

LIFE COURSE AND AGING CENTER

LSU'S INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTER FOR TODAY, TOMORROW, AND BEYOND

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Dr. Edward Zigler, Head Start Founder, Visits LSU

On March 25th, 2008 Dr. Edward Zigler was the keynote speaker at the LCAC Annual Luncheon and Student Poster Session His visit was a tremendous honor and great success, and his presentations were very relevant to many of the members of the LCAC.

Dr. Zigler is one of the truly great living contemporary psychologists. Not only has he been an influential research scientist, publishing hundreds of scholarly papers and numerous books, but, perhaps more notably, he has been and continues to be among the most influential persons in the US in formulating and guiding federal policy on the education and healthy growth, of children in poverty. He is **the** "father" of Head Start and the various family-child programs inspired by Head Start. Dr. Zigler was appointed by President Nixon in 1972 as the first director of the U.S. office of Child Development and Chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau. While in these posts he developed and conceptualized the fledgling Head Start Program into its current form and status as the Federal government's principal educational outreach program for poor and disadvantaged children. For the past 50 years, he has been the principal intellectual driving force behind Head Start. During this time he has served in numerous federal posts and advisory positions under several presidents, including Presidents Nixon, Carter, Clinton, and the current President Bush.

In addition to Dr. Zigler's influential public policy contributions he is universally recognized for his many pivotal empirical and theoretical contributions to understanding of child development, mental retardation, psychopathology, and educational practice. Dr. Zigler has been for many years and still remains one of the most frequently cited individuals in the professional literature. His research has been continuously supported by different federal agencies and foundations. In recognition of his myriad contributions he has been honored by numerous professional groups, organizations, foundations, and universities.



(left to right), Katrice Albert, Alan Baumeister, Brooks Keel, Astrid Merget, Ed Zigler, and Katie Cherry

Life Course and Aging Center Updates

- We welcome our new faculty member: **Dr. Arend W. A. Van Gemmert** in the Department of Kinesiology. Dr. Van Gemmert joins us from Arizona State University.
- LSU School of Social Work assistant professor, **Dr. Scott E. Wilks** received the prestigious Hartford Foundation Scholar Award.
- Get up-to-date with the latest research being done by center members! Our sixth annual luncheon for community partners will be held on March 13, 2009.
- Visit our website: <http://www.lsuagingstudies.com>

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Dr. Mark Batzer Given LSU's Highest Distinction

Prestigious researcher adds "Boyd Professor" to his ever-growing list of titles

BATON ROUGE – Mark Batzer, LSU alumnus and one of the university's most prominent faculty members, was recently named an LSU System Boyd Professor, the highest academic rank at the university, by the LSU Board of Supervisors at its August Meeting.

Batzer, who holds the title of Dr. Mary Lou Applewhite Distinguished Professor in Biological Sciences, becomes the 66th LSU System faculty member to achieve Boyd status in the 55 years since the honor was created.

"His work has contributed significantly to our understanding of the genetic diversity of humans," said Kevin Carman, dean of the LSU College of Basic Sciences, who noted that Batzer's work has the potential for advancing disease prevention and producing a better understanding of evolution. Batzer's research has also resulted in several patents that are currently being used in forensic DNA analysis by companies such as Reliagene, Inc. of New Orleans.

Batzer, the author of more than 215 peer-reviewed publications in leading academic journal articles, including cover articles in both "Nature" and "Science," was commended in the unanimous resolution that awarded him the Boyd professorship as a "highly productive" researcher whose work has bridged international borders to "link collaborators in innovative approaches to the study of population biology and human origins." His work has been cited more than 7,500 times in scientific literature.

In May, Batzer and an international team of researchers made headlines in the scientific world with a groundbreaking study of platypus DNA. Their research revealed that the duck-billed platypus is actually a bizarre combination of mammal, bird and reptile genes, a discovery that was hailed as providing new insight into how humans and other mammals first evolved.

