Towson University Experimental Psychology Newsletter


ALUMNI UPDATES

Tiana Krum started a new career as a Research Analyst for the Research Unit of the University of Maryland Counseling Center.

Jesse Rothweiler recently began a Ph.D. program in Cognitive Psychology at Iowa State University and is working with Dr. Christian Meisner.

Blair Shevlin has started a Ph.D. program in Decision Psychology at The Ohio State University working with Dr. Roger Ratcliff.

Nimra Jamil is now a Research Program Coordinator at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in the Dept. of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychology at Towson University.

Kristin Winter has been working at Chemical Defense since she was a student in the Experimental Psychology Program. She was hired by the D.O.D. in a GS rated position as a biologist and lab manager. Kristin also earned her B.S. in psychology from Towson University.

Jessica Stansbury graduated in December 2016 with a doctorate of education degree in Instructional Technology from Towson University Instructional Technology Program.

Debbie Patton just returned from a 10-month scientist exchange program at the Defence Science and Technology Group in Adelaide, South Australia, where she worked in simulation training, and assessing new land vehicle systems.

Bryan Moore completed a graduate certificate program in Regulatory Affairs at The George Washington University.

Michael Andrews recently earned a fellowship as a Research Technician with Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Department of Behavioral Biology, Sleep Research Center.

“I feel incredibly fortunate to have found myself in a position so related to my training and degree from Towson University.”

Rebeccah Bernard recently passed the EPPP and is now working as a staff psychologist for the VA Maryland Healthcare System in Baltimore.

Nathan Lenick started a doctoral program in Life-Span Developmental at West Virginia University.

Felicia Wright successfully defended her dissertation on “Identification of Differential Item Functioning of Self-Esteem in a Sample of High Achieving Minority Students.”

David (DJ) Rompilla recently accepted a year-long research coordinator position working under Dr. Claudia Haase at Northwestern University. He will be coordinating a study involving emotion regulation and relevant physiological measures in older adults.

Kristen Amber Brock was recently hired as the Student Community Pastor at Mountain Christian Church in Joppa, MD.
Welcome, first-year students!


CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW ALUMNI!

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<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Undergraduate College</th>
<th>Research Advisor</th>
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<td>Andrew Bennett</td>
<td>Towson University</td>
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<td>Kyle Edward Berger</td>
<td>Towson University</td>
<td>Bryan Devan</td>
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<td>Laura Jean Castellon</td>
<td>East Stroudsburg University</td>
<td>Bryan Devan/Rick Parente</td>
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<td>Larry D. Fort</td>
<td>Stevenson University</td>
<td>Kerri Goodwin</td>
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<td>Anthony Reed Garove</td>
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<td>Cristina Iafolla</td>
<td>Towson University</td>
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<td>Carolyn Ann Koch</td>
<td>University of Maryland, College Park</td>
<td>Jacqueline Leventon</td>
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<td>Zoe Kolker</td>
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<td>Kristy Meads</td>
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<td>Mark Chachich</td>
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<td>Jared Wildberger</td>
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EXPY AWARDS

**Anita Delahay** was awarded the Graduate Student Research Award for her thesis on “The Role of Retrieval Practice in Text Comprehension”.

**Jesse Rothweiler** was awarded the 2017 Outstanding Graduate Student Award in the EXPY Program, and the Psychology Department’s 2017 Distinguished Graduate Student Award.

**Blair Shevlin** was awarded the Psychology Department’s 2017 Distinguished Graduate Student Award.
### STUDENT/ALUMNI PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

**ERIC BOORMAN**  

**KRISTEN BROCK**  

**DEBORAH CARSON**  

**BELINDA CHEN**  

**BRYAN MOORE**  


**DREW PARTON**  


**DAVID (DJ) ROMPILLA**  

**ANTONIA SANTORO**  

**RACHEL TOCCO**  
Meet the EXPY Faculty

Dr. Jeff Kukucka

Can you tell us a little bit about your research?

