Psychology's dazzling array of careers

When I completed my doctorate several decades ago, the job market was good, but the choices were narrow. My fellow graduates and I had three major career options: university faculties, public mental health facilities or Veteran’s Administration hospitals. Faculty positions carried the highest prestige and the lowest salaries; public mental health facilities offered opportunities for part-time practice; the VA offered good salaries and a secure future. Most of my graduate student friends chose one or another of these options, and many have continued on their chosen paths for their entire careers.

Now, psychologists are everywhere. The job market may not be quite as good, but the choices are dazzling. Psychology is an extraordinarily diverse field with hundreds of career paths. In addition to the choices of several decades ago, psychologists are now found in government, courtrooms, corporate offices, advertising agencies, consulting firms and high-tech businesses.

A recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education noted that many new psychology graduates who might have been expected to enter academic careers are now being lured away from academia by jobs in business, ranging from survey research to software design. And the complexities and frustrations of the current health-care system have led many who would have been clinical practitioners to jobs just as varied.

The cover story of this month's Monitor features profiles of recent psychology graduate students who are pursuing innovative careers that draw on their education and training in new and exciting ways. These young psychologists are making their mark in a variety of arenas, most of which could hardly have been imagined just a few years ago and for few of which the graduates were specifically trained.

A foundation for success

Studying psychology at the bachelor's level has always been considered a good preparation for working with people in a variety of fields. Although there are few

more people with psychology degrees will probably apply their skills and training to the field of management, which is a natural fit for psychologists. While managers were once valued largely for their technical expertise, today there is an increasing recognition of the importance of having managers and executives with strong interpersonal skills—skills that many psychologists learn as part of their graduate education and training. The ability to systematically observe, record, analyze and interpret data, when applied to human behavior, opens many doors for psychologists.

Because the field of psychology is so diverse—APA alone has 53 divisions—psychologists are accustomed to dealing with colleagues with very different training and background, and thus find it easy to team up with other professionals in other disciplines such as physicians, lawyers, school personnel, computer experts, engineers, policy makers and managers to contribute to every aspect of society.

A bright future

Despite the ebbs and flows in the job market, which can be distressing to new graduates, psychology is a discipline with a bright future. Among fields requiring a college degree, it is expected to be the third fastest growing field in the United States through 2005 and to continue to grow steadily after that. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a bright employment outlook for psychologists. In its 1998–99 Occupational Outlook handbook, the bureau forecasts that job opportunities for psychologists will increase in businesses, nonprofit organizations and research and computer firms. Market trends also indicate that psychologists will probably have increased opportunities in areas such as technology, cultural diversity and medical delivery.

As the variety of innovative careers highlighted in the profiles indicates, the doors are opening to many new career options for psychologists now and in the future.
"What is this spongy thing inside my skull?" Laura Helmhut, PhD, mused as a child.

That longing to understand her own mind propelled Helmhut's career path. After extensive study and self-reflection, she now inspires wonder and understanding in others as a writer for *Science* magazine, based in Washington, D.C.

At Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Fla., Helmhut majored in biological psychology. She recalls performing a study that did not fulfill her predictions and learning "that things don't always turn out as expected." A telling lesson indeed, as Helmhut later opted not to pursue a tenure track after she finished her PhD at Berkeley and instead became a science writer.

Midway through graduate school, Helmhut suspected that she would enjoy writing something other than the "stilted language of science." She tested her hypothesis, finding a summer job as a travel writer in Eastern Europe.

Trekking from mountain to museum, Helmhut realized that writing "was a lot of fun and a great way to see the world." Her job at *Science* is her current passport—"a great way to keep up with what's going on in science."

Helmhut has worked at *Science*, dividing her time between writing for the magazine's news department and editing *Science Now* online, since she completed the University of California—Santa Cruz science writing program and an internship at *Science News* in 1999. Helmhut also worked as a general assignment reporter for a local newspaper, the *Salinas Californian*, covering an environmental beat.

She calls her career fun and flexible, and enjoys not having to worry about obtaining tenure and grants. When she reports on academic conferences, Helmhut feels "like I have been out in the real world" and appreciates thinking about a variety of topics, compared with "people who are stuck in the lab for a lot of their lives."

She finds freedom in writing, partly because the time commitment for each project is so brief. Actually, her greatest frustration is "there are just so many more cool things you'd like to write about without having space."

Stories that "inform and entertain" is Helmhut's standard. "You have to make the story fun enough and explain the concepts in an accessible, entertaining way so that even somebody from a different field will keep reading," she explains. She also makes a point of writing about psychology as much as possible, noting that behavioral and social sciences are often "drowned out by the sound of all the genetics that's happening." She finds many story ideas at APA's Annual Convention, which she regularly covers for *Science*.

To PhD candidates searching for leads to their own stories, Helmhut says, "it is important to know there are so many options out there. You're in grad school. You're smart enough and people will be impressed enough that they'll hire you."

As for her own future, she remains "really happy with this job" and predicts that climbing the writing and editing ranks will keep her "constantly entertained"—as will be the readers of *Science*.

—E. O'CONNOR
Paul Elrif's love of computers dates back to 1978, when at age 10 he got his first computer, an Apple 2 Plus that didn't even have a disk drive—it used a cassette player to store and run programs.

Although he always enjoyed working with computers, Elrif never considered making a career of his software hobby. That changed while he was working toward his master's degree in experimental psychology at the University of Dayton, where he was planning to work on display technology for airplane cockpits. His roommate "came back really jazzed" from an internship at Microsoft Corp., he says, and convinced Elrif to try out the company himself.

To his surprise, Elrif found his internship work on product design to be both engaging and challenging.

"The Microsoft internship program is great," he says. "Interns get a lot of opportunities to work on software as if they were full-time employees."

What started out as a summer internship became Elrif's career.

After a stint in Hewlett Packard's human factors department during graduate school at Tufts University, Elrif returned to Microsoft in 1998 as one of more than 100 usability engineers who apply user feedback to help software developers create products that are easier to use. He focuses on Windows Server networking and storage components and the Microsoft Management Console—components that help computers talk to each other and share files.

"In a nutshell," Elrif explains, "I'm responsible for making Windows Server easier to use." To do this, he works on a technical level with the product development teams, providing them with, and helping them to understand, empirical data about users' behaviors and needs.

Elrif gathers that data by observing real users working with the software to complete tasks, both in the laboratory and in the field at customers' workplaces. And while Elrif spends a lot of time in the lab, he says field research is just as valuable. He and other usability engineers often bring along program managers and software developers to draw on their expertise when collecting information. The visits not only help his colleagues to develop their site-visit and interviewing skills, but show them how real users work with their products.