Batzer has also participated in equally significant genetic studies focusing on the rhesus macaque and the opossum over the past year. For more information, contact Batzer at 225-578-7102 or mbatzer@lsu.edu, or visit <http://batzerlab.lsu.edu/>

RELATED LINKS:

- Platypus study:
<http://appl003.lsu.edu/UNV002.NSF/ebbed8deb406c8c986256da30052e7dd/7875d21d35aea9a586257442007baa92?OpenDocument>
- Opossum study:
<http://appl003.lsu.edu/UNV002.NSF/ebbed8deb406c8c986256da30052e7dd/0ec0eff7bc1c5493862572d60069f1fb?OpenDocument>
- Macaque study:
<http://appl003.lsu.edu/UNV002.NSF/ebbed8deb406c8c986256da30052e7dd/40a2263bc857c6b5862572bb0069b777?OpenDocument>

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LSU Conducts Trials for Peripheral Neuropathy Treatment Drugs



The Department of Kinesiology in the College of Education has successfully registered three clinical trials with an international register. The principle investigator of these three clinical trials is Dr. Li Li, Jo Ellen Levy Yates associate professor of Kinesiology. The registered trials are: ISRCTN20181108 - The effect of Neuragen® on neuropathic pain: Double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial; ISRCTN13226601 - Neuragen® for the relief of neuropathic pain: a randomized, double-blind, placebo controlled clinical trial and ISRCTN08911796 - Neuragen® for the relief of neuropathic pain part 2: a randomized, double-blind, placebo controlled clinical trial.

These clinical trials are sponsored by a Canadian pharmaceutical company – Origin Biomed, Inc. Neuragen® is an over-the-counter topical ointment that designed to control pain due to peripheral neuropathy. The studies are conducted in conjunction with LSU Peripheral Neuropathy Studies, directed by Dr. Li (see PN.LSU.EDU for further details). Some preliminary results of the studies were presented at the annual meeting of International Society of Electrophysiology and Kinesiology during June 18-22, 2008.

These clinical trials have received attention in the media. For more information please visit:

<http://www.emaxhealth.com/1/60/26309/lsu-conducts-trials-neuragen-homeopathic-drug.html>

***Pictured above:** Dr. Li Li, from LSU Department of Kinesiology gives a talk on October 15, 2008 at the Annual meeting of the Chinese Association of Biomechanics in Sports (CABS) on behalf of the International Society of Biomechanics (ISB) in Taiyuan, China during his sabbatical, Fall semester 2008.*

OLLI at LSU Program Expanding!

THE OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE (OLLI) AT LSU is a membership-based community of mature adults who love learning and enjoy spending time with like-minded individuals. At present there are three lifelong learning chapters: The Lagniappe Studies Unlimited chapter in Baton Rouge, the Felicianas chapter in St. Francisville, and the St. James Place chapter in Baton Rouge. Other chapters are in the making. Our mission is to foster accessible lifelong learning and individual growth for mature learners aged 50 and better by creating intellectually stimulating learning opportunities and program tracks that will enrich their lives. Membership is open to anyone 50 and over. Chapters hold coffees between program semesters to invite prospective members to learn about the program. For more information about the OLLI at LSU program, call 225-578-6763 or visit the web site: www.outreach.lsu.edu/OLLI.



LCAC Faculty Member Named Hartford Scholar

In April 2008, Dr. Scott E. Wilks was named a John A. Hartford Foundation Faculty Scholar in Geriatric Social Work. Accompanying this title is Hartford's two-year funding commitment of \$100,000 (2008-2010) for research related to improving health and care for older adults and their caregivers. It is funded by the Hartford Foundation and administered by the Gerontological Society of America. Dr. Wilks is the first faculty member from LSU to be selected as a Hartford scholar, as well as the first faculty member from the state of Louisiana.

Dr. Wilks' research agenda focuses primarily on non-professional (unpaid) Alzheimer's disease (AD) caregivers: their perceived burden, coping skills, and resilience stemming from coping success. His Hartford project is the first study to examine AD caregiving appraisal with the specific, psychological well-being outcome of resilience. Resilience is identified as the positive characteristic of strength and hardiness as a result of successful adaptation to adversity. Potential ethnic differences in this caregiving process, particularly on effects of varying coping strategies, will also be explored. Dr. Wilks' research on stress, coping, and resilience has been highlighted in a recent article in *The Advocate*, titled *Caregivers Need Support to Handle Constant Stress* (11-30-08, p. 2D). The article emphasizes caregivers' overwhelming sense of caregiving burden and their need for social support with family, friends, and professional support services. Among other populations, social support has shown to be a strong, protective factor of resilience, buffering the deleterious effects of adversity. With his Hartford project, Dr. Wilks aims to provide empirical evidence for specific coping strategies and social support systems as protective within the burden – resilience relationship. In addition to the Hartford Foundation, Dr. Wilks benefits from the collaborative support of the LCAC and Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area (Baton Rouge).

To learn about the John A. Hartford Foundation, please visit www.jhartfound.org.

