We can all agree that the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University are wonderful schools filled with new opportunities around every corner. Their academic departments are filled with great experiences that make CSB/SJU the incredible place it is. The Psychology Department is one of the places that provides seemingly endless opportunities. The department is filled with caring staff, interesting classes, club activities and events, and the chance to do hands-on research with professionals. While spending your time doing these things through the Psychology Department, you are building a noteworthy resume and working your way to a career you love.

Coming in as a first year in college, many still do not know what they want to do once they “grow up.” Whether you want to minor or major in psychology, the classes you take and the professors you encounter will make your time at CSB/SJU worthwhile. There are more than thirty different classes available for you when you are a psychology major or minor. Each one of these classes has a committed and helpful professor ready to bring you to the next level in the skills needed to accomplish the course. Not only will these benefit you academically, they will also give you useful knowledge for the outside world.

Besides the benefits of stimulating classes and encouraging professors, the Psychology Department also offers a club. The Psychology Club is a wonderful way to share your love of psychology with other CSB/SJU students. Even if you aren’t a psychology major or minor, this club is a fun way to further your knowledge in psychology. The club’s meetings include movies, speakers, volunteer opportunities, and other fun events!

Psychology is a subject with many aspects ready to be explored. A lot of the professors in the department are already involved in their own research projects and are open to collaborating with their students. There is also an opportunity do your own research through a Senior or Honor Thesis. Here you will get the chance to conduct research, write a paper, and do a presentation. Other opportunities include Empirical Research Projects, internships, Summer Research Fellowships, reading groups, and teaching the Intro labs through the Teaching Practicum program. The CSB/SJU Psychology Department will give you the chance to broaden your horizons through unique, beyond the classroom experiences.

Whether you are majoring, minoring, or you just enjoy psychology, the Psychology Department has something to offer everyone. “You won’t lag behind, because you'll have the speed. You'll pass the whole gang and you'll soon take the lead. Wherever you fly, you'll be best of the best. Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.” – Dr. Seuss, Oh the Places You’ll Go!

Let the CSB/SJU Psychology Department help you “top all the rest!”

For more information about the department visit www.csbsju.edu/Psychology
As a senior at CSB/SJU, Amanda Nusbaum has always had an interest in Forensic Psychology. As she approached her final year at CSB/SJU she decided to create a research project to fulfill her Capstone requirement for her Psychology major. “I am going into Forensic Psychology and it was the closest I could get to creating a research project relevant to my field,” she said. Doing research as a capstone project – through a Senior or Honor Thesis – is something not all underclassmen are aware of. By choosing this capstone option Amanda has been able to run her own study on a topic she wants to pursue in the future. It’s an option worth considering, and to get started on early. The Psychology Department offers three other Capstone options: a History of Psychology course, a Psychology Seminar course (with varying topics such as Criminal Psychology, Buddhist Psychology, and Ethics and Controversy in Psychology), and Teaching Practicum, where students teach the Introductory Psychology labs.

One of the benefits of choosing a Senior or Honor Thesis is to be able to study a very specific area of psychology that you are interested in. Amanda’s study allowed her to not only study more in depth something interesting to her, but it also has helped prepare her for graduate school. “I chose to do research because I will have to write a dissertation for my Master's program and another one if I go on to get my PhD,” she explained. With the help of Dr. Ben Faber she has developed a study to determine how implicit biases affect a jury. Amanda’s study looks at how our unconscious (implicit) biases of minorities may affect the actual (explicit) decisions that jurors make. She will also look at how mock jurors’ personalities influence the jury’s verdict, as well as how implicit biases affect post-jury satisfaction. The study has required a lot of work and organization to make it all come together. “It is so stressful, especially trying to get four people to show up for a study at the same time,” she said. Though there have been stressful moments for Amanda she has learned a lot about the process. She added, “I feel very accomplished and learned so much about the process and it will be less intimidating when I have to do it on my own in graduate school.”

Doing research is a great opportunity for students not only to fulfill a required capstone, but also to gain firsthand experience in conducting a study or experiment. If you think that pursuing this option is something you are interested in, you should talk to your advisor. The earlier you start thinking about it the better; you will want to start getting organized and developing potential research questions in your junior year, and if you are studying abroad this may take some extra planning ahead. Even if you are unsure of your plans, it will still be helpful to talk to your advisor early on about your capstone options and what would be a good fit for you. Amanda’s advice on the topic is also to start early: “if you work on it or at least communicate ideas with your primary advisor over the summer you will be far ahead of most people. Also, if a teacher advises you to take a different route or to edit your experiment it is because they want you to succeed.”

Amanda is currently analyzing her data and finishing her research paper. If you are interested in seeing the final results of Amanda’s study she will be presenting her research on Scholarship and Creativity Day on April 24th.
STRESS AND ADJUSTING TO COLLEGE LIFE
CURRENT RESEARCH FROM DR. LINDA TENNISON

BY LAUREN FAUST

Have you ever wondered if all of the stress related to adjusting to college life can affect your performance in school? For Dr. Tennison, one of the psychology professors at CSB/SJU, this has crossed her mind many times. This past fall she and four psychology students, Taylor Ramlar, Abby Hansen, Lauren Alexander, and Duy Nguyen, did research with FYS students to see how stress relates to college. I met up with Dr. Tennison to find out little bit more about her research. Here is what she told me:

“For the past several years I’ve been conducting research on stress and the first year transition to college. My prior research demonstrated that adjustment to college is related to academic performance, self-reported measures of well-being, and cortisol levels (a stress hormone). This past fall, we used a quasi-experimental design to test the effects of a mindfulness based intervention on first year adjustment. Specifically, students in two sections of FYS completed an 8 week mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) course taught by an experienced MBSR instructor. Mindfulness scores were measured with the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer, 2006) before the MBSR course began and were compared to a control sample of FYS students. No significant differences were observed between the groups at pre-test. MBSR students were retested, again, after the course was completed. Mindfulness scores increased from pre- to post-test on three of the five facets (the ability to observe one’s experience, to describe one’s experience, and non-reactivity). In addition, adjustment to college in the MBSR group was measured by the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) and compared to a control sample of first-year students drawn from intro psychology. No significant differences were observed between the groups on academic and social adjustment factors of the SACQ or on end of semester academic performance measures. However, students in the MBSR group scored significantly higher than control students on the personal/emotional adjustment factor of the SACQ. All students completing the SACQ also provided cortisol samples taken immediately upon awakening and 30 minutes later. These samples have not been analyzed yet, but we hypothesize that cortisol levels will correlate with adjustment and may differ between MBSR and control students. In addition, I plan to follow the MBSR students throughout their careers at CSB/SJU.”

If the results of the sample analysis support Dr. Tennison’s hypothesis, it could indicate that students with higher stress levels may be less well-adjusted to college, and that a mindfulness intervention may be related to lower stress levels.
St. Patrick’s Day Fun Facts!

- St. Patrick wasn’t Irish!

- The original color of St. Patrick’s Day was blue!

- There are about thirty four million Americans who are of Irish descent.

- From the Guinness Book of World Records: the biggest four leaf clover had fourteen leaves!

- The chance you will find a four leaf clover are one in ten thousand.

Facts from: www.stpatricksday.com