

## Chapter 9

### **The Explosive Growth of Psychology, 1960-1981: The College of Arts and Sciences (renamed Rutgers College in 1967) Psychology Department**

Experimental psychology, which was to become the primary area for teaching and research at the men's college during the 1960's and 1970's, began to take shape in the late 1950's. Sanderson and Williams, the two clinical psychologists from the Starr era, had both retired and were replaced with young psychologists whose research and teaching lay in one or more of the experimental topics of learning, comparative psychology, sensory processes, motivation, emotion, and physiological psychology.

Staffing the department with these specialties was also a reflection of the emphasis of American psychology departments during that period. As the department grew, junior and senior faculty members in areas other than experimental psychology were also hired and experimental psychologists who came on board during these decades reflected changes that were gradually taking place in American experimental psychology — most notably the shift from learning theory qua theory to its applications in psychopharmacology and, more generally, to a more biologically oriented psychology.

A number of highly productive research-oriented experimentalists joined the department during this period. Their ability to consistently attract ample funds for their research from federal granting agencies impressed the university administration and led, in turn, to increasing support for the department. With the state of New Jersey now also more forthcoming in its financial support for the university, the administration was able to provide the department with new lines, including senior lines with competitive salaries. The availability of state funds for new buildings and the willingness of the administration to give psychology priority in the use of these funds eventuated in the construction in 1974 of a psychology building on the Busch Campus with modern animal research laboratories.

The roots of the department's success in recruiting productive researchers and in garnering support from the administration can be found in the early leadership of Donald J. Lewis (b. 1922), who came to Rutgers in 1961 as professor and chairman of the department. Lewis's own interests were both in learning and behavior theory and in social psychology.



**Psychology Building**, College Avenue Campus, served as offices for the Rutgers College experimental faculty during the 1960's and early 1970's. (Photo by Linda King.)

George Collier (b. 1921) with research interests in animal learning and behavior arrived in 1962 followed in 1964 by Michael D'Amato (b. 1922), whose interests also lay in learning theory as well as comparative psychology. Both were senior appointments. Peter Carlton (b. 1931), a physiological psychologist, joined the department in 1963 as Associate Professor.

The administration also gave Lewis several faculty lines to recruit senior research-oriented faculty in other specialties. Lewis clearly aspired to build a strong graduate program at the university, led and nurtured by the faculty at the men's college. The morale and enthusiasm of the department were high and undoubtedly contributed to Lewis's vision of a graduate program with a national reputation. Lewis hired Omar K. Moore (b. 1920) in 1965 to strengthen the social psychology area, and although Moore left after a couple of years, I was recruited for this area, with an eye to later joining the Livingston College faculty, the future locus of a strong social psychology faculty.

Arnold Buss (b. 1924) also joined the department in 1965 as part of the clinical program.



A second office building on the College Avenue Campus for faculty in social psychology and personality who came to Rutgers College in the mid to late 1960's. Several faculty members later moved to the Livingston College Psychology Department when the college opened in 1969. (Photo by Linda King.)

By 1968, when Lewis left Rutgers to assume a chairmanship at the University of Southern California, the department had clearly established itself as a productive research-oriented group in the various facets of experimental psychology. Also departing in 1968 were William Pavlik (b. 1932) who went to Virginia Polytechnic Institute as chairman there, and Peter Carlton, now a full professor, who moved to the newly founded Rutgers Medical School. Although Buss left for the University of Texas in 1969, clinical psychology was now strengthened by the arrival of Peter Nathan (b. 1935), who

replaced Cohen as Director of Clinical Training. Cohen also moved to the Psychiatry Department of the Rutgers Medical School.

The dean of Rutgers College appointed Collier as chairman to replace Lewis, and Collier remained in that administrative position for the next nine crucial years in the shaping of the department. Within a year, two additional senior appointments were made: John Falk was hired as Full Professor and came with interests in psychophysiology and operant behavior, and later developed a large-scale research program in psychopharmacology; Russell Leaf (1935-1997) was hired as Associate Professor with interests in neuropsychology and psychopharmacology. These were among the last of the more senior appointments in the department. Collier's preferred hiring strategy was to recruit junior faculty and make their retention contingent on their productivity as researchers.

