psychology Students, Faculty, and Staff!

I write this Letter from the Editor with feelings of sadness and excitement. Part of the Doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology involves completing a residency. This is one year of clinical practice, and marks the culmination of formal training in clinical psychology. I am currently completing this part of my degree, and, as such, am no longer in Thunder Bay. It seemed appropriate to pass along the role of Editor to someone who would be closer to campus and the larger Lakehead community. With that, I am pleased to introduce you to Adam Davis. Adam is currently completing his M.Sc. in the Psychological Sciences program. I hope that you will help him make the newsletter a success by continuing to contribute!

The newsletter is meant to be one medium by which we can continue to build a community here at Lakehead. Whether you are in Thunder Bay, Orillia, or somewhere else, you can stay connected and make efforts to connect through the newsletter. This is a newsletter for the Psychology Department by the Psychology Department, and I encourage you to become actively involved.

Seeing as this is likely the last time I will be contributing to the newsletter, I wanted to take the time to thank everyone who contributed to and read the newsletter. Community building is an important way of feeling connected, and feeling connected is an important part of well-being. I hope that as the newsletter continues to be published, the sense of community with the Psychology Department at Lakehead will grow.

Good luck to everyone with the school year! Submitted by Taslim Alani, M.A., Ph.D. Clinical Psychology Student



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NeuRIG: Description and History

NeuRIG (Neuroscience Research Interest Group) at Lakehead University is dedicated to the promotion of neuroscience knowledge and its accessibility to all. It encourages an environment that is intellectually curious and open to diverse investigations and discourse related to the basic and translational aspects of neuroscience among interested individuals, regardless of their academic or research background. It also promotes the knowledge of neuroscience among high school students and the general public. To this end, NeuRIG (i) provides a forum for active interaction among students and researchers across disciplines and institutions through collaborative research projects and research meetings and discussions, (ii) promotes the establishment of undergraduate and graduate studies specialized degree in Neuroscience integrated with relevant, degree-conferring programs throughout Lakehead University, (iii) sponsors the *Talks on the Basics of Neuroscience* that is open to everyone, (iv) undertakes outreach initiatives to high school science students, and (v) participates in science exhibits under the aegis of the Lakehead University annual Research & Innovation (R&I) Day for the general public.

NeuRIG is a grassroots scientific society that started in the late fall of 2014 when a few researchers met with one another and realized that they had a common passion for neuroscience research. Moreover, they shared a common scientific language that allowed them to discuss different neuroscience models, theories, methods of measurement, data management and data analysis techniques. They shared the view that colleagues who identified with neuroscience were strewn among disparate departments and disciplines, and that interest, familiarity, and support for the basic aspects of neuroscience was limited within the university. Furthermore, it became clear that many talented students who had a strong interest in neuroscience were seeking their education at other universities. These researchers decided to form a neuroscience journal club to promote mutual support in neuroscience. The first meeting was held in December of 2014. The group quickly grew into a sizable society with a principle desire to establish a common neuroscience presence at Lakehead University. The impetus was to knit together researchers and students from disparate disciplines and reduce their sense of isolation, and to retain students with neuroscience interest at Lakehead University.

Since its inception, NeuRIG has made several major accomplishments. It presently has 90 members from Biology, Kinesiology, Psychology, Engineering, and Physics at Lakehead University, as well as from NOSM, Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute, St. Joseph's Care Group, and George Jeffrey Children's Centre. It has sponsored presentations for students who used the forum to test their presentation skills for defense examinations and/or scientific meetings. In the beginning of 2016, NeuRIG decided to start a presentation series called *Talks on the Basics of Neuroscience* to make neuroscience widely accessible to everyone, regardless of their familiarity with the topic area. High school outreach has also been made in the form of presentations and invitations to high school science students and their teachers to attend NeuRIG talks.

NeuRIG plans to further its community outreach by holding an exhibit at the university's R&I Day at the Intercity Mall on March 5th 2016. This exhibit will cover different aspects of neuroscience that include the molecular, cellular, systems, behavioural, and cognitive. It offers educational and fun activities for adults and children, and provides a bridge between academics, researchers, and students from Lakehead University to the Thunder Bay public and potential neuroscience students for the exchange of information and knowledge. Importantly, NeuRIG worked with Biology in the fall of 2015 to develop a Neuroscience concentration in its undergraduate programming. This concentration received Senate approval in January 2016 and is undergoing reviews by the various Senate subcommittees. Assuming positive

reviews, the Biology with Neuroscience concentration program will be ready to receive its first cohort of students in September 2016.

