



Student Driven Publication 2014

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Lauren Alloy, Ph.D.

Temple University

2014 Zubin Award Winner

Michael Kruepke, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Shauna Kushner, University of Toronto

Craig Marquardt, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Dr. Lauren Alloy was the 2014 recipient of the Zubin Award, which was given to her in recognition of her lifetime contributions to research in the etiology and maintenance of mood disorders. Dr. Alloy's work spans a range of topics from cognitive vulnerability models to neurobiological correlates of psychopathology. She continues to oversee multiple research programs and maintains a steadfast dedication to mentoring numerous graduate students. It was fitting for Dr. Alloy to be honored during the Society's annual meeting in Evanston, Illinois, which is the home of Northwestern University where she held her first faculty appointment. We met with Dr. Alloy to discuss her reflections on her research and on life as an academic psychologist.

Much of Dr. Alloy's work is rooted in her early collaboration with



Dr. Lyn Abramson (University of Wisconsin-Madison), which began during their graduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania. "We probably now have the longest running collaboration in psychology. Lyn and I are still collaborating and we're best friends, although it didn't start out that way. We actually did not like each other when we first met and then we found out that we had a lot in common—maybe that was the problem. We came, of course, to like each other a great deal and to really work well together. So, I think that one of the absolute best things that happened to me was meeting Lyn Abramson." Dr. Alloy stressed how helpful it was to have a close collaborator early on in her career, especially one who shared her passion for research.

“When tackling problems, the two “feed off each other’s ideas” in a way that continues to foster much of their current scientific work.”

For their first co-authored manuscript, Dr. Alloy fondly recalls sitting with Dr. Abramson for hours on end, writing word-by-word together until they both were satisfied with the content and the presentation, though they have since developed more “efficient” ways to get things done. From her perspective, having good collaborators contributes not only to productivity, but also to making research more fun and exciting. In reflecting on their partnership, Dr. Alloy noted, “I wouldn’t be here today without her. I highly recommend that. I actually think either as a graduate student or early in your career if you can develop a collaborator where it really works... that can become lifelong or at least long lasting, it’s just wonderful.”

Fruitful collaborations and rapid productivity were just as much hallmarks of Dr. Alloy’s early career as they are today. At age 25, she was hired by Northwestern University as an assistant professor directly after receiving her Ph.D. She was evaluated for tenure two years later, and then for promotion to full professor three years after that, which led to her becoming the youngest full professor in that

university’s history and the first female full professor in the Psychology Department. “I had two big worries when I first arrived at Northwestern, and one of them was, ‘I’m going to be younger than all of my graduate students.’ And that was true, but I also thought, ‘They’re not going to respect me because they’re actually going to be older than me,’ but that part wasn’t true.” Her enthusiasm at Northwestern seems to have made a lasting impact on graduate students and undergraduates alike. One example is past SRP president Dr. Deanna Barch (Washington University in St. Louis) who Dr. Alloy said was an honors student of hers. In fact, when presenting the Zubin Award to Dr. Alloy, Dr. Barch told the audience that it was Dr. Alloy who first introduced her to research. Dr. Alloy moved on to Temple University, where she is a professor and the Joseph Wolpe Distinguished Faculty in the Department of Psychology. At Temple, her passion for research and working with others is clearly seen in her impact as a supervisor and mentor. Specifically, she described her work with graduate students as the most rewarding aspect of her career. Her zeal for mentorship is apparent in the size of her Mood and Cognition Lab, which currently includes seventeen graduate students! Even more remarkable is Dr. Alloy’s commitment to making time for these students, whom she prioritizes second only to her family.

In addition to varied roles as a principal investigator, supervisor, and mentor, Dr. Alloy is also the Head and Director of Clinical Training of the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program at Temple University. A busy life appears to suit Dr. Alloy, who “thrives on a job that doesn't stop.” The unique challenges and opportunities within each role have allowed her to stay well connected to the field while “being a student” herself. Unsurprisingly, she listed time management as one of the most challenging aspects of an academic career. She noted this is often especially true for female academics as they balance expectations about their family roles. However, she strongly believes academic careers have the advantage of considerable flexibility, which in her case has opened doors for time with her family outside of the lab. Academic psychology plays a unique role in her family life as well. Her daughter is in the midst of a clinical psychology doctoral program. “My husband is also an academic psychologist and my father was an academic psychologist. So, my daughter is actually third generation. We didn't push this at all, but from an early age she was showing a lot of interest in psychological questions. We like to say, ‘Genes and environment were working together.’”