To learn more about the Gerontological Society of America, that nation's oldest and largest multidisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging, please visit www.geron.org.

New Faculty Highlights

Dr. Russell Matthews, Department of Psychology

Russell Matthews, Ph.D., joined the LSU Psychology Department in 2007 as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Matthews received his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut in *Industrial/Organizational Psychology* (2007), and also holds graduate certificates in *Occupational Health Psychology* and *Quantitative Research Methods* (UConn, 2007). In addition to participating in the LCAC, he is also Director of Organizational Psychology Research Consultancy at LSU.



Dr. Russell Matthews

Dr. Matthews' primary research interests include the stressor/strain process with an emphasis on how working adults manage their work and family lives. Outcomes of interest include employee health, job and family satisfaction, turnover intentions, and organizational deviance. Other topics of interest included methodological issues related to the study of work-family issues, and the effect worker age has on workplace experiences. Dr. Matthews recently co-authored a chapter in *Aging and work in the 21st century* (Erlbaum-2007), was recognized as a finalist for the 2007 Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence in Work-Family Research, and is member of the Sloan Work and Family Research Network Early Career Work and Family Scholars Program. Given the interdisciplinary nature of his work, Dr. Matthews is particularly interested in developing collaborative research projects with other LCAC members.

Dr. Arend W. A. Van Gemmert, Department of Kinesiology

Dr. Van Gemmert received his BA in Psychology, and MA and PhD in Experimental Psychology from the University of Nijmegen (currently Radboud University), Nijmegen, The Netherlands. In 1992 he

was also an ERASMUS Graduate Student (European Exchange Program) in the Department of Psychology at The University of Birmingham, United Kingdom, and in 1994 he received a NATO Fellowship (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) to attend a summer workshop on “Multisensory Control of Movement” at the ISAS, Trieste, Italy (International School for Advanced Studies). In 1997, he moved to the United States, to join the Motor Control laboratory at Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona. In 1999, he obtained a joint appointment in the Department of Neurology at the Mayo Clinic Scottsdale, Arizona, as a Special Project Associate. Dr. Van Gemmert joined the faculty of the Department of Kinesiology at LSU, in August 2008 as an Assistant Professor, and director of the Fine Motor Control and Learning laboratory. He also immediately joined the LCAC. Dr. Van Gemmert’s professional memberships include the Society for Neuroscience (SfN), the American Psychological Association (APA-divisions Experimental Psychology (3), Rehabilitation Psychology (22), and Clinical Neuropsychology (40)), and the International Graphonomics Society (IGS). At the IGS, he has served as Secretary (2001-2005) and Treasurer (2001-2007), and currently he is a member of the Advisory Council.



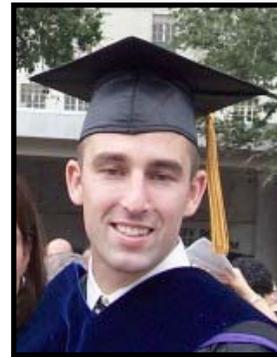
Dr. Arend Van Gemmert

Dr. Van Gemmert’s research interests centers around the control of fine motor tasks, such as handwriting, drawing, pointing, and reach-to-grasp movements. More specific, his interests center around three different, but related, themes. The first area is focused on the mechanisms causing changes in motor control during increased demands due to stress and mental load. The second area is focused on the changes in fine movement control due to physiologic deterioration of the movement system as result of advanced age and neurological disease. In the past 11 years Dr. Van Gemmert has been working on NINDS (National Institute for Neurological Disorders and Stroke) funded projects centered on Parkinson’s disease and aging. Dr. Van Gemmert is determined to continue this research at LSU, which is concentrated around the determination of the mechanisms causing changes in fine motor performance of the elderly, and the origin(s) of

deficient movement control in Parkinson’s disease. Finally, the last theme of his interest combines the two fore mentioned research subjects focused on the changes occurring in fine motor performance. This last area of research he is focused on challenges to (re)learn fine motor tasks under strenuous conditions as a consequence of stress, mental load, advanced age, and neurological disease.

The hospitable environment and strong support of the Department of Kinesiology and LCAC upon Dr. Van Gemmert’s arrival at LSU has made the transition for him very easy. Therefore, he is very excited about the opportunities he has been given to further his research agenda and initiate new ones, which he believes will flourish in the collegial environment at LSU.