"On site visits, they learn a lot about how users work," explains Elrif. "So when I bring them usability data, they're a lot more likely to understand what I'm talking about."

Elrif and his colleagues also conduct focus groups and customer roundtables. As they collect their data, the product team makes alterations to the program. When the program team thinks they've got another prototype, it goes back to the lab for more testing.

While Elrif works on a daily basis with nonpsychologist software developers, testers and writers, many of his fellow usability engineers have a psychology background.

"Having the whole psychology experience—that makes a difference," he says.

—D. SMITH
Marisa Reddy, PhD, wants to tell you a few things about school shootings: First and foremost, this isn’t a new phenomenon; school shootings have been happening since the 1970s. Second, you can’t believe everything you see on the news. And third, school shooters almost never “just snap”; they plan, sometimes for months ahead of time.

Reddy is co-director of the Secret Service’s Safe Schools Initiative, an operational study of school shootings in the United States. Along with forensic psychologist Robert Fine, PhD, and Secret Service Agent Bryan Vossekuij, Reddy is analyzing 37 shooting cases that span 25 years. Some of the incidents are familiar—Pearl, Miss.; West Paducah, Ky.; Littleton, Colo.—but many are not. For example, in 1985 a 14-year-old in Goddard, Kan., shot and killed his principal and injured three others.

For each case, Reddy and her colleagues thoroughly research the incident to answer hundreds of questions about what happened. They review investigative, court, school and mental health records and talk with police, sheriffs, school officials, prosecutors and, in some cases, the shooters. The team’s goal is to find what was known or knowable before an attack and how to apply that knowledge to prevent future attacks.

Reddy spends about 65 percent of her time on the road researching cases and explaining the Secret Service’s findings at training sessions for principals, teachers, mental health professionals and law enforcement officials.

“I used to hate public speaking,” she laughs. “And now I’m giving three and four hour talks.”

She became interested in psychology and the law as an undergraduate at Williams College, and garnered experience from internships at the Federal Judicial Center, APA’s Public Policy Office and the Rand Corp. While president of Div. 41’s (American Psychology-Law Society) student section, Reddy met Margaret Coggins, PhD, who headed up research at the Secret Service. Coggins helped her land an internship at the Secret Service that she says was “unpaid but well worth the investment.”

“I highly recommend seeking out internships, even if there’s no formal program, because I have more connections and have had more opportunities as a result,” Reddy advises.

And she says her internships and education provided a solid foundation for conducting behavioral research. Her social psychology background in recognizing what influences behavior has particularly helped her better understand violence-risk assessment and violent behavior.

Reddy’s research is now coming to fruition, with the release of the initiative’s interim report last fall. Some of the report’s other findings include:

• There is no “one” profile of a school shooter; they have diverse backgrounds, behaviors and family situations.
• Frequently the attackers were influenced or encouraged by peers.
• In a vast majority of cases, the attacker told a peer or sibling about his plan before attacking.

—D. SMITH
J\text{ames C. Kaufman, PhD, has always wanted to make a difference in the world. As a researcher who ferrets out possible bias in educational testing—as well as a part-time playwright and lyricist—he has paved a gratifying road for himself doing just that.}

Kaufman is an associate research scientist for the Center for New Constructs at the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the world's largest testing service, administering 12 million tests in 181 countries per year.

He works with other researchers to investigate noncognitive constructs and how these constructs affect testing. "At ETS, I feel like I can really make an impact and help people in a practical way, while still doing research on topics I love," he says.

While earning his psychology degree at Yale, he figured he'd pursue an academic career but wasn't completely wedded to the idea. Things changed when his adviser forwarded an e-mail announcing an opening at ETS.

"The Center for New Constructs seemed to be a really good match with my pet interests in creativity, thinking styles and motivation," he notes.

One research proposal he's working on looks at how thinking styles "might mediate racial or ethnic differences on the SAT," he says. Another will explore creativity and how it affects scoring on writing tests, such as the GRE writing assessment.

The proposals, Kaufman notes, aren't much different from grant proposals, except the audience is much more targeted. He says, "I have to show that the work will have real-world importance. Will it make testing more fair? Will it help people perform better?"

Kaufman finds the teamwork aspect of his job appealing. He works with eight other psychologists at the Center for New Constructs, as well as "an exceptionally talented" support staff.

"In academia, there is almost implicit competition. Here, we work together and root for each other. It's much more akin to what graduate school is like," he says.

And if he ever decides he'd like to go back to academia, it's a route that's wide open. Many researchers at ETS "go back and forth between academia and ETS," he says.

When he's not researching the possible links between creativity and test-taking, he's moonlighting as a successful playwright and lyricist. Kaufman has written about a dozen short plays, several full-length plays and two musicals. His works have been performed in small theaters, festivals and schools all over the United States, Canada and Australia. "My Very Elegant Mother," a one-act play, received great reviews during its 1999 run at The Fritz Theater in San Diego, Calif. The play takes a comic, yet truthful, look at family relationships through dialogue between a teen-ager and her newly single uncle. Several of his plays were performed off-Broadway last year.

"It's a fun side thing, but it doesn't really pay," he says.

At 26, Kaufman has certainly learned how to harness his own creativity. He's chosen a career with "lots of freedom," he's enjoyed success as a playwright and he's making a difference.

\text{—J. DAW}
David Aboussafy, PhD, admits that choosing to work at a start-up technology company over faculty jobs and hospital staff positions may not have been the most financially secure decision for a new psychologist. But the decision feels less like a risk and more like serendipity every day, he says.

Not only is the company expanding and making money, he’s pioneering new territory—and loving it.

"Emerging technology as an effective health education tool really intrigues me," says Aboussafy, manager of content development and research at Ucounsel Corp., a Vancouver, Canada-based company that offers online behavioral health self-help courses as part of benefits packages for businesses. "This is the direction that self-help manuals are going."

At Ucounsel, Aboussafy creates multisession, interactive online courses, or "self-help manuals come to life," on topics such as stress management, stopping smoking, panic, insomnia and asthma control. He oversees every step of the development, including the writing and editing, testing and research, and digital production.

"We take the written material and we storyboard it...looking at where we want to add video and animation," says Aboussafy. "It has been an incredible learning experience for me, almost like producing miniature movies."

Words like "streaming video" and "flash media," which meant nothing to Aboussafy a year and a half ago, are part of his daily lingo now. And he's picked up Web design skills through his daily collaboration with animators, graphic designers and technology experts. In fact, his career is 180 degrees from what he expected to be doing with a doctorate in clinical psychology from McGill University in Montreal and an interest in behavioral medicine and health psychology. But it was his health expertise that led him down the digital path.