When asked about unexpected turns in her career, Dr. Alloy described being a bit surprised by the shift toward

biology and neuroscience in her more recent work. “I started out doing strictly cognitive vulnerability-stress models of depression, and ... even when I started to work on bipolar disorder as well, the early work was on cognitive vulnerability-stress models... so if you asked me then, I wouldn't have been expecting to incorporate as much biological, neuroscience questions and measures into my work.” This shift has been so substantial that Dr. Alloy believes she would likely be studying neuroscience if she were ever to start over as a graduate student. Dr. Alloy credits her great collaborators for her ability to incorporate cutting-edge neuroscience methods into her program of research.



Moving forward, Dr. Alloy will undoubtedly continue to provide the field with incredible insights and play a crucial role in training future scientists. In addition to the Zubin Award, she has recently received three NIMH R01 research grants and is thus preparing to begin another round of intensive investigation. It should go without saying that our talk with Dr. Alloy was insightful and uplifting, and we, along with the field, look forward to seeing what Dr. Alloy does next!

Brian Hicks, Ph.D.

University of Michigan

2013 Early Career Award Recipient

Kat Herzhoff, *University of Houston*
Hailey Dotterer, *University of Michigan*
Hallie Nuzum, *University of Notre Dame*

Dr. Brian Hicks, Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan, is this year's winner of the SRP Early Career Award. He studied psychology as an undergraduate at Eastern Michigan University, and received PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Minnesota. We talked to Dr. Hicks about his current and upcoming research projects and his advice for students entering the field.

Currently, Dr. Hicks' primary line of research focuses on the developmental psychopathology of externalizing disorders, particularly substance use disorders. He employs a number of advanced methodologies to study these processes. Most of his work has used behavioral genetic designs to explore gene-by-environment processes in the onset and chronicity of substance use disorders. Recently, he has



expanded his research into neuroimaging (e.g., EEG, MRI) to examine changes in the brains of adolescent patients with addictions. Dr. Hicks has also been studying life events or transitions and their role in personality development. One of the interesting findings he mentioned was that

the same life event (e.g., initiation of sexual intercourse, marriage, or becoming a parent) seems to have differing effects on the personalities of men and women.

Dr. Hicks also told us about a paper he recently co-authored with his wife, Dr. C. Emily Durbin of Michigan State University, entitled "Personality and Psychopathology: A Stagnant Field in Need of Development" (*European Journal of Personality*, 28, 362-286).

In their paper, they discuss a major implication which is that:

“Personality tends to develop toward more “mature” traits over time, and thus the personality can represent a very global overall index of how well someone has adapted to [his/her] context.”

Individuals who are not able to adapt effectively to their environments over time via normative changes in personality structure are then at increased risk for developing psychopathology. Also, early onset and chronic psychopathology such as depressive and substance use disorders disrupt normative personality development resulting in increasing maladjustment over time. Drs. Hicks and Durbin drive home the importance of taking a developmental approach to better understand the relations between personality and psychopathology.

When asked about advice that he could give to students entering the field, Dr. Hicks emphasized the importance of having good role models, who can provide advice throughout one’s career. Additionally, he highlighted the value of seeking guidance beyond your advisor alone to create connections with others in your field. Apart from finding a good role

model, Dr. Hicks emphasized that the key to research is natural curiosity; when you find something that you are truly interested in and immerse yourself deeply, the opportunities for innovation organically reveal themselves. For example, Dr. Hicks’ research on subtypes of psychopaths comes out of an interest in what personality processes might contribute to criminal behavior. He views intellectual curiosity as the foundation for research. Rather than learning specific procedures, research should be based on a desire to understand a problem because “science is not about writing a paper to be published. Science is about approaching a problem in a certain way.” He reflected on the excitement that comes with making novel discoveries, finding something that makes a truly unique contribution to the existing body of literature, as he did early in his career when studying the structure of psychopathy. Dr. Hicks finds the ability to pursue his own curiosity among similarly minded colleagues to be the most rewarding aspect of his career.