The NeuRIG website is currently under development. Its Chair is Prof. Vineet Johnson (Kinesiology) and its Coordinator is Dr. Michael Wesner (Psychology). NeuRIG welcomes inquiries and new members, and can be contacted through its email: neurig.biology@lakeheadu.ca.

Submitted by Dr. Josephine Tan



This new NeuRIG logo (located above) was collectively designed by Clinical Ph.D. Student Dana Dupuis along with fellow NeuRIG member Elizabeth Legace.

Academic Transitions



Elsa Trovarello

My transition from undergraduate to graduate studies in the psychological science program at Lakehead has been brimming with unique learning experiences. Naturally there were many things that met my expectations previously set as a bright-eyed undergraduate, such as closer relationships with professors, and a greater range of opportunities to advance in my area of study. However, I was surprised to realize that the common joke about academics working hours and hours of overtime regularly was not really a joke at all. This wasn't necessarily a bad thing for me, as I've come to know myself as an "all or nothing" type. It also allowed me to foster greater relationships with those who I work closely with in the Cognitive Acquisition Lab, and within Psi Chi, a psychological honour student society on campus.

I've enjoyed the camaraderie of other graduate students in my classes, as I've found graduate school has a heavy emphasis on presentations, and a friendly atmosphere in class has been an integral part of my settling in and feeling welcome. Presentations were not a strong suit of mine, but slowly I have become much more confident in my presenting skills, which was important to me as I intend to teach in the future. These skills have influenced the way I conduct myself as a graduate assistant as well, giving me necessary tools needed to communicate in an effective manner. Overall I would say the quality of information gained in the classes I have taken so far have exceeded my expectations, and that I look forward to continuing my studies here.

A Word from Psi Chi...



The Lakehead University Psi Chi chapter has been keeping busy throughout the 2015/2016 academic year with the continuation of successful events and programs established in previous years as well as several exciting new initiatives. We are very happy to have the opportunity to share some of these activities and programs with you today.

Welcoming a New Executive Team!

Psi Chi has several new and returning executive team members this academic year, including Dana Dupuis as President, Chad Keefe as Past President, Elsa Trovarello in a dual role as Vice President and Treasurer, Stephanie Campbell as Secretary, and Angela Casey as Events Coordinator. We have also taken on two Web Masters, Wendy Leppanen and Sarah Arthurs to work on our website. All of our team members have been working very hard this year to organize and promote events for Psi Chi.

The Psychology Mentorship Program for Undergraduate and Graduate Students

A mentorship program, organized and sponsored through Psi Chi, is available for students who are in need of some extra guidance and support in their academic careers. Psi Chi pairs up undergraduate mentees with graduate mentors based on their interests, future goals, and what they are looking to gain from the mentorship experience. Through this program we encourage mutual learning and facilitate personalized guidance for undergraduate students, as well as the development of mentorship and leadership skills in more senior students.

Being a part of the mentorship program is a fantastic way for students to network, navigate career or graduate school opportunities, and connect with relevant people in their field of interest. It helps junior students get the most out of their academic experiences and facilitates guiding them on a path that will be most personally beneficial to their individual goals.

Currently, this is the second year of Psi Chi's mentorship program and we have been successful in pairing up over 60 mentors and mentees. We welcome new applicants to this program on an ongoing basis. If you are interested in participating in the mentorship program as either a mentor or mentee, please email us at psichi@lakeheadu.ca.



Psi Chi volunteering at the Shelter House

Volunteer Opportunities with Psi Chi

Beginning in the summer of 2015, Psi Chi has regularly been providing opportunities for students to get involved with volunteering in the community of Thunder Bay. We have successfully organized three volunteer sessions with The Shelter House, where psychology students gathered to prepare and serve hot meals to community members in need.