While developing health education materials on smoking and stress management during his clinical postdoc at Vancouver General Hospital, he impressed psychologist Robert Wilson, PhD, president and chief executive officer of Wilson Banwell, a Vancouver-based psychological services and employee-assistance program provider, and founder of Ucounsel. Wilson asked Aboussafy to draft an online course for the then-fledgling company. Six months later he offered Aboussafy a full-time job that paid more than the academic positions and hospital staff positions he'd been interviewing for.

Not to say he signed on for the money. Instead, Aboussafy saw it as a great way to merge his psychology training with the excitement of the technology boom.

And while he foresees his future will involve technology, he hasn't cut his ties with research or practice. He's running a smoking-cessation program for the British Columbia Ministry of Health and conducting research on asthma self-management at Vancouver General Hospital.

"People just keep telling me to keep my options wide open," he says. "I follow everyone's advice."

-J. CHAMBERLIN
Sharon Lundgren, PhD, is something of a rarity. She's one of only about 400 professionals—about a third of them psychologists—who consults on court trials, including preparing witnesses for trial, holding mock trials to help attorneys prepare for court and teaching attorneys how to present themselves to jurors.

Learning the ropes of this profession is "deep-end immersion by fire," the independent trial consultant says. Her first employer flung her immediately into trial work, with guidance from a senior consultant who knew the tricks of the trade.

She uses all aspects of her training—social psychology, experimental psychology, statistics and the listening skills of counseling—to help lawyers win cases or opt out of losing ones, says Lundgren, who lives in Houston. For example, she uses paper-and-pencil assessment measures to ascertain the opinions of mock jurors in mock presentations of a case, then informs attorneys with that information.

Marketing savvy is also a requisite for the field, she says. "A lawyer's case is like a product," she says. "You can't change the facts of a case, but you can learn how to spin them."

Lundgren's maverick attitude probably played a role in her eventual choice of profession, she surmises. When she left undergraduate school at Southwestern University in 1989, she had no idea which psychology specialty to pursue. To her surprise, a summer job as a vacuum salesperson piqued her interest in marketing.

"I noticed there's something very subtle about persuasion," she says. "People know when you're desperate—they can see the sales pitch coming. When you relax, you can sell better."

Those observations led her to minor in marketing at Texas A&M University while working toward a social psychology doctorate there, which she earned in 1995. She took courses in consumer persuasion, and interned at an advertising agency. When a graduate school colleague told her about trial consultation, the career seemed a perfect fit.

Lundgren's first job was at the Houston office of Litigation Sciences International Inc., a Los Angeles-based firm that pioneered the field of trial consultation. When the company folded in 1996, she moved to a rival firm, Forensic Technologies Inc. There she acquired a wealth of experience, including handling a $600 million antitrust suit.

While on maternity leave for her first child in 1998, Lundgren decided to launch her own business so she could have more time for family.

Now, she seems to have the best of both worlds. In her first year, she earned two to three times the lucrative salary she made at Forensic Technologies. Her caseload varies: Last year, she had about 20 cases; in 1999, she handled about eight, including a $1 billion lawsuit that consumed most of her time.

Her biggest challenge, though, is juggling a profession and her family, says Lundgren, mother of 2-year-old Nathan and 2-month-old Noah.

"Sometimes I feel guilty, like I should be just a stay-at-home mom," she says. "The next day I land my biggest case ever and I'm on top of the world."

—T. DeANGELIS
Although she has a PhD in experimental psychology from Kent State University, Anne Marie Apanovitch, PhD, doesn’t see herself as a psychologist, per se.

“I think of myself in terms of the skills that I’ve acquired, rather than by my degree,” says the senior marketing analyst at Bayer Corp. “I’m a manager, critical thinker, communicator and statistician.”

Apanovitch says her career path has “always been a quest to team-build by applying my skills.” Now at Bayer, “I work on various projects in different groups,” she says, noting she most enjoys “the applied aspect” of marketing.

She is part of a special quantitative team performing strategic analysis for clients within Bayer. “We try to do an objective, cost-effective analysis of different marketing programs,” Apanovitch explains. “I analyze the different marketing programs used to promote drugs, see which are most effective and then make recommendations to the internal clients.”

Moving from the classroom to the boardroom, Apanovitch didn’t miss a beat; the skills of an outstanding research leader met the demands of Bayer’s marketing team from the outset. “My background and skills were crucial to getting me to where I am today,” she says.

Apanovitch’s colleagues, most of whom hold MBAs, value the skills she garnered in academia. “Being a successful team member means utilizing the skills of everyone at the table. We each offer complementary skills,” she says.

Apanovitch attended Saint Olaf College in her home state of Minnesota, earning a joint degree in Spanish and psychology. Inspired by a memorable professor, Chuck Huff, PhD, under whose tutelage she performed her first research for a study on capital punishment, Apanovitch directed her desires toward graduate school. After graduating from Kent State in 1996, she served as a project director of HIV/AIDS prevention research at Yale University for four years before moving to Bayer.

Apanovitch calls entering the pharmaceutical industry “a natural progression from what I was doing at Yale.”

Integrating herself in “a very team-oriented environment” was “not a matter of rebelling against the academic tradition,” she asserts. “I continue to grow as I would in academics. Both are viable options; I simply chose this way instead.”

Market analysis was enticing because “being a good manager, communicator and working well with people are really valued,” she says. “I’m also now out of the laboratory and in a very applied setting, which is exciting for me.”

Preparation and a pinch of good fortune lead, she believes, to myriad career options. “Think about your long-term options and the skills that you’ll need to be successful performing those jobs. Then work on building up those skills every day. The opportunities come for everyone, it’s those that are prepared to take them that will be successful,” she urges. “In that sense, I feel very lucky.”

—E. O’CONNOR
Doug Kaufman, PhD, an enthusiastic psychologist with a penchant for teaching and education, seems perfectly suited for a faculty position at a major university. Not so. Kaufman discovered during graduate school that classrooms of 20, 50 or even 100 students just weren’t going to be big enough for him.

“My voice wasn’t reaching as far as I really wanted it to,” says Kaufman. “I thought there might be a way to extend my reach beyond the confines of the classroom and have a greater impact on students and education as a whole.”

At the education technology company Blackboard Inc., Kaufman found the global classroom he’d dreamed about—one with millions of students, dozens of subjects and endless possibilities. Kaufman is director of Internet product development at the Washington, D.C.-based Blackboard, a company that creates software that enables schools—including every Ivy League university but one—to offer online courses and manage school services.

