Now begins their family, Cox prepares to embark on a lucrative car rental venture. As he and Laurel firm and started several side hustles, including suits. They collaborated at a tax and consulting steadfast influence, shaping his academic pur -

Through the following years, Laurel remained a for Laurel, who would become his wife, though it took until eighth grade for her to notice him. Jonah Cox grew up as a middle child in Lehi, Utah. In seventh grade, he fell head over heels for Laurel, who would become his wife, though it took until eighth grade for her to notice him. Though the following years, Laurel remained a steadfast influence, shaping his academic pursuits. They collaborated at a tax and consulting firm and started several side hustles, including a lucrative car rental venture. As he and Laurel now begin their family, Cox prepares to embark on a master of accountancy program. He will attend law school in 2024, where he hopes to blend psychology, law, and business perspectives.

Cox began at BYU as a transfer student, drawn by the institution’s blend of education and values. He was the first in his immediate family to attend BYU. When he struggled with his studies, supportive professors guided him. Grateful for their unwavering expectations and challenging coursework, Cox acknowledg -

Julia Dias Blankmeyer (clinical graduate student): APF Division 49 Richard Moreland Dissertation of the Year Award for “Group Therapy for Pain: A Meta-Analysis”

Upon graduating from BYU’s psychology program, Cameron Alldredge moved to Waco, Texas, to begin working as a postdoctoral fellow in the Mind-Body Medicine Research Laboratory at Baylor University. This lab is one of the world-leading research labs on clinical hypnosis, with a 20-year track record of NIH-funded studies. In this position, he spends the majority of his time involved in conducting studies on clinical hypnosis, writing manuscripts for publication, and writing new NIH grants. Since starting, Alldredge has contributed to one published book chapter and six scientific publications with 12 more in various phases of the publication process. He also teaches clinically focused courses at Baylor. He recently received the Stanley Krippner Award (excellence in hypnosis research by a student or early-career professional) from the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis. He currently serves on the executive committee of APA Division 30: Society of Psychological Hypnosis.

Julia Dias Blankmeyer: 2023 Valedictorian

For her, coming to the end of a difficult journey and looking back with pride on all that she has accomplished is the most amazing feeling in the world. Specialized in psychiatry.

Cameron Alldredge (clinical graduate student): APF Division 49 Richard Moreland Dissertation of the Year Award for “Group Therapy for Pain: A Meta-Analysis”

Upon graduating from BYU’s psychology program, Cameron Alldredge moved to Waco, Texas, to begin working as a postdoctoral fellow in the Mind-Body Medicine Research Laboratory at Baylor University. This lab is one of the world-leading research labs on clinical hypnosis, with a 20-year track record of NIH-funded studies. In this position, he spends the majority of his time involved in conducting studies on clinical hypnosis, writing manuscripts for publication, and writing new NIH grants. Since starting, Alldredge has contributed to one published book chapter and six scientific publications with 12 more in various phases of the publication process. He also teaches clinically focused courses at Baylor. He recently received the Stanley Krippner Award (excellence in hypnosis research by a student or early-career professional) from the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis. He currently serves on the executive committee of APA Division 30: Society of Psychological Hypnosis.

Jonah Cox: Mark K. Allen Award

Jonah Cox grew up as a middle child in Lehi, Utah. In seventh grade, he fell head over heels for Laurel, who would become his wife, though it took until eighth grade for her to notice him. Though the following years, Laurel remained a steadfast influence, shaping his academic pursuits. They collaborated at a tax and consulting firm and started several side hustles, including a lucrative car rental venture. As he and Laurel now begin their family, Cox prepares to embark on a master of accountancy program. He will attend law school in 2024, where he hopes to blend psychology, law, and business perspectives.

Cox began at BYU as a transfer student, drawn by the institution’s blend of education and values. He was the first in his immediate family to attend BYU. When he struggled with his studies, supportive professors guided him. Grateful for their unwavering expectations and challenging coursework, Cox acknowledged that his growth stemmed more from the seemingly insurmountable challenges than the anticipated ones.

Having graduated with his bachelor’s in psychology in April 2023, Cox extends gratitude to his wife, professors, and BYU for their patience and support.