When asked about how to infuse creativity into one’s work, Dr. Hicks emphasized the need for careful

deliberation and thoughtfulness. He finds that following the work of researchers in different fields and then applying those methods to one's own work to be a useful starting point for innovation. He said: "I need prompts, I need an idea to get me going." One example was noticing that it was very hard to distill consistent patterns of gene x environment interaction for psychiatric phenotypes, which prompted him to take a more systematic approach to this question in a series of papers. He ended by encouraging researchers early in their careers to find the missing pieces of the puzzle, which ultimately will result in novel and creative work. In his work, he

is currently trying to synthesize developmental and treatment approaches to better understand the mechanisms of change in substance use. The basic idea is that a treatment study can be conceptualized of as a short term longitudinal study with the additional strength of being able to manipulate the treatment. A program of research that combines treatment designs with naturalistic longitudinal studies (that avoid the biases associated with treatment samples) then has potential to be very powerful in understanding how and why people change over time. We look forward to hearing more about Dr. Hick's exciting research at upcoming SRP meetings.

Jim Gold, Ph.D.

University of Maryland

Clementina P. Lo Proto, Yeshiva University
Olivia Russak, University of Colorado Boulder
Adam Culbreth, University of Maryland

Dr. Gold is currently professor of Psychiatry at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center, which is part of the University of Maryland School of Medicine. We asked Dr. Gold about his career trajectory and how he came to study schizophrenia. He told us that while he did not study psychology as an undergraduate student at Hampshire College, he decided he wanted to be a psychoanalyst at the age of 22 and took several graduate courses at The New School in New York City. He was introduced to schizophrenia in what he describes as "a totally life-changing lecture by Dr. Erlenmeyer-Kimling " on the genetics of mental illness in the first lecture of the first course he took at The New School. This prompted him to spend the semester reading every book on schizophrenia available at the school's library, and subsequently passing that course with an A+.

Treating psychosis was the growing focus of Dr. Gold's professional



interests. He went on to get his PhD in clinical psychology from Adelphi University and completed his clinical psychology internship at the Bronx Public Hospital, where he had the opportunity to work with psychiatric patients, and had the fortune to meet Alice Medalia who was his first supervisor in neuropsychological assessment. Dr. Gold then completed postdoctoral training in clinical neuropsychology at New York Hospital and went on to work at Saint Elizabeth's Hospital. He notes that his review article on "Antipsychotic Effects on Neuropsych Performance in Schizophrenia" was a catalyst for his move to Saint Elizabeth's, thanks to the attention that it received by key professionals there. Dr. Gold describes his 10 years there as "very fortunate and those were really exciting times." There, he was part of Dan Weinberger's lab that "pioneered all kinds of structural and functional imaging." Dr. Gold explained that he had the

opportunity to obtain a "great clinical education" and moved up to become the clinical director of the program, supervising a 45-bed inpatient program for a number of years until the program closed.

Dr. Gold's current research program at the University of Maryland focuses on understanding the etiology of cognitive and affective dysfunction associated with schizophrenia, with a particular focus on negative symptoms. Throughout his career, Dr. Gold has stressed the bridging of basic and clinical research by encouraging by collaborating with researchers such as Steve Luck and Michael Frank, who are at the cutting edge of basic psychology and neuroscience. Dr. Gold has also been involved in highly collaborative research ventures with other schizophrenia researchers through his work on the Cognitive Neuroscience Test Reliability and Clinical applications for Schizophrenia (CNTRACS) Consortium. This collaborative project seeks to provide psychometric data on tasks from cognitive neuroscience in order to assess effectiveness of treatments designed to remediate the cognitive dysfunction and general functional deficits in schizophrenia.

In the future, Dr. Gold hopes to get into the area of prodromal research. He hopes to make a difference in helping people get treated early in their course of illness and would like to design interventions. He mentioned that he felt like he made the most

difference as a clinician when he was working at St. Elizabeth's, and commented on how important that knowledge he gained there continues to be for him to this day, which also is one reason he mentioned that he misses working in inpatient facilities.

We also asked Dr. Gold for his advice to young researchers. He offered three main pieces of advice during our interview. The first was to understand that a person can't be good at everything. He stressed the importance of building partnerships with basic scientists in order to solve problems using methodologies that don't always get talked about in the clinical psychology field. The second was to really, sincerely know about patients, to spend time with the population you are studying. Again, he alluded to his time at St. Elizabeth's, telling us that it really helped him to get to know about patients with schizophrenia. He stressed that:

"Researchers in the field of clinical psychology must be intimately involved in observing, assessing, and treating disorders that are the subject of their research program. This is especially important early in training when researchers are attempting to generate questions about psychopathology that are both pertinent to patient populations and which address critical gaps in the scientific knowledge base."

Finally, Dr. Gold spoke to the importance of scientific integrity and being “cautious with science.” He has found that many students are pressured into publishing before they are ready, which can lead them to disseminate findings prematurely and produce such difficulties as “effect size inflation.” We

look forward to seeing where Dr. Gold’s research leads him in the future.