LCAC Alumni Update:



*Dr. Brad Manor
May 2008 Graduate*

Dr. Brad Manor, former LCAC graduate enhancement recipient, is currently in his first year as a post-doctoral researcher at Harvard Medical School and the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, MA. Dr. Manor’s research interests include the effects of age-related movement disorders on balance, as well as interventions aimed at alleviating fall risk.

Dr. Rania Mekary continues her work as a post-doctoral researcher at Harvard Medical School. She has completed studies on epidemiology of nutrition (antioxidants) and colorectal cancer, physical activity and weight changes, and physical activity epidemiology. She is currently working on a new grant proposal to extend her stay.



Student Highlights

Emily O. Boudreaux, Department of Psychology

Emily Olinde Boudreaux is a fifth year doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Katie Cherry. She completed her masters last year and is currently starting work towards her dissertation. The study is one component of the Louisiana Healthy Aging Study, in which older adults' memory aging concerns is examined. It is expected that the data will provide insight into what factors influence the everyday memory aging fears and worries of older adults as well as the most commonly reported memory aging concerns. There are many possible practical applications that could be developed as a result of the study such as educational programs targeting particular at-risk individuals. Emily is also currently teaching an introductory psychology course and is completing the requirements towards a dual degree in clinical psychology.

Jenny Y. Denver, Department of Psychology

Jenny is a fourth year Cognitive/Developmental Psychology doctoral student in Dr. Katie Cherry's lab. Her current research interests are related to the study and measurement of ageism with a particular focus on the relationships among ageism, knowledge of aging, knowledge of memory aging, social desirability, and psychological well-being. Jenny is also a second year MSW student in the LSU School of Social Work and is working as an intern with the Grief Recovery Center. Jenny received her bachelor's and master's degrees in Psychology from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga where she worked with Drs. Amye Warren and Rich Metzger. Recently, she attended the annual convention of the Gerontological Society of America where she was co-author on a paper presented by Dr. Erdman Palmore. Jenny is also a co-author on two posters that will be presented at the annual convention of the Southeastern Psychological Association in February 2009.

Heather Gough, School of Social Work

Heather is a first year doctoral student in the Social Work Department, working with Dr. Cecile Guin as her advisor. Ms. Gough received her BA in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley. She received her JD from the University of California, Berkeley (Boalhall) and is an active member of the California State Bar. Ms. Gough earned her MSW from the University of Denver and is currently working as a graduate assistant at LSU with Dr. Scott Wilks, Hartford Scholar. Her interests include the intersections between law and social work as well as healthy family functioning throughout the life course. Ms.

Gough was named an LCAC Enhanced Student for the 2008-2009 academic term.

Zahra Kadivar, Department of Kinesiology

Zahra Kadivar, is a Ph.D. candidate in the Kinesiology Department working under Dr. Jan Hondzinski. Zahra Kadivar acquired her Bachelor's degree in Physical Therapy from University of Shiraz Medical Center. She is interested in working with Parkinson's patients in order to find the most effective rehabilitation techniques which can assist these individuals with walking difficulties. She is also collaborating with Dr Emily Elliott from the Psychology department investigating the role of visual and auditory stimulation on attention network in middle aged adults. She is also working with Dr Scott Wilks from the Social Work Department to better understand the coping strategies of Parkinson's patients.

Jared LeDoux, Department of Psychology

Jared LeDoux is a second year doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Tracey Rizzuto. He received a B.S. in Psychology from McNeese State University and will receive his M.A. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology in May, 2009. His research interests include teamwork and team cognition, organizational training processes, and the nature of motivation within organizational settings. He currently has one manuscript under review (The importance of dyadic relationships in team process outcomes: A social relations analysis of interpersonal perceptions) with Dr. C. Allen Gorman of Angelo State University and Dr. David Woehr of the University of Tennessee. This research was also presented at the Society for Industrial Organizational Psychology (SIOP) conference in San Francisco in April, 2008. He has a second manuscript in press (It's not just what you know, it's who you know: Testing a model of relative importance of social networks to academic performance) with Drs. Tracey Rizzuto and John Paul Hatala. His thesis is entitled, "Task interdependence perceptions: Toward an integrative model of teamwork." He has previous graduate experience from the University of Tennessee and McNeese State University.