“We’ve developed solutions that provide institutions with all the features they need to build an online campus,” says Kaufman. “Students can register for courses online, upload their homework and pay their parking tickets through us.”

Kaufman, the only psychologist among Blackboard’s 450 employees, is responsible for Blackboard’s latest project—researching, developing and expanding online resource centers geared toward faculty who teach Web-based courses and students who take the courses. He and his staff have developed 253 online centers—on topics ranging from psychology to finance—each offering full-text journal articles, online communities, news and Web links.

Kaufman was no stranger to online resource centers before working at Blackboard. While earning his PhD in social psychology at the Virginia Commonwealth University, he developed Web sites for courses he taught and created the site www.alleydog.com, an online resource center for psychology students across the country. Just when Kaufman thought the Web site might serve as the foundation for his own company, the site attracted the attention of Blackboard’s founders, who persuaded Kaufman to join their company and build similar resource sites for Blackboard’s wider audience.

Nowadays Kaufman can’t imagine a more exhilarating job or better place to put his social psychology skills to work. His training has helped him to manage his staff at Blackboard, research content for the resource centers and develop ways to market the centers.

He’s enjoying being at the head of the class in the online learning industry, playing an occasional game of foosball to spark his creative juices, and developing new services through partnerships with companies such as America Online and textbook giant Pearson Publishing.

“Just the other day I was thinking, ‘Here I am meeting with one of the biggest textbook publishers in the world, and just a few months ago I was in a classroom using these books we’re talking about!’” he marvels. “I am lucky to be at a company that is having a real impact on education and opening doors for me.”

—J. CHAMBERLIN
Evan Byrne, PhD, is the kind of guy who looks up whenever an airplane passes overhead—even if it means he’s constantly tripping over his own feet.

Now he’s putting that interest to work in the Office of Aviation Safety at the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) in Washington, D.C. There he and colleague Bart Elias, PhD, investigate the human factors involved in aviation accidents. Byrne received his doctorate from the University of Maryland in 1993; Elias received his from Georgia Tech the following year.

When accidents involving pilots, air traffic controllers, airplane mechanics or cargo loaders occur, Byrne and Elias are “launched” to an accident site, maintenance shop or airport. As human factors psychologists, they investigate the people involved in an accident, the task they were performing, the equipment they were using and the environment they were working in. Their data-collection efforts might entail gathering records, consulting with experts or interviewing survivors, supervisors, mechanics, next of kin or anyone else with potential insights.

Back at the office, the data analysis stage begins. “If you have a cockpit voice recorder, you know what actions took place,” says Byrne, a senior human performance investigator who has been at the board for almost five years. “Other times you have to work out some possible scenarios.”

Take John F. Kennedy Jr.’s fatal crash, one of Elias’ first cases. Since the accident occurred before he joined the board in 1999, Elias analyzed data collected by field investigators. He examined weather reports and transcripts of interviews with Kennedy’s flying instructors and then reviewed the psychological literature on spatial disorientation. The board concluded that the accident’s probable cause was disorientation caused by haze and a dark night.

“Anyone who’s flown long enough has experienced disorientation,” says Elias, a human performance investigator with a private pilot’s license of his own. “It’s important to bring your own personal experiences to bear.”

As the number of passengers soars, the aviation field will need more human factors psychologists to help ensure safety in crowded skies. Opportunities for accident investigators include jobs in airline safety offices or management positions within the NTSB or the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

A background in aviation helps. Byrne spent three years conducting research on human/machine interfaces for the FAA and other federal agencies at a research lab. Elias put in six years conducting research on cockpit displays and related issues in an Air Force lab. Once at the NTSB, they underwent special in-house training for investigators.

“Flying doesn’t always mean accidents,” says Byrne, a flying club member who takes frequent sightseeing flights over Maryland. “It can be fun as well.”

—R. CLAY

FEBRUARY 2001
On the highest hill in Richmond, Va.—with views so romantic that young men bring their girlfriends there to propose—is a historic monastery that once housed cloistered nuns. And just as fascinating as the grounds is the singular institution that now inhabits them, an institution known as Richmond Hill.

It started 13 years ago as an ecumenical community that provides hospitality, healing and racial reconciliation through prayer and worship services, individual and group retreats, counseling, discussions and studies in urban spirituality. Rev. Bruce Yoder, PhD, Richmond Hill's development officer, calls it a quiet place that "encourages people to work at levels of increasing depth in order to transform their own lives, their relationships and the city."

One part of the community is a group of residents who live by a modified Benedictine rule, gathering for prayer three times a day and offering hospitality to thousands of guests annually.

Yoder, who has been a Mennonite minister for many years, earned his MDiv from Yale in 1975 and his PhD in psychology in 1997 from Virginia Commonwealth University. Nine years ago he discovered Richmond Hill and began attending its Monday night service because "it was the best interracial gathering I knew," he says.

He became more involved through volunteer work and worship services while working on his psychology degree. He intended to teach in a seminary after earning his doctorate. But about the time he earned his PhD, Richmond Hill created a position for someone to coordinate its development efforts, including a $7 million capital campaign to renovate the ancient facilities. Yoder saw a chance to combine religion and psychology, and applied for and was given the job in 1999.

Yoder is a nonresident staff member and one of the few salaried employees. He freely admits the pay is low for a professional. But he finds more compensation being part of a group committed "to being catalysts for what we believe God wants to happen" in changing individuals and social institutions.

No day is typical. He may:
• Start by going to a meeting at the YMCA on a program of dialogues Richmond Hill will host on metropolitan Richmond and race, jurisdiction and economics.
• Meet with an accountant on the capital campaign. Rewrite a solicitation letter to donors.
• Get a ladder and change the fluorescent bulb over the copier (strict division of labor is not one of the community's values).
• Attend a Chamber of Commerce dinner to be introduced to corporate contacts.

Yoder notes that for psychologists looking for innovative careers, there are not many places like Richmond Hill. For that matter, there may not be many psychologists in search of sacrificially low incomes. But he does believe there's "a wonderful match" between psychology and development work in general.

Good development officers know, he says, that the job is not just fund raising. It's about cultivating relationships.

—K. FOXHALL
A typical day for Natacha Blain, JD, PhD, often unfolds like the front-page article in the Washington Post or the lead story on CNN.

