Blue Denim Award recognizes students by recognizing Hugo

One of Hugo du Coudray's students tells us the time Hugo was at the computer demonstrating how to graph her data outcomes. She worried aloud that she shouldn't be taking up so much of his time. He turned to her and said quietly and insistently, "Nancy, I'm your employee!" And that was really it," says the student, "He really felt he worked for us!"

As a way of honoring Hugo's respect for students and love of psychology, the Psychology Department is proud to establish the Hugo du Coudray Blue Denim Award, an undergraduate scholarship recognizing financial need, student achievement, and love of psychology.

Hugo du Coudray (formerly Hugo Maynard) spent 32 years at PSU, retiring in 1999. These words from him reflect his dedication to undergraduates: "Teaching undergraduates is the main responsibility of the university, and we must never diminish or dilute that responsibility for the sake of other things we do." Students tell us of the results: "He expected me to rise to my greatest competency—and though I didn't know him outside the classroom, it was clear that he expected the same of himself!" Another said, "Hugo is so present to people and to their best possibilities. He had a way of allowing you to recognize that more was possible for yourself than you imagined, but that you were also part of something larger."

The Community Psychology course developed by Hugo is still taught today. Partnership projects were created with community agencies and implemented by the evolving community of student learners. "Each year Hugo reminded us that our immediate legacy was passing along the continuing project to the next class of students, creating a more lasting legacy to our community partners. Our work was always in the context of a greater good."

With his trademark jeans and blue denim shirt, Hugo symbolizes a grass roots respect for learning and accessibility to students—thus "The Blue Denim Award." (For more about Hugo, please go to www.psy.pdx.edu.)

Our faculty have rallied around this idea and embraced the goal to raise $20,000 for an endowment in Hugo's name. To this end, they have provided personal contributions as well as raising funds in other ways. As a result, we are nearly 20 per cent of the way to our goal.

As a way of acknowledging the importance of your own undergraduate experience, we hope you will make a contribution and return it in the enclosed envelope. Make possible for a student the same love of learning and appreciation of psychology that Hugo inspired? (If it's more convenient, you can give online at www.foundation.pdx.edu. Please specify the purpose of your gift.)

Learning to lead

By ROBERT R. SINCLAIR, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Psychology

At some point in our lives, most of us will work with other people. We do this in a vast array of settings including large corporations, sports teams, military units, nonprofit organizations, and neighborhood groups. Research suggests that the actions of leaders represent one of the most important influences on group morale and effectiveness. So, what can you, as a potential leader, do to help your team succeed?

Organizational psychology research provides answers to this important question.
Psy Chi at Portland State
By NICOLE STETTLER
Chapter President

Psy Chi, the National Honor Society in psychology, has as its purpose “to encourage, stimulate, and maintain excellence in scholarship of the individual members in all fields, particularly in psychology and to advance the science of psychology.” Here at Portland State, we have tried to further that purpose by engaging members and psychology students in academic, social, and service-oriented activities throughout the school year.

Two new officers, Christine Taorm and Erin Mahaffy, have joined the two returning officers, Nicole Stertler and Gasha Saed, along with several volunteer committee chairpersons, to continue to provide new and exciting opportunities. We are sponsoring talks like “What Can I Do with a Major in Psychology?” by PSU’s Career Center and “Toward a Socially Responsible Psychology: Theory, Practice, and Professional Paths” by Professor Todd Sloan of Lewis and Clark College.

Our social committee is working on upcoming activities such as a movie night and a faculty/student bowling night. The service project committee is planning on connecting with a local organization for regular events, as well as creating a resource on Psy Chi’s Web site for psychology students to find upcoming volunteer opportunities. Finally, our fundraising chair is looking into hosting a department-wide silent auction at the end of spring term.

We have come a long way in the past few years, trying to revive Psy Chi at Portland State and encourage more psychology students to get involved, and we are very excited about the possibilities for future growth of Psy Chi and the Psychology Club!

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leader and the group want to take the group in the future. Vision is important, in part, because it helps leaders select strategies—courses of action the organization will take to achieve its vision. Strategies involve selecting short-term measurable goals that enable the group to track progress toward the goal.

When leaders fail to deliver on promises, they send the message that the group cannot trust the leader and that they do not need to take the leader seriously. Thus, leaders must demonstrate that they are committed to their vision, not just through words, but also through actions.

Reduce workplace stress
Research shows that stress hinders job performance, limits creativity and innovation, harms employee health and well-being, and negatively affects employee morale. Unfortunately, leaders are often one of the main sources of stress for employees. The actions leaders can take to reduce worker stress include giving people a sense of what is likely to happen in the future, encouraging people to participate in making decisions that affect them, making sure people understand their responsibilities and their leader’s expectations, and reducing conflict people might face due to conflicting demands from multiple roles (e.g., work and family).

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT
Although reducing the sources of stress is important, stress is a fact of organizational life, whether one works in a large corporation with an intense competitive environment or with a small nonprofit engaged in a day-to-day fight for survival. Research shows that support from one’s leader is one of the most important factors that buffer people from experiencing the adverse consequences of stress. Leaders demonstrate support by providing employees with information, assistance, or emotional support; by being trustworthy; by advocating for the group with other people in the organization (particularly higher-level decision makers); and by being fair and respectful when making decisions that affect group members.

CONCLUSION
I base these recommendations on several decades of organizational research, including thousands of studies. Although these recommendations may sound simple in principle, they can be extraordinarily difficult to follow in practice. However, keeping these principles in mind and doing your best to follow them will increase your effectiveness and make you a role model for other leaders in your organization.