Laura Meiki, School of Social Work

Laura is a first year doctoral student in the School of Social Work. She received her MSW from University of Illinois at Chicago's Jane Addams College of Social Work in 1997 in the Health Social Work concentration. Her professional field experience includes hospice, home health and emergency room social work. In 2005 she joined the LSU system as an adjunct instructor and program coordinator with the Institute for Human Services and Public Policy at LSUS under the direction

of Dr. Norman Dolch. Laura transferred to LSU to work with School of Social Work's Office of Social Service Research and Development as a research associate in 2007 under the direction of Dr. Cecile Guin. She recently joined the staff of LSU's Office of Strategic Initiatives as a program coordinator and student advisor under the direction of Dr. Isiah Warner. Her primary research interest is end of life issues in social work education.

Ryan D. Russell – Department of Kinesiology

Ryan Russell is a fourth year doctoral student under the guidance of Dr. Arnold Nelson. His undergraduate degree is Biomedical Science from Marquette University, and is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and the American College of Sports Medicine. Ryan is on scholarship through the department of Education, and is funded through the Dept of Kinesiology and LCAC. He has several articles either published or in press at major journals in his field. He has also presented at both regional and national American College of Sports Medicine conferences on vascular health/cardiovascular improvements and has participated in the Louisiana Healthy Aging Study. His current intervention project involves exercise training elderly people in order to quantify metabolism in diabetes. He is projected to finish his PhD in the summer of 2010.

Jennie L. Silva, Department of Psychology

Jennie is a fourth year cognitive/developmental doctoral candidate in the Psychology department working with Dr. Katie Cherry. Jennie earned her bachelors and masters degrees in Psychology from the University of New Hampshire - Durham. Her research examines the genetic predictors of physical functioning and cognitive ability in older adults. Jennie will defend her dissertation entitled, *Apolipoprotein Status and Cognitive Functioning in Later Adulthood: Examining the Role of Health and Social Network Characteristics*, in the summer of 2009. Following graduation, Jennie will be an assistant professor of Psychology at Drury University this fall.

Marisa Sullivan – Department of Psychology

Marisa is a first year doctoral student in the cognitive and developmental program in the psychology department under the direction of Dr. Katie Cherry. She graduated with her bachelors in psychology from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in 2006. She recently graduated from Western Carolina University with her Masters degree in experimental psychology. While there, she completed her master's thesis entitled: *Examining the positivity effect: The relationship between age and optimism in autobiographical memory*. She plans on presenting her

thesis at the Southeastern Psychological Association conference in New Orleans this spring.

Johanna Thomas – School of Social Work

Johanna Thomas, MSW is a third year doctoral student in the Social Work Department. Dr. Cecile Guin is her advisor and committee chair. Mrs. Thomas received her BA in Sociology/Corrections from the University of Akron, Ohio. She received her MSW from Louisiana State University. Currently she is a graduate assistant in the Office of Social Service Research and Development working on the Truancy Assessment and Service Center (TASC) Grant. Her interests are truancy and delinquency and the implications of each through the life course. She recently presented on the implications of truancy through the life course at the Louisiana chapter of the National Association of Social Worker's Annual Conference. She is also set to present a workshop for licensed social workers on the same topic

LSU Faculty and Students Attend Gerontological Society of America Conference



(left to right) Dr. Lilly Allen, Dr. Howard Litwin, Dr. Erdman Palmore, Jenny Denver, and Dr. Charles Emllet.

LCAC's Dr. Lilly Allen and Ms. Jenny Denver presented at the Gerontological Society of America annual conference at National Harbor, Maryland in November of 2008. They were able to discuss their research with important leaders in the field from Hebrew University (Dr. Litwin), Duke University (Dr. Palmore), and University of Washington (Dr. Emllet).

The Life Course and Aging Center *is an interdisciplinary initiative out of the Office of Research and Economic Development at LSU*

Community Partners

James Bulot, PhD, Executive Director, Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs

John Graham, President/CEO St. James Place

Gwen Moore, PhD, St. James Place Retirement Community

Fr. Kenneth Ritter, Rector, Trinity Church

Kathy Vilas, JD, LCSW, Executive Director, Grief Recovery Center

Mrs. Susie Folse, Administrator of Ollie Steele Burden Manor

Teri Fonenot, President/CEO, Woman's Health Foundation

Todd Hamilton, Deputy Director, Catholic Charities

Barbara Auten, Executive Director Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area

Dr. Susan E. Nelson, Geriatrics, Lake Senior Care

Liz Berzas, Our Lady of the Lake College

Twanda L. Lewis, Baton Rouge Area Foundation

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Li Li, PhD, Department of Kinesiology

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Russell Matthews, Department of Psychology

Janet McDonald, PhD, Department of Psychology

Pam Monroe, PhD, Professor, School of Social Work

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