Each morning Blain, a counsel for U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin (D-III.), scans the news looking for clues on what her day will bring. With just a moment’s notice, she could be attending to the concerns of Durbin’s constituents, talking with lobbyists and examining pending legislation. The next minute, she might be preparing the senator for confirmation hearings on President Bush’s cabinet nominees. Or the day may find her busily drafting legislation, a job responsibility that enables her to put her psychology training to work.

“The senator has taken an active interest in mental health issues,” she says “and I am happy to help bring some of these issues to his attention.”

Recently Blain developed legislation granting presumptive eligibility benefits to mentally ill offenders. She’s currently examining ways legislation might be able to reduce the high rates of police suicide.

Blain’s route to Congress was nonstop. She caught the public policy bug in graduate school when she worked as an intern in APA’s Public Policy Office. Soon after graduating from the law-psychology program of Villanova School of Law and Allegheny University now known as MCP-Hahnemann University, in 2000 Blain started working for Durbin as an APA Congressional Fellow.

The excitement of work in Congress hooked Blain almost immediately, and she accepted an offer from the senator to serve on his staff permanently before her fellowship ended in August.

“I interviewed with many congressional offices and committees, and decided to join Durbin’s staff because they were so welcoming and really took the time to look at my background and determine how best to utilize both my law and psychology degrees.”

And the initial shine hasn’t worn off, says Blain. If anything, the excitement that first captivated her has only gained momentum.

For instance, one day near the end of the 106th Congress, she cancelled all her meetings, skipped lunch and ignored her ringing phone so she could pull together Durbin’s talking points on the Republican Legal Immigration Family Equity Act. The bill was slated to come to the Senate floor that night and failed to include changes in immigration laws that Senate Democrats supported.

“We got together a comprehensive 15 minutes of talking points for him, which is pretty good, and then the issue didn’t come to the floor,” she says. “We had no idea what was going to happen. We just had to be very prepared.”

Indeed, timing is everything on Capitol Hill, says Blain.

“When the moment is right to strike you have to take that moment,” she says. “If you wait too long to get more information, someone else will have introduced the legislation.”

—J. CHAMBERLIN
Though there were still skirmishes to be caught in, the Bosnian war was technically over when Teri L. Elliott, PhD, traveled there in 1996 to observe, listen and try to understand the impact the turmoil had had on the people.

In Mostar one day, she watched a group of children play. As she drew closer, she recognized the game they were so caught up in: cemetery. They were making little graves, putting little markers on them. Like so many traumatized children, they were acting it out again and again, Elliott explains, until they could see it in a way that made sense to them.

It is for that kind of insight Elliott would like to bring more psychologists into her field of disaster mental health—a career path she believes will burgeon in the next 10 years as more humanitarian aid agencies recognize that psychosocial interventions are as essential as other types of aid to enable people to function after a tragedy, be it a man-made conflict or a natural disaster.

Her own job is evidence of the field’s increasing prominence. Almost three years ago, just as she was finishing her degree at Long Island University in Brooklyn, the Disaster Mental Health Institute at the University of South Dakota hired her as its first full-time faculty member. The position, with requirements for both teaching and ongoing service in trauma, was what she had trained for despite a persistent lack of evidence such jobs existed.

Now she, along with the institute’s director and the three other faculty members, helps and builds a Clark Kent life: On many days, as Elliott says, “We act pretty much like regular professors. We come in, we teach our classes, we do supervision, we do our research.”

But with a phone call, they can be heading across country or around the world. Elliott screened and provided mental health services to victims of the 1999 North Carolina floods. And in 2000, at the request of the Gambian Red Cross, she flew to that country on two hours notice to do crisis intervention when a Red Cross volunteer and a number of high school students were shot in a civil uprising.

Other parts of her work are more planned. Under the institute’s agreement with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, she is helping the Gambian Red Cross develop programs to teach the nation’s natural healers and others about psychosocial support. At other times she has gone into school systems to teach suicide prevention or disaster preparedness or to instruct school counselors on psychological support after traumas.

She is also conducting research on the truth and reconciliation process in South Africa; the Northern Ireland conflict; bullying and the strengths of children who don’t bully; and why helpers enter the field of trauma.

It’s not a job for everyone, says Elliott. And it’s very hard for professionals, she says, because in working with various cultures, “You have to let go of what you know and then you have to grab it back.”

But for Elliott, who gave up a more lucrative career in computers, “It’s great, rewarding work.”

—K. FOXHALL
Over coffee one day in 1996, Elizabeth T. Miller, Ph.D., and a friend were discussing the latest study Miller was doing in her clinical psychology doctoral program at the University of Washington.

"I had minimal time and resources," remembers Miller.

Her friend suggested using the Web. And so began a chain of events that would influence Miller's future. Her partner, George Dittmeier—a software architect and engineer—"was willing to develop the technology," she says. The research project was the first ever in the social science field to use a Web-based survey.

Miller's Web survey sparked interest in the research community, and she and Dittmeier began consulting. Soon after, DatStat.com was born. "We decided to start a company when we realized there was such interest in using the Web to do research," Miller says.

DatStat.com provides integrated data collection and data management services via the Web. "Generally speaking, high-caliber researchers are expert researchers, not expert technologists. They shy away from technological solutions not easily integrated into their work," she notes.

DatStat.com's services include running and administering secure Web servers; developing Web-based data collection forms; providing a secure, customized online data management environment; trouble-shooting software and hardware obstacles; interacting with institutional review boards and offering staff and user support, all to enable researchers to save time and money while increasing data accuracy and accessibility.

"The Web isn't appropriate for all research," admits Miller, "but for multisite studies or those with certain populations, there are numerous advantages to having easily accessible and centralized survey forms and data."

As the founder and director of research for DatStat.com, Miller's days are varied and always busy. "Sometimes I'm sitting in front of the computer working on contracts or the Web site or marketing materials. Other times I'm out talking to clients and potential clients." She's also taking business classes and is very involved with the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs in Seattle.

Her psychology background has helped her launch and run her business by equipping her with critical-thinking skills. "As psychologists, we learn to think outside the box," she says, "So many clients have said 'You helped us do better research than we've ever done because you ask the right questions ahead of time.'"

Currently, DatStat.com has three full-time employees, 12 consultants and four board advisers working on 12 contracts.

"We're really growing and changing all the time," she says.

As for her own professional growth, Miller says she'll continue to nourish her entrepreneurial spirit. "I hope I'll continue to bridge psychology and industry in other forms." She's flexible and innovative, she says, which is probably why she started her own business rather than choosing a more traditional psychology path. DatStat.com "taps into my strengths and challenges me," she says.

—J. DAW
Aletta Coble, PsyD, works four jobs—not because she needs the money, but because she likes the variety and believes “practical experience is really important.”