In fact, Lewis had not been reluctant to impose a darwinian approach to retaining the junior faculty he found at the men's college. Although the research interests of the junior faculty present when he arrived in 1961 were resonant with his plan for making experimental psychology the dominant specialty of the department, Lewis was apparently not satisfied with their productivity and with one exception (William Pavlik), they were gradually let go. Nor did he fail to hire junior people whose retention was conditional on their productivity. Among Lewis's significant junior appointments were Charles Schmidt (b. 1941), Richard Schiffman (1934-2006), and Norman "Skip" Spear (b. 1937). Among the junior faculty hired during Collier's tenure as chairman, the survivors who also continued their career at Rutgers included Charles Flaherty (1937-2004), Arnold Glass (b. 1951), Leonard Hamilton (b. 1943), Carlton James (b. 1942), Ronald Gandelman (b. 1944), June Reinisch (b. 1943), Judith Stern (b. 1944), Arthur Tomie (b. 1946), David Wilder (b. 1949), and Terry Wilson (b. 1944).

Psychology's researchers at the men's college were rapidly outgrowing the space available for research, particularly animal research with its special needs. At one point there were seven different locations on campus for the various animal and human laboratories. Lewis approached the university administration for a new psychology building that would house both the Rutgers College Psychology Department with its manifest need for modern animal laboratories and for research laboratories that would strengthen other graduate specialties as well. He (and some others) thought that the

facilities of the graduate program and its leadership then scattered over the campuses was an impediment to the growth of psychology at Rutgers into a nationally recognized department. There were discussions at meetings of psychology's Graduate Faculty on how best to integrate the various graduate components under one (new) roof.



**George Collier**, joined the Rutgers College Psychology Department in 1962, and later served as chairman for nine crucial years as it acquired a distinguished faculty in experimental psychology. (Photo from the Psychology Department Archives.)

Collier, in his oral history to me, described the long process of planning and negotiations before a final plan was accepted for the building. The main elements are as follows: Although President Gross had promised Lewis a new building, nothing came of it until Edward Bloustein became President in 1971 and was able to obtain state funds for a new psychology building. Meanwhile, as various plans were being considered, a period of high inflation in America during the early 70's eroded considerably what the allocated funds could now buy in terms of the size and architectural quality of the new building. In the end, when the Busch Psychology Building was completed in 1974, it housed only the Rutgers College department with modern animal research facilities, the Psychological Clinic, and the office of the New Brunswick chair. Douglass obtained the space in Davison occupied by the clinic, while Livingston College provided psychology with good research and office facilities on the Kilmer Campus (later renamed Livingston Campus).



**Psychology Building** on the Busch Campus was completed in 1974 and provided offices and research laboratories for the Rutgers College faculty, the Psychological Clinic, and the office of the New Brunswick chair. (Photo by Linda King.)

Lewis's far-sighted recognition of the need, for several reasons, to put psychology under one roof was not realized even after the unification of the New Brunswick Psychology Department in 1981. Unsuccessful attempts to expand the building on the Busch Campus are taken up in the final chapter: *Unification of Psychology*.

When Hamilton became chairman of the department in 1975, one of the themes of his three-year tenure was to improve teaching in the undergraduate courses. Graduate student teaching assistants assigned to recitation sections of the Introductory Psychology course requested that they themselves be given training in teaching methods and Hamilton saw this as a marketable skill for students planning a career in academia. With some grant funds he inaugurated the Teaching Improvement Clinic both for the graduate students and for new faculty members. Another of Hamilton's goals was the

improvement and expansion of undergraduate laboratory courses in Physiological Psychology, Comparative Psychology, Sensation and Perception, and Human Cognition.

Adequate housing for these labs was, however, a chronic problem throughout the 1970's. There was no permanent location for the laboratories and they were moved from one campus to another according to what space was and was no longer available. Also, as Flaherty, who followed Hamilton as department chairman, noted, funds from the university for maintaining the equipment and for supplies were miniscule and relied instead on the "expertise and [gratis] time of several faculty and graduate students" and "often at the expense of personal and/or research funds." (Memo from Flaherty to Rutgers College dean, 7/30/79)

Although psychology was not alone in not having enough funds for support of its instructional laboratories, it suffered from the fact that when several of the natural science departments appealed to the university for such funds they neglected to include psychology. The omission was likely unintentional: the college categorized psychology as one of the departments in Humanities and Social Studies rather than one in Mathematics and Science. However, as Flaherty explained in objection to this omission, psychology is as much a biological science as it is a social science, and in any case the psychology curriculum includes many laboratory courses that require a good deal of laboratory equipment.