Gary Burlingame
Department Chair
Brigham Young University Psychology Department

With warm regards,
This program offers students an experiential learning opportunity that would be difficult to replicate on campus. It exposes students to different ways of thinking about the mind (in particular, diseases of the mind) and also helps students broaden their networks for future educational and collaborative research opportunities. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the 2022 program was limited to Hungary, which has a strong tradition of medical and neuroscience research. In addition to taking two courses (PSYCH 381: Behavioral Neurobiology and PSYCH 370: Sensation and Perception), students participated in experiential learning activities. For example, they visited the Semmelweis Museum of Medical History to learn about the history of research methods in neuroscience. Their tour of the Great Synagogue in Budapest helped them explore memory processes and collective memory. The students also visited art museums to observe visual processing and how artists achieve the perception of depth in their works.

Students met researchers and toured active research labs at the University of Pécs, the University of Szeged, Central European University, and the Budapest University of Technology and Economics. They also toured the Brain Imaging Center at the Research Centre for Natural Sciences. Finally, students participated in a number of cultural experiences to better understand the Hungarian people and their way of life.

This study abroad will be available every two years, and there are plans to expand the program to other countries in the summer of 2024.

VISITING FACULTY

Travis Blackwelder recently completed his first year of full-time teaching at BYU. He extends appreciation to his colleagues for their generosity and support and relishes the opportunity to work alongside them.

A native of Delta, Utah, Blackwelder met his future wife, Collette, during his time at the Missionary Training Center. Blackwelder served a mission in the Canada Toronto Mission, where he sought always to “be an instrument in the hands of God,” as taught in Alma 29:9. After his mission, he and Collette reconnected and married.

His life took a transformative turn in 2013 when he received a dual-organ transplant. The kidney and pancreas he received came from a young missionary who had tragically passed away. Blackwelder was reminded of the scripture in Alma as he was blessed by someone who had been an instrument in God’s hands, not only to share the gospel but to save Blackwelder’s life.

The Blackwalders have now been married for 27 years and reside in Provo’s Grandview area. They have a three-year-old daughter, Grace, whom they adore.
Danica Limon is conducting a study on cortisol levels among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and typically developing children. Her findings indicate no significant differences in cortisol levels between the two groups, although cortisol levels showed no significant differences among EP men and women.

The study involved 111 EP individuals (68 men, 43 women) and 55 healthy comparison participants (35 men, 20 women) from an accessible dataset at Harvard. Brain scans were transformed into high-dimensional imaging maps at BYU, gauging brain surface thickness and the shape of deeper FPN regions. Comparisons were made between EP and non-EP groups, as well as between EP men and women.

Surface brain variations were marginal, yet profound differences emerged within deep-brain structures. Specifically, atypical shape patterns in EP men notably differed from those in EP women and their healthy counterparts. EP women displayed more pronounced abnormalities than EP men, and these deviations corresponded with compromised cognitive control, particularly in women.

The study implies that men and women undergoing early psychosis manifest distinct brain abnormality patterns in the FPN during the disorder’s inception. This revelation may shed light on the initial stages of cognitive control decline, which often worsens over time in the course of the illness.

MRI SCANNER UPGRADE

The MRI Research Facility at BYU upgraded their MRI scanner to a Siemens MAGNETOM Vida in the fall of 2022. The new scanner is the same field strength (3 Tesla) as the previous one, but with upgraded hardware and software that will make research with MRI faster and more reliable. New features include faster and stronger gradient coils and AI assistance in the scanning software, which should result in clearer and more reliable images from the scanner. The scanner upgrade was made possible by the generous support of the office of the BYU associate academic vice president for research and graduate studies.

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHTS

BRAIN IMAGING AND BEHAVIOR LAB

The Brain Imaging and Behavior Lab, directed by Derin Cobia, recently presented groundbreaking research at the International Neuropsychological Society’s annual meeting in San Diego, CA. The study, led by Katryn Green (PhD ‘22), investigated sex differences in brain structure among individuals in the early stages of psychosis (EP). Driven by Green’s dissertation work, the research centered on discerning distinctive brain abnormalities within the frontoparietal network (FPN), linked to cognitive control, among men and women with EP.

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CLINICAL COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE AND NEUROPSYCHOLOGY LABORATORY

Michael Larson oversees BYU’s Clinical Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuropsychology Laboratory, which is dedicated to unraveling the intricacies of cognitive control. Cognitive control is the ability to manage thoughts and actions to achieve goals, which encompasses attention, working memory, decision-making, and self-control. Cognitive control aids focus, distraction resistance, and wise choices.