She has a private sports psychology practice, Athletic Performance Enhancement Counseling. She teaches classes for caregivers for people with disabilities. She’s a consultant for Full Circle of Choices, an agency that serves adults who have developmental or emotional disabilities. And she’s a clinical coordinator for Circle of Care—STRIVE, a day treatment program for adolescent girls who are on probation or who have difficulty in school.

Coble spends a good portion of her 60-hour workweek consulting with Full Circle of Choices and doing “attendant care training”—teaching caregivers how to communicate effectively with people who have disabilities.

"Many times disabled persons can't communicate easily," says Coble. "So attendants will assume what the disabled person wants rather than actually figuring it out."

"Not many psychologists do this type of attendant/client communication work within the disability community," she adds. "It's a really underserved population."

In her role as consultant to Full Circle of Choices she also works with care attendants and facilitators, conducting conflict resolution. "A person with a disability may have eight to 10 different people helping them in the course of a week. This can lead to a lot of frustration for the disabled people and even for the care attendants."

She compares attendant/client training to couples therapy. "I focus on communication skills and the dynamics of relationships. We're doing very personal stuff. There's a high level of trust and intimacy that must develop between an attendant and a person with a disability."

Coble's intense interest in helping people with disabilities stems from her own personal experience: She is permanently disabled with cerebral palsy. Bolstering her psychology training is her experience of living with the condition.

While in graduate school at John F. Kennedy University, she did her internship in a psychiatric emergency unit at a county hospital. "Because of my disability, I took many of the cases involving disabled clients who came to the unit," she says.

Her work didn't go unnoticed. About three months after she graduated, supervisors from her internship called to say that the director of Full Circle of Choices was looking for her. "She tracked me down because she liked the work I did with some of their clients," she says.

Coble rounds off her week spending Saturdays in her private sports psychology practice in Walnut Creek, Calif., and working during the week at the day treatment center for adolescent girls.

"One minute I’m working with an adolescent girl in trouble, the next I'm working with an athlete who wants to improve his or her performance. The approach is totally different," she says. "Sometimes I feel like Jekyll and Hyde."

—J. DAW
When Margaret Feerrick, PhD, graduated from Cornell University with a doctorate in developmental psychology, she wanted a job where she could apply her scientific background and use the writing and public relations skills she garnered as an undergraduate and as a fund-raiser.

It sounds like a tall order, but she's found the perfect marriage of her interests as a program director for the Child Development and Behavior Branch at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

"My psychology training is essential to what I do," Feerrick says. But she also relies on the writing and people skills she developed earlier in her career.

Feerrick, who graduated in 1998, administers one of the largest grant portfolios at NICHD—Cognitive, Social and Affective Development, and Child Maltreatment and Violence. She oversees about 155 active grants and another 100 in various stages of submission and revision that cover a range of areas like cultural change in child-rearing beliefs and practices or the effects of improving children's mental health care and developmental outcomes.

Feerrick reviews the scientific progress of grantees and works with grant applicants to help them develop their proposals. "I spend a lot of time walking them through the process and helping them decide on the relevance of their research for the institute," she says.

She then reviews all applications for her program area and makes funding recommendations to NICHD's national advisory council. Feerrick also keeps an eye out for research gaps in her program area. Once a gap is identified, she collaborates with experts in the field to develop the specifics of the funding initiative, and then recommends how much money NICHD should allocate.

Her job description also includes writing program announcements and organizing conferences and workshops to inform principle investigators and other psychologists about the NICHD grant process. "A lot of times, people don't understand that they can submit applications at any time within our grant cycles," explains Feerrick. "They don't need to be responding to a particular call for applications."

Her PR training comes in handy for responding to congressional and public requests for information on her program, requiring her to translate the science into lay terms. Feerrick developed those communication skills at her first job out of college as director of development and contributions for a private junior high school in New York.

By the time she finished her doctorate at Cornell, Feerrick had worked on several federally funded research studies and had developed and written numerous grants.

"I really thought it would be interesting to take my research grounding and apply it in some way," she remembers.

She's shepherded the program for two and a half years now, and both its applications and funding continue to grow by leaps and bounds. Last year alone, her active grant portfolio increased by about 50 percent.

—D. SMITH

MONITOR ON PSYCHOLOGY
First impressions often make the greatest impact, a lesson Michael Moon, PhD, puts to use in his line of work—creating Web sites that are visually appealing and user friendly.

Yes, your favorite cyber portal has a "face," attests Moon, an Internet marketing analyst who says entering a Web site is "like seeing someone's face for the first time."

At his jobs at software companies Quaartz.com and Egghead.com, an Internet commerce company, Moon designed Web site "personalities" using both words and images. To target consumer taste, he dressed business portals to "well-designed, informative and useful" perfection.

Perhaps Moon so easily envisions winning Web sites because he was born an eager observer. "When I was a toddler and my family went out to eat at restaurants," he says, "I would just sit with my mouth stuffed, cheeks ballooning out like Dizzy Gillespie's...watching, observing and scrutinizing everyone."

True to his silent trumpeting of childhood, Moon became a violinist. But psychology was his foremost vocation.

Experiences such as mentoring younger musicians fed Moon's fascination with "questions of emotional, cognitive and social development." After obtaining his bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, Moon traded coasts for a doctorate in psychology from Columbia University. He also earned a Certificate in Organizational Development and Consultation from the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis and Psychology.

Midway through his PhD track, Moon grew "disillusioned with the concept of academic freedom" that had initially propelled him toward academic research.

"The cons became clear," he says, citing "funding sources, research communities and departmental pressures" as involving more politics "than I cared to participate in."

The Internet was enticing new territory to Moon; Web sites offered an opportunity to "build something" to serve others. Newly armed with his PhD in 1998, Moon entered the cyber-world as an entry-level customer service representative for Onsale.com. When that company was acquired by Egghed.com the following year, Moon was promoted to analyst. At the end of 1999, Moon transferred to Quaartz.com as a marketing manager.

"In both cases, the roles had been created for me and my research abilities," he says. His marketing positions "came as a result of brainstorming with my eventual bosses," Moon says. "They didn't even realize that they had a need to fill!"

Though he enjoys his marketing career, knowing "I couldn't have done it any other way," there are times when Moon has felt like an island in a sea of MBAs.

"I've felt a bit like a squatter with a psychology background on marketing territory," Moon admits, surmising that he may "turn the tables and use my marketing background for a role that is related to psychology."

—E. O'CONNOR
What is the meaning of life? That's not exactly the question Sharon Bober, PhD, spent her undergrad as a philosophy major pondering. But close.