My research is in the area of psychology and law, which is, broadly speaking, all the ways you can use psychology to assist or improve the operation of the legal system. I’m really interested in social justice issues and making sure that the justice system is functioning as well as it can. A lot of the work that I do is inspired by real-world instances of people being convicted and going to jail for crimes that they didn’t actually commit, and kind of looking back at those cases and seeing what went wrong and how we can change the system in ways that prevent that from happening again. For example, many people have seen forensic science portrayed on TV, but unfortunately, it’s not always as accurate and reliable in the real world; sometimes forensic scientists make mistakes, and sometimes those mistakes are due to psychological influences.

The great thing about psychology and law is that no matter what part of psychology interests you, there’s a way to apply it to the legal system. I’ve had students do research on lie detection, eyewitness memory, jury decision-making, racial bias in the justice system... there’s really no end to it. If you’re interested in memory, you can study eyewitness memory; if you’re interested in social psychology, you can research interrogations; if you’re interested in developmental psychology, you can study children in the justice system and how we treat children differently from adults.

What kind of studies are you doing right now?

I have a few studies of my own and some student-led projects as well. When I take on a student, it’s obviously helpful if they are already interested in the same things that I’m interested in. But if our interests are slightly different, we sit down and try to find a middle ground where they can do a project on something that interests them, but is also relevant to the things in which I have experience to make sure that I can be a good advisor to them.

One of my current students [Lauren Grove] is a great example: She came in interested in juveniles in the justice system. I’m not a developmental psychologist so I don’t know that much about development, but I do know that with respect to a lot of things in the justice system, juveniles can—and arguably should—be treated differently from adults. So we came up with a project that blended her interest and mine by looking at how people, namely juries, view juvenile interrogations differently from adult interrogations.

Another one of my Masters students [Heather Applegarth] is interested in employee recruitment and selection, so she and I sat down and came up with a study on whether people who are wrongly convicted are later discriminated against when they get out of jail and apply for a job. We’re collecting data on it right now but it looks like they are, which has lasting consequences for them in terms of their ability to make money and to support themselves. As we discover more of these wrongful convictions, and there are more innocent people getting out of prison after being convicted of something that they didn’t do, psychologists have started to ask questions about how well those people are able to transition back into society. So, this is another perfect example of blending interests.

Over the past few years, I’ve also worked with several police departments around the country, collecting data on the impact of videotaping police interrogations. For a long time, there’s been this debate over whether police should or shouldn’t record interrogations, and we realized that neither side really had any data to back up their arguments, so we went and collected some. We found that recording is actually quite beneficial; it deters police from using coercive tactics, it helps police remember the interrogation better, and it helps juries determine whether a suspect is guilty or innocent, but it doesn’t make the suspects less talkative or less cooperative. That’s the great thing about this area of research: The work that we do can really impact how the justice system works.

How did you get into the field of Psychology and Law?

I don’t know how many people know this, but I was Dr. Goodwin’s student before she came to Towson. While taking her undergraduate Cognitive Psychology class at Loyola University, I participated in a study on eyewitness memory for extra credit. I thought the study was really cool, so I started talking to the experimenter, who turned out to be one of Dr. Goodwin’s students doing a study for her senior thesis. She said she needed another Research Assistant and asked if I was interested in the position. So, purely by accident, I ended up working in Dr. Goodwin’s lab, which is how I got my foot in the door doing this kind of research. It was entirely because of what Dr. Goodwin was doing.

Finally, can you share something personal about you?

I’m a big music nerd; if you walk past my office, I’m always listening to something. Phish is one of my favorite bands; I’ve seen them in concert almost 50 times, all over the country. Another fun fact about me is that my wife and I are currently in the process of trying to visit all 50 states. We’ve been working on this for a couple of years and every summer we try to knock out another 5 or 6 states. We’re up to 39 or 40 now, and we’re thinking of planning a trip to either Alaska or Hawaii this summer to knock one of those off of the list.