William Iacono, Ph.D.

University of Minnesota

2014 Sustained Mentor Award

Avante J. Smack, University of Houston
Kathleen W. Reardon, University of Houston
Jessica L. Hamilton, Temple University

Dr. William Iacono is a Regents Professor and McKnight Distinguished University Professor at the University of Minnesota. He is the Co-Director of the Minnesota Center for Twin and Family Research along with Dr. Matt McGue. Dr. Iacono was the recipient of this year's Society for Research in Psychopathology John Neale Mentorship Award. We had the opportunity to sit down and talk with him about his research, mentorship role, and advice for new students entering the field of psychology. Dr. William Iacono first became interested in psychology as an undergraduate chemical engineering student at Carnegie Mellon University, where he said he was more interested in philosophy and psychology than his own major. He transitioned to a psychology major and pursued the research opportunities available to him. Dr. Iacono went on to receive his



doctoral degree from the University of Minnesota under the mentorship of Dr. David Lykken. While there, Dr. Iacono said he was able "to marry . . . two [methods] and do research . . . using behavioral genetic methods along with psychophysiological methods" to study schizophrenia. Following his graduate studies, Dr. Iacono joined the faculty at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver where he conducted a longitudinal epidemiological study of first onset schizophrenia, which sparked his interest in development. Dr. Iacono then returned to his graduate school alma mater, the University of Minnesota, as an Associate Professor. When the National Institute of Drug Abuse put out a call for research on the biological effects of substance use in humans, Dr. Iacono saw an opportunity to apply what he had learned about biological

measures and schizophrenia to this new area. He began his renowned longitudinal twin study that is, remarkably, still ongoing. Dr. Iacono continues to add innovative techniques, including brain imaging and genotyping, to his longitudinal twin study.



Dr. Iacono has made many wonderful contributions to psychological research. When asked what he considers to be his greatest contribution to the field, Dr. Iacono explained that psychology is more about incremental contributions to the field, and that much of his career has been focused on developing ideas around endophenotypes. He shared that “a concern that I have had for about 15 years is that endophenotypes are intended to help us find psychopathology-related genetic variants, but we were never able to actually put them to the test. So in this work that I’m doing in the Twin Family Study, we got to the point where we could put them to the test by examining their molecular genetic basis.” Dr. Iacono explained that they have the

DNA on about 5,000 people assessed in his psychophysiology lab that enabled him and his colleagues to carry out a genome-wide association and sequencing study of 17 endophenotypic measures. The results are in the December 2014 issue of the journal *Psychophysiology* that was devoted entirely to the work of his lab. Thus far, his conclusion is that endophenotypes are complicated and may not help us with the genome work as expected, but that endophenotypes are going to have utility in other important ways.

As this year’s recipient of the Society for Research in Psychopathology mentorship award, it is not surprising that Dr. Iacono identified his trainees over the years as one of the most important parts of his legacy and contribution to the field.

“I get a great deal of satisfaction out of helping young people with career development. It’s fun to work with people on new ideas, and . . . you’re developing people into scientists who will carry forward your ideas [and] . . . add significance at a personal level that you don’t get just by publishing a paper.”

When asked to share advice with incoming graduate students and

researchers who are in the early stages of their careers, Dr. Iacono advised that it is important to take advantage of opportunities wherever you are and to “push the envelope yourself for what it is that you can accomplish.” He expanded that by saying, “I think all clinical students are faced with a sense of competing priorities and you need to get a sense of how to balance that... So I say to my students that you really should try to figure that out by the end of the first semester and certainly by the end of the first year... what's really important, what am I trying to do, where am I going to invest my time.”

Beyond his contributions to research and mentorship, Dr. Iacono also enjoys success as a photographer. He primarily takes photos of the outdoors and nature, including on his canoe trips with students and employees each summer. Though Dr. Iacono was modest in naming himself a

professional photographer, he has won several competitive awards for his photos (onetreeislandphotography.com). We continue to be impressed by Dr. Iacono's brilliance and success!

Overall, when reflecting back on his career thus far, Dr. Iacono was overwhelmingly positive. He said, “The neat thing about what I do is that it's hard to make too many bad choices. You're usually choosing among really good things. What you want to do is something you love, and for me there are probably 30 things I could do ...that I would really, really love, so I feel good about what I'm doing.” With his advice of doing what you love in mind, we concluded the interview thinking about all of the possibilities for our own careers. We were so excited at the opportunity to talk with Dr. Iacono, and are waiting to see where his research will take him next!