"I was always interested in how meaning is made in ambiguous situations in life," she says. She translated her philosophical interest into "something more grounded in human experience" when she decided to study psychology in graduate school at Clark University.

Her dissertation examined autonomy and empowerment in the context of relationships. "I really wanted to explore those concepts in the context of illness," she says. The experience of cancer in her own family made her realize that cancer brings up fear, panic and anxiety that "affects the whole family."

"How do people make decisions that are meaningful and satisfying when they are scared or confused?" she wanted to know.

In her role as consulting psychologist to the Cancer Risk and Prevention Program at Beth Israel Deaconess in Boston, Bober helps find answers to these important questions surrounding illness. Her responsibilities include examining preliminary assessments for depression and anxiety when a patient first comes in, acting as psychology consultant for a multidisciplinary team—a medical oncologist, a surgical oncologist and a genetics counselor—and providing psychotherapy and consultation for women who may be dealing with cancer or the risk of cancer.

At the Cancer Risk and Prevention Program, women get a risk assessment and are given advice and feedback about the assessment. Some women may be in a situation to undergo genetic testing for cancer, allowing them to determine early on how likely it is that they will have the disease. She helps manage and cope with the results of genetic testing and, in some cases, offers counseling on whether to even undergo the testing.

"Everyone has his or her own decision-making and coping styles. Each person may make sense of the same information in very different ways," she says.

Her work has piqued her interest in how women with increased risk make complex decisions surrounding cancer prevention. She is now researching how women make decisions about taking the drug tamoxifen, currently used with women in clinical trials to prevent breast cancer.

"This is really the first step to learning the kinds of challenges that women face. The next step is developing interventions to help people," she notes.

Bober is one in a growing number of psychologists and behavioral scientists working in oncology. "Sometimes the physicians are not sure about what I do," she says. "In general, they are still learning how to incorporate behavioral science into their practices. But the ones I work with directly see a lot of value in what I have to offer."

Bober still wrestles with philosophical issues. Through her clinical work and research, she hopes to bridge theoretical problems with real-world situations.

—J. DAW
Calling an Air Force recruiter isn’t the obvious first step for a psychology student in search of an internship. But that’s just what Karen A. Orts, PhD, did.

Orts had never considered a career as a military psychologist until a flier promoting opportunities in the Air Force landed in her graduate school mailbox at Ohio State University. When she got an internship at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, she was almost as surprised as her friends and family. By 1999, she was chief of mental health services at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama and a captain in the U.S. Air Force.

“The Air Force offers so many opportunities for psychologists,” says Orts.

As one of two psychologists on the base, Orts spends about half her time providing traditional outpatient psychotherapy. Although most clients come in with the same sorts of problems civilians have, there are key differences between military and civilian psychology. For one thing, civilian psychologists’ training doesn’t include tents, helicopters and simulated gas attacks. And civilian psychologists typically don’t have to learn how to handle combat stress in their clients.

“What you do for combat stress is almost a 180-degree turn from what you would do in traditional psychotherapy,” explains Orts. “In a traditional mental health clinic, you might think of difficulty sleeping or concentrating as symptoms of depression. In combat situations, these are perfectly normal reactions to abnormal environments.”

Confidentiality is another issue. Since Orts may be treating people with highly sensitive jobs, she must help them work with their commanders to ensure that they can do their jobs without jeopardizing the safety of others.

Because Maxwell is home to Air University, Orts also has a chance to teach officers and enlisted members. As an adjunct instructor at the university’s Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Orts teaches students how to prevent suicide, handle alcohol-related incidents and identify other potential problems among the men and women they lead. Orts also teaches at the university’s academy for first sergeants, who are responsible for the welfare of the troops in their units. Orts teaches them how to recognize when troop members are having problems and how to tap into the resources available on the base.

“In the Air Force, we take care of our own people,” she explains. “Preventing mental health and substance abuse problems is very much a communal effort.”

Orts is also standing by for disaster. Thanks to training she received from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, for example, she is ready to serve as part of the base’s hostage negotiation team. She is part of the critical incident debriefing team. And she could be deployed along with the troops should war break out.

“When you stand up to take the oath to support and defend our Constitution, you know that’s part of what could be expected of you,” she says. “For me personally, I’d love to have that opportunity.”

—R. CLAY

MONITOR ON PSYCHOLOGY
Trials and technology

When it comes to career planning, it’s easier for some of us to know what we don’t want. That was true for Meghan Dunn, PhD, who had no interest in following in her professors’ footsteps.

“I knew I wanted to look outside of academia and more into applied research,” she explains.

With the help of her adviser, Dunn found a 1999 summer internship at the Federal Judicial Center (FJC) in Washington, D.C., a post that showed her one of the off-the-beaten-track careers that existed outside of academia. Eventually, that internship turned into a permanent job as a research associate.

Dunn performs social science research for the federal court system in the research division of FJC, where empirical and exploratory research on federal judicial processes and court management is conducted. The research division is comprised of 15 lawyers and 15 social scientists. Most have social psychology PhDs, and several have joint PhD/JD degrees.

“I enjoy working in a place where I can share my interests with people who also study law and social psychology,” she says.

Dunn helps identify problems and issues relevant to the federal courts, develops research designs to study them and analyzes the data once the study is complete. She also writes the final reports of the data analyses. One of the division projects examines the impact of electronic and digital evidence in the courtroom—a perfect fit for Dunn, since her graduate dissertation at Yale University studied the effects of computer-animated reconstructions, such as car accidents, plane crashes, etc., on juror decision-making.

To gather data for the FJC project, Dunn speaks with judges and courtroom clerks and staff to get a sense of the technology used in court, whether attorneys like using it and the problems they have encountered. The research division also talks with judges about ways in which the technology can enhance or impede the different stages of a trial, from pretrial conferences to the attorneys’ closing arguments. Because FJC works at the federal court level, it focuses more on judges and less on attorneys. According to Dunn, the research division is more interested in the legal issues raised by courtroom technology, such as whether the side with more technology has more of an advantage during a trial.

“Eventually, we’d like to do a series of empirical studies to examine how certain types of courtroom technology affect trial participants, judges, attorneys, witnesses and the jury,” says Dunn.

She says she thoroughly enjoys doing research that will benefit judges and the legal profession. “It’s interesting to see the research in action and to know that it won’t be buried in a journal,” she says. “It will be distributed to judges and lawyers and can help improve the trial structure and the way things run in a courtroom.”

As a research associate, Dunn finds that the skills she learned as a student—such as designing valid and reliable questionnaires, analyzing data and writing reports—are valuable to her job.