Aside from the practical loss to psychology by its omission from an appeal for laboratory funds, the omission had hit an ideological nerve as well. Flaherty's argument (necessarily brief in the context of its having to convince biological and physical scientists that psychology also needed laboratory equipment for their undergraduate courses) was grounded in the fundamental shift that had taken place in academic psychology almost a century before. The "new psychology" had replaced the philosophical armchair methods of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with rigorous empirical methods for collecting psychological data and with precise quantitative methods for data analysis, and even mathematical models for theory construction. Whether or not psychologists viewed psychology as a biological science, they adhered to the idea that it is a *science* and able to take its place among such empirical sciences as biology, chemistry, and physics. (The new psychology is described in Chapter 3.)

Flaherty's dedication to the vitality of the undergraduate program at Rutgers College was palpable in other ways. When asked by the editor of the Rutgers College Yearbook for 1980-81 to characterize the psychology program at the college, Flaherty gave the following statement (reproduced here in part):

The psychology program at Rutgers College emphasizes the empirical basis of psychological knowledge. Students are asked to obtain experience with a laboratory science, math, statistics and computer science outside of psychology and many of the psychology courses, especially experimental psychology, emphasize research procedure as well as content. We hope students will learn how to conceptualize a problem...[that] they will realize that data depend in part on the methods used...and that objective results may be open to several interpretations... We hope also that students will see the value of the empirical method for clinical and health-related areas as well as fields other than Psychology.

There were two faculty appointments during Flaherty's tenure as chairman of the Rutgers College department that had an impact on the Rutgers psychology program in the ensuing years. One was Michael Kubovy (b. 1952) who played an important role in the early development of the Cognitive Psychology area and George Wagner (b. 1949) whose research in neurochemistry and behavior filled an important niche in biopsychology.

### *The Undergraduate Curriculum and Major*

In the 1960's the laboratory course in Experimental Psychology were limited mainly to the topics of human learning and memory, topics that required the rather modest equipment that was then available. There was also a two-hour "laboratory" component in courses in Psychological Testing (Schwartz) and Personnel Selection (Upton). (college catalogs 1960-69) In the 1970's the courses in Experimental Psychology, Comparative Psychology, Physiological Psychology, and Sensory Processes were being furnished with increasingly more sophisticated laboratory equipment, partly as a result of three successive competitive Instructional Scientific Equipment Grants obtained by Flaherty and Hamilton from the National Science Foundation.

This extensive set of laboratory offerings in the basic processes was rounded out with courses in other psychological topics: Social Psychology, Personality, Abnormal Psychology, Tests and Measurements, and Psycholinguistics. Courses not available at the other colleges included Psychobiology of Sex Differences (Stern's specialty), Personnel Psychology (Schwartz's specialty), Artificial

Intelligence, Behavior Modification, Behavioral Pharmacology (Falk's specialty), and Behavior Genetics.

The requirements for an undergraduate major in psychology included exposure to one of the laboratory sciences other than psychology and to quantitative methods. Throughout the 1950's and early 1960's, psychology majors were required to take one year of biology; by the late 1960's a year of physics (with lab) could substitute for biology, and in the 1970's chemistry (with lab) was included as one of three science options. A year of mathematics was another outside requirement from the 1950's on, with later stipulations that it had to be calculus or a one-year computer science course. Statistics was also required of majors starting in the 1960's.

As for courses within the Psychology Department, a year of Experimental Psychology as a lecture/lab course became a required course in the early 1970's. Experimental Psychology had been required throughout the 1950's, taught by Sanderson until his retirement at the end of that decade. It continued to be taught in the 1960's but not required. (Interestingly, a year course in Introductory History in the History Department had been a required course throughout the 1950's and dropped after that.)