At each volunteer session, we successfully served meals to over 200 people. We have three more upcoming volunteer sessions scheduled with The Shelter House during the 2016 winter semester and will be looking for

volunteers to help out. The upcoming dates are February 27th, March 19th, and April 23rd, 2016. If you would like to volunteer for any of these dates, please contact us at psichi@lakeheadu.ca.

In addition to volunteering at the Shelter House, Psi Chi is planning a community parks cleanup event for any students that will be in Thunder Bay during the spring/summer semester. Be sure to keep your eyes on your email in the coming months for that announcement. We are also happy to provide opportunities for students to volunteer at our Psi Chi Invited Speaker Series and other on-campus events throughout the year, so if you are looking to get more involved do feel free to contact us at any time.

Induction Ceremony and Invited Speaker Series

In April 2015, we were pleased to host another installment of Psi Chi's Invited Speaker Series, this time featuring Dr. Michael Wesner who led a very interesting talk entitled, "*Cognitive Avoidance – How Cognitive is it?*" in which he discussed psychophysical evidence for early-stage, face-selective configural processing. We would like to sincerely thank Dr. Wesner for his wonderful presentation, and everyone who supported or attended this event.

Dr. Wesner's talk was paired with our annual Psi Chi induction ceremony, during which we inducted a total of 16 new members into our Lakehead University chapter. Psi Chi currently has over 80 student, faculty, and alumni members. That number is expected to increase this current academic year with our upcoming induction ceremony, scheduled for early April. The upcoming induction ceremony and next installment of our Invited Speaker Series will be announced soon!

Some Additional Activities...

In addition to the above events and programs, Psi Chi has led three workshops in partnership with the PSYC-4901 Honours Thesis class, including *Writing the GREs and Applying to Graduate School, Careers in Psychology*, and *Presenting an Honours Thesis Proposal*.

We have also been heavily involved in promoting on- and off-campus events, funding opportunities, and current research information relevant to psychology students through social media and email. With a passion for fostering enthusiasm about psychology and academia, we aim to continue providing and promoting these types of events and opportunities throughout the remainder of this academic year and beyond. Keep your eyes on your email and social media for more exciting news and event announcements from Psi Chi!

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Follow Psi Chi on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/psichilakehead>

The Publication Spotlight

The Value of Middle Phalangeal Hair as an Anthropometric Marker: A Review of the Literature

N. Westlund, Kirsten A. Oinonen, Dwight Mazmanian., and Jessica L. Bird

Published August 2015 in the *Journal of Comparative Human Biology* Volume 66, Issue 4, pp. 316–331

Middle phalangeal hair (MPH) is a trait frequently examined in anthropological studies throughout the 20th century. MPH is found on the back of the middle segment of the fingers, excluding the thumb. Typically, researchers examined the presence and absence of hair in various populations, and described it in terms of age, ancestry, and sex. Recently MPH has been examined as a potential anthropometric indicator of: androgen levels, androgen-related side effects in women, gene homozygosity, and disease resistance. Given the potential value of this marker, the present paper provides a comprehensive overview of MPH and its associated characteristics (i.e., ethnicity, sex, age, and hormonal variations) and presents new data on the reliability of MPH assessment. Findings suggest that ethnicity, sex, and age need to be controlled in any studies examining MPH and its relationship with other variables. Two measures of MPH (i.e., presence/absence of MPH and actual hair count) are both acceptable to use in MPH assessment; and the use of a hand lens to examine MPH provides high reliability when MPH is assessed by expert raters. However, researchers should avoid participant self-assessment. Future avenues for research are suggested (e.g., measurement issues and studies on hormonal correlates in women). MPH could be useful in research or for clinical purposes as a possible non-invasive indicator of hormone levels or hormonal sensitivity, or of predisposition toward androgen-related or gene-homozygosity-related health issues or behaviors.