“All the steps I followed in graduate school are being put to good use,” she says.

—M. WATERS
What do a director of industry and market research at the American Society of Association Executives in Washington, D.C., an adjunct instructor at Trinity College and a clinical psychologist at Johns Hopkins University have in common?

One man juggles all of these positions and still maintains a 50-hour workweek and a social life.

Instead of pursuing a psychology career in one setting, Steve Williams, PhD, decided to spread his expertise around. "It is extremely important for me to get a mix of what I do," he says. By combining these positions, he is satisfying his love of clinical work, research and administration.

His position at the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) appears to be nontraditional from the outside, but a closer look shows that he is using many skills he learned through his psychology training. Williams directs and plans all of the association's industry and marketing research operations.

His department helps executives make concrete decisions at the individual level—such as compensation—and at the organizational level—including guidance about decisions within the organization—based on empirical data. The research establishes benchmarks for organizational management, such as financial operations, policies and procedures, or an organization's use of technology (i.e., e-commerce).

He also interacts with top-level executives to discuss compensation, benefits and perks.

Williams decided to pursue a career in administration after seeing the data on salary for psychologists working in traditional settings when he worked at APA's Research Office as assistant director from 1997 to 1999. Employers with traditional psychology settings often view recent psychology doctorates at the beginning of their careers. But, says Williams, "If you're a new doctorate in a nontraditional setting, employers often count from the time you get your bachelor's to the time you receive your doctorate as experience and you get compensated accordingly for those years." Also, as the only psychologist—and the only person to have a PhD—in the organization, Williams finds that he's no longer just one of the crowd.

Taking a nontraditional path has also allowed Williams to build his knowledge and skill base—in areas such as salary and contract negotiations—that can be applied to many other job settings. In the future, Williams says he would like to get more involved in consulting about management issues.

Williams says he still wants clinical work to be a part of his career.

"In years to come, I don't think many psychologists will have a choice about pursuing nontraditional careers, especially with the way managed care is making changes to the health-service provider fields," says Williams. "Psychologists should start to think outside the box, whether they do it by choice or they're forced to."

—M. WATERS
Kristen Ralph Beyer, PhD, describes her first six months researching violent crime for the FBI in one word: amazing.

Beyer—whose official title is violent crime resource specialist at the FBI’s Child Abduction and Serial Murder Investigative Resource Center near Washington, D.C.—works with specially trained agents to conduct a new research project on child abductors who murder and serial murders.

The project involves interviewing 150 child abductors and 150 serial murderers to glean demographic and epidemiological information, such as a murderer’s education, marital history, employment history and sexual deviancy. Her job is to not only help agents conduct team interviews of prisoners and corroborate their stories, but to also manage the study’s protocols and data. In her first six months, she’s helped to hone the 700-item questionnaire used in interviews as well as an additional one for those who can’t be interviewed in person for legal reasons.

She’s also using her psychological training to boost the center’s research methodology. Beyer makes sure the study uses sound research strategies, such as taking into account inter-rater reliability, so that the FBI produces academically credible research.

“The goal is to be able to say, ‘Look, we’ve talked with 300 inmates and 75 percent of them experienced this,’ or maybe ‘Only 20 percent experienced this.’ And then to provide that information to law enforcement officers throughout the United States,” Beyer explains. The research, she says, will assist in developing investigative strategies that can cut criminal careers short and ultimately save lives.

While she spends most of her time on research, Beyer wears a few other hats at the FBI. She’s in charge of continuing education for her center and is a volunteer counselor for the FBI’s employee-assistance program. She’s also beginning to learn the ropes of providing on-site consultations, where she and her colleagues look for behavioral aspects of a case and provide input based on their observations.

In her first six months, she’s also attended a half-dozen conferences, traveled to prisons to speak with officials about inmates joining her study and helped set up a live satellite interview with a serial murderer.

Beyer, who earned her PhD at the University of Detroit in 1997, came to the FBI after spending three years as a neuropsychologist at the Children’s Hospital of Michigan, where she became frustrated with managed care. “Having to defend my treatment and fight for money for services rendered was disheartening,” she explains. “I wanted to expand my options.”

An internship she’d had at the FBI’s behavioral science unit lit the way for that new career path. Remembering how interesting she had found the work, Beyer watched for job openings at the bureau and jumped when one appeared.

“It’s important for psychologists to not think very rigidly and expand into nontraditional roles,” she advises. “The variety and the exposure the FBI affords has just really been an amazing experience.”

—D. SMITH

FEBRUARY 2001
WHO'S EARNING THOSE PSYCHOLOGY DEGREES?

Psychology continues to be one of the science and engineering fields with the highest representation of women among new PhDs, according to the results from the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED). The survey is conducted annually for the National Science Foundation.

In 1998, 58 percent of new psychology PhDs went to women. By the end of the decade, the ratio was just over three to one: 65 percent were awarded to women. The growing proportion of women among new PhDs was particularly striking in clinical psychology, in which women now account for 69 percent of the graduates, up from 58 percent in 1990. These figures also appeared in other subfields, including developmental, experimental and multicultural.

Meanwhile, the percentage of minorities among new psychology PhDs grew from 12 percent in 1990 to almost 22 percent in 1999. The last decade saw an increase in the proportion of Asian Americans, followed by an 8 percent increase among Hispanics, and a 10 percent increase among American Indians and Aleuts. The most recent increase occurred among African Americans, whose 85 percent increase among Hispanics and a 30 percent rise in the number of blacks earning PhDs in psychology.

Although these increases are impressive, the numbers are still relatively small. In terms of absolute numbers, in 1999, Hispanics comprised the largest minority group receiving PhDs in psychology. This is a change from 1990, when blacks earned more PhDs in psychology than any other minority group.

The gender gap in psychology among new PhDs is evident across all racial/ethnic groups. In 1999, 68 percent of new American Indian/Alaskan Native PhDs in psychology were women; 73 percent of new Asian/Pacific Islander PhDs; 77 percent of new Black PhDs; 72 percent of new Hispanic PhDs; and 66 percent of new white PhDs.

Postgraduation plans of new psychology PhDs differed only slightly between men and women in 1999. Thirty-one percent of women and 35 percent of men had plans for postdoctoral study. About one-fifth of both men and women planned to work in academia. Fifteen percent of women and 15 percent of men stated that they were going to work in industry. Just under one-fourth in each group mentioned other employment, which likely includes self-employment and government jobs.

JESSICA KOHOUT, PHD
DIRECTOR, APA'S RESEARCH OFFICE