The lab’s efforts are focused on four key areas:
1) Exploring behavioral and neural manifestations of cognitive control through event-related potential and functional magnetic resonance imaging studies.
2) Studying developmental trajectories of cognitive control linked to neurologic insult or psychopathology such as traumatic brain injury, autism, depression, or anxiety, thereby enhancing comprehension of rehabilitation and treatment.
3) Researching cognitive control’s role in exercise, food behavior, and health, including response inhibition and its impact on obesity.
4) Ascertaining the psychometric properties of biological measures to enhance research quality and pave the way for clinical applications.

The lab studies obsessive-compulsive disorder assessment and treatment, collaborating with institutions such as the University of South Florida and Baylor College of Medicine. Recent student-led publications cover domains such as age-related inhibitory control in older adults, interhemispheric transfer time (IHTT) and adolescent concussions, error processing in psychosis, and the connection between inhibitory control and soda consumption. These contributions showcase dedication to advancing cognitive control understanding.

LUNDWALL COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT LAB

The Lundwall Lab is dedicated to autism research. Described below are four distinct graduate projects aimed at advancing interventions for individuals and families, ultimately minimizing distress.

Dakin Stovall researches parenting children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Her recent ventures involved leading acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) and emotion coaching groups for parents, successfully reducing parent distress and child behavior concerns. She shared her findings on parents’ choices in dual language immersion programs for autistic children at the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR) in Sweden in May 2023.

Maddie Gillies measures the stress levels of parents of children on the autism spectrum, using self-report questionnaires and hair cortisol levels. Her research revealed higher stress levels in parents of ASD children compared to parents of neurotypical children, although cortisol levels showed no significant differences. She presented at INSAR in May 2023.


Danica Limon delves into the perspectives of Hispanic parents on vaccines and healthcare for their children. Her research considers two groups: those with children diagnosed with ASD and those with typically developing children. Limon’s study is ongoing, and she anticipates presenting its findings at INSAR in Australia in May 2024.

MRI SCANNER UPGRADE

The MRI Research Facility at BYU upgraded their MRI scanner to a Siemens MAGNETOM Vida in the fall of 2022. The new scanner is the same field strength (3 Tesla) as the previous one, but with upgraded hardware and software that will make research with MRI faster and more reliable. New features include faster and stronger gradient coils and AI assistance in the scanning software, which should result in clearer and more reliable images from the scanner. The scanner upgrade was made possible by the generous support of the office of the BYU associate academic vice president for research and graduate studies.
During the academic year of 2022–23, for their contributions to BYU and the psychology profession, the following faculty were recognized:

- 4 staff
- 1 visiting faculty member
- 7 associate professors
- 18 professors

Faculty and Staff

- W. Ben Hill
  Excellence in Teaching by Adjunct Faculty Award
- Ben Ogles
  Martin B. Hickman Excellence in Citizenship Award
- Blake Jones
  National Excellence in Multistate Research Award (USDA)
- Brent Sife (retired faculty)
  2022 Award for Distinguished Theoretical and Philosophical Contributions to Psychology (APA)
- Melissa Jones
  Women’s Research Initiative Grant
- Steven Luke
  Mary Lou Fulton Associate Professor Faculty Award
- Wendy Birmingham
  Women’s Research Initiative Grant
- Dianne Tice
  Most Influential Paper of the Year Award 2022, Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practices
- Daniel Kay
  Corecipient of the President’s Innovation Award for a Sleep Consortium
- Kara Duraccio
  Corecipient of the President’s Innovation Award for a Sleep Consortium
- Julianne Holt-Lunstad
  Selected as the lead scientist on an advisory for the Office of the US Surgeon General
- Brock Kirwan
  Coauthored an article in the Wall Street Journal featuring MRI work on computer security behavior
- Scott Brathwaite
  Full professor

NEW FACULTY

- Scott Steffensen
  Faculty member, 2001–2023

DEAN OF PSD

- Gary Burlingame
  Department Chair
  Michael Larson, Associate Chair
  Jaiene McDonald, Business Manager

STAY CONNECTED

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Sandra Shutts Jefferson, Program Coordinator
Jill Turner, Clinical Psychology Program Coordinator

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