[doi:10.1016/j.jchb.2015.02.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jchb.2015.02.003)

Competitiveness Reconceptualized: Psychometric Development of the Competitiveness Orientation Measure as a Unified Measure of Trait Competitiveness

Jennifer L. Newby and Rupert G. Klein

Published December 2014 in *The Psychological Record* Volume 64, Issue 4, pp. 879–895

Despite the utility of examining competitiveness across different contexts, current competitiveness scales lack the ability to unify trait competitiveness into one comprehensive measure. The goal of the present study was to construct one, psychometrically sound, multidimensional scale that would serve to correctly and concisely measure competitiveness tendencies across situational contexts. The present study synthesizes previous research by defining four dimensions of competitiveness: general competitiveness,

dominance, competitive affectivity, and personal enhancement. The initial pool of 137 items for the newly developed Competitiveness Orientation Measure was tested in a sample of 886 participants. Item-total correlations, discrimination indices, and factor analysis procedures resulted in the retention of 37 final items with excellent reliability. Theoretically, the Competitiveness Orientation Measure is the first comprehensive, psychometrically valid scale that adequately captures individual differences in competitiveness across four theoretically supported dimensions. Preliminary construct validity was additionally demonstrated, suggesting that competitiveness may serve to differentiate competitors' success.

[doi:10.1007/s40732-014-0083-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40732-014-0083-2)

Executive Function and Self-Regulation Mediate Dispositional Mindfulness and Well-Being

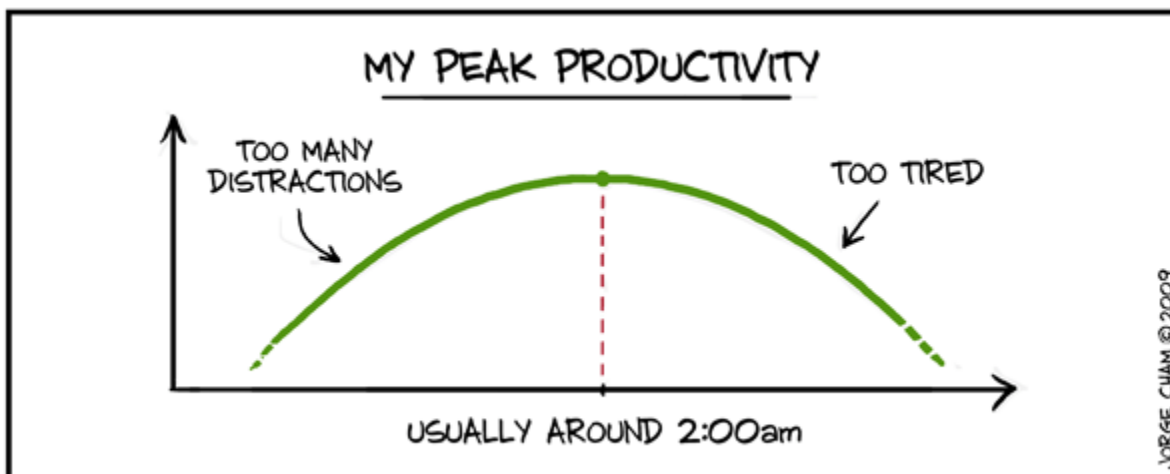
Megan M. Short, Dwight Mazmanian, Kirsten A. Oinonen, and Christopher J. Mushquash

Published on April 2015 in *Individual Differences in Mindfulness* Volume 93, pp. 97–103

