

## STUDENTS

## THE CAMPUS CORNER

## Dalhousie University (Department of Psychology and Neuroscience)

Halifax, Nova Scotia (if we were any farther east we would fall into the Atlantic Ocean)

JENNIFER PARKER, M.Sc. - Ph.D. Student

**N**ova Scotia has enjoyed a beautiful fall and Dalhousie's campus is alive with undergraduate and graduate students. Halifax is, on average, Canada's warmest city and situated in the heart of the city is Dalhousie University (established in 1818), one of the oldest universities in the country.

Psychology was first taught at Dalhousie in 1838 as a course in the Philosophy Department by Thomas McCulloch, a professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy. In 1855, Dalhousie's Rev. William Lyall authored Canada's first psychology textbook. Also, Donald O. Hebb, one of the most highly influential neuropsychologists in the field of learning, was a BA student in English and philosophy at Dalhousie from 1921-1925. In 1948, a separate psychology department offering a bachelor's and a master's degree was created, and in 1963 a doctorate in psychology was offered. In 1989, Dalhousie established a Ph.D. program in clinical psy-

chology and an extensive neuroscience program that awarded bachelor's (honours), master's, and doctorate degrees. More recently, in 1998, an undergraduate certificate in forensic psychology was created, and this continues to be an area of interest in both the undergraduate and graduate programs.

In the undergraduate program, there are over 450 students who choose to major in psychology or neuroscience each year and more than 40 honours students. Most of the upper-level courses are small, with about 50 students in third-year lecture courses and fewer than 20 students in fourth-year seminar classes. In the grad-

uate program, the experimental and neuroscience programs consist of a master's and doctorate degree, whereas the clinical program is a 5-year Ph.D. program based on the scientist-practitioner model. One unique feature of Dalhousie's Ph.D. programs is that graduate students conduct comprehensive research projects rather than oral or written comprehensive exams. These projects help to strengthen research skills and broaden research interests. There are over 60 graduate students who have a wide range of research interests including, cognitive neuropsychology, behavioural neuroscience, visual and auditory perception, animal learning, cognition, attention, memory, child development, substance abuse and addictions, and health psychology, among many others. With many nearby private clinics and hospitals, including the Isaac Walton Killam Health Centre (IWK), the largest children's hospital in Atlantic Canada, clinical students are able



In 1971, psychology moved into the Life Sciences Centre where it remains today.

to choose from many challenging and interesting practica and internships. At Dalhousie, graduate students are given many opportunities to strengthen their teaching skills through paid teaching assistantships. In addition, although many (over 65%) students are externally funded, Dalhousie offers a competitive guaranteed level of funding for each student, which not only helps to decrease degree completion time, but also alleviates a considerable amount of stress.

Research at Dalhousie is a top priority; recently *ScienceWatch*

(October/November 2005) ranked our psychology department number one in Canada based on research impact as measured by the number of citations per paper. Furthermore, in 2006, *The Scientist* magazine named Dalhousie the best non-commercial scientific institute in which to work in Canada. In our department, we currently have 36 faculty members, 20 adjunct faculty members, and 17 cross-appointed members, with over four million dollars in research funding. We are always searching for innovative researchers and our newest faculty members include Drs. Sean Barrett, Hélène Deacon, Kevin Duffy, Sophie Jacques, Shannon Johnson, Aaron Newman, and Leslie Phillmore.

To learn more about research at Dalhousie or to obtain more information about the psychology department at both the undergraduate and graduate level, please visit the website at <http://psychology.dal.ca>

## The Myth of Work-Family Balance?

## A Response from the Section for Students

KELLY B. SMITH, Queen's University  
Chair, CPA's Section for Students

**I**n the *Psynopsis* issue of Fall 2006, Dr. Elizabeth Church wrote a piece entitled 'The Myth of Work-Family Balance?' In this thought-provoking article, Dr. Church outlined the difficulties in balancing one's career and family, and the concerns that graduate students have regarding this balance.

Certainly, for many students, a struggle ensues when they consider how, and if, they can have both a successful family life and a successful career. This struggle can cause stress, and may cause students to doubt their ability to have 'it all' (i.e., a career and family). Questions may arise such as 'is it possible to have both a successful career and family?', 'when is the best time to have children?', and 'will I be able to fulfill my duties as both a parent and a professional?'

However, students may be reluctant to voice such questions or concerns in the graduate school setting. As Dr. Church noted, students do not want to appear uncommitted to their careers by raising such issues. This highlights the challenge that some students face – the challenge of feeling torn between work and family, and perhaps feeling it necessary to sacrifice one domain (e.g., family) for the sake of the other (e.g., career). Students may also

feel that they lack appropriate role models who are both successful professionals and parents. Although graduate school can be a time of great professional and personal rewards, it may also be a time of added stress and anxiety for those who are contemplating both career and family decisions.

In response to work-family balance concerns, Dr. Church recommended that 'family-friendly' graduate programs be developed, and that universities establish policies regarding child rearing. As students, we would welcome such developments! Although it may be daunting to develop new policies, or change existing environments, here are some student- and family-friendly suggestions that departments may consider:

**Find a mentor:** Encourage students to seek a mentor who has both a professional career and a family. Perhaps establish a

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