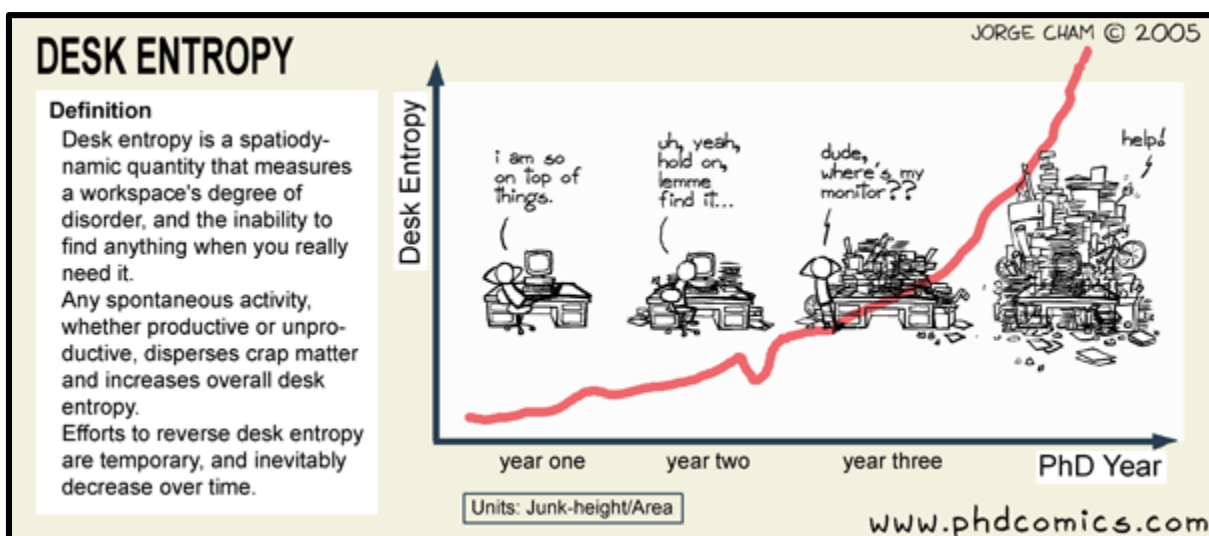
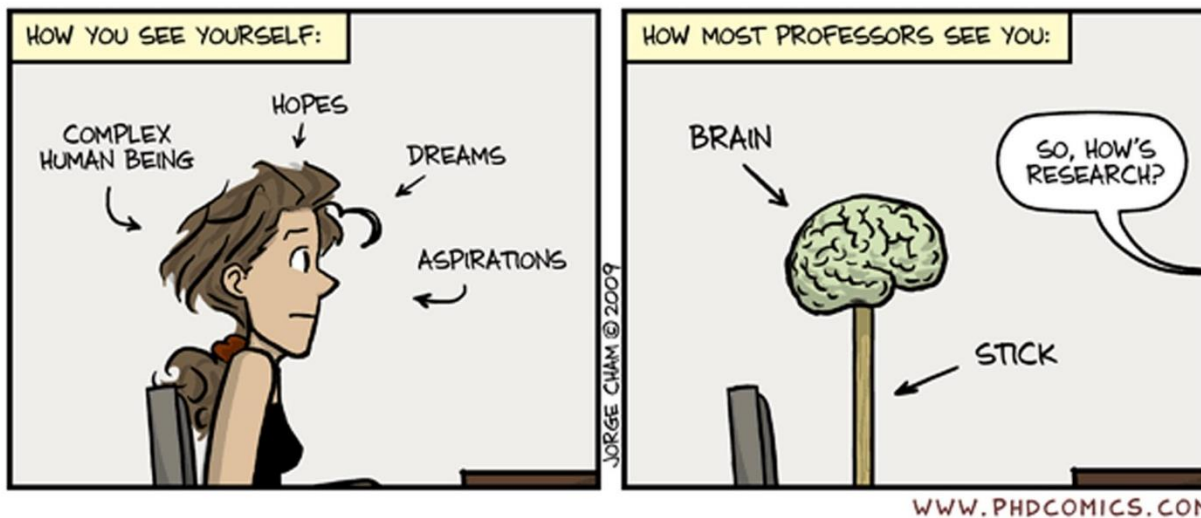
Research indicates that mindfulness is linked to higher-order neurocognitive control processes, and the associated executive functions and self-regulation capacities needed in daily life. The current study examines the roles of executive function and self-regulation in the link between dispositional mindfulness and well-being using a multi-method, two-phase longitudinal design. Two multiple mediator models were tested in a sample of 77 undergraduate students. Self-regulation independently mediated the relationship between mindfulness and positive affect; however, both executive function and self-regulation independently mediated the relationship between mindfulness and negative affect. The mindfulness facets of acting with awareness and non-judgment were most strongly related to executive function and well-being outcomes, while describing and acting with awareness were most strongly related to self-regulation. Performance-based neurocognitive control was related to self-regulation and positive affect, and a test of inhibition/shifting was related to executive function in daily life. Thus, students who are more dispositionally mindful than their peers tend to be non-judgmental and act with awareness, rather than on automatic pilot, which may engage executive functions and self-regulation.

[doi:10.1016/j.paid.2015.08.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.08.007)

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Contact Us!

For more information about the Psychology Department at Lakehead University, visit <http://psychology.lakeheadu.ca/>

If you have any ideas for a submission that you believe would be relevant to our department or have any questions about the newsletter, please get in touch with Adam Davis using the contact information below:

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