



# **Positive Psychology Center**

**University of Pennsylvania**

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**Martin E.P. Seligman, Director**

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The Positive Psychology Center has a wide range of initiatives in research, training, education, dissemination, and application. Following is a summary of these initiatives.

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## A. Research Programs (Internal to Penn)

### 1. Positive Interventions (Creating and Validating)

Do positive interventions help make people happier? Can they prevent depression? Can they treat depression? We also want to see if this type of intervention is effective for a variety of populations, including children, young adults, and individuals with disabilities. Further, we want to determine whether positive interventions are effective in a variety of modalities, such as classroom-based versus Web-based. Our ultimate goal is to mass disseminate effective positive interventions to the general population in a cost-effective way.

**Web-Based Positive Interventions.** We conducted a random assignment placebo controlled study examining the effectiveness of positive exercises for increasing happiness and decreasing depression. We conducted the study on the Internet in a way that can be mass disseminated at low cost. We found that several of the exercises – for example, writing down three good things that happen to you each day and why you think they happened – led to increases in happiness and decreases in depression that lasted for over three months compared to a placebo, which showed no sustained effects.

**Classroom-Based Positive Interventions.** We also developed a classroom-based workshop using several of the most effective positive exercises, with college students who had mild to moderate depressive symptoms. Participants who received the workshop experienced a substantial improvement in their depressive symptoms immediately after the workshop and this continued through the three-month follow-up. In addition, the intervention seemed to prevent an increase in depression experienced by the control group at three months.

### 2. Fostering Genius

**The GRIT Study.** We define GRIT as perseverance towards an ambitious goal that could take years to reach and therefore requires the ability to overcome obstacles, difficulties, or discouragement. We created and validated a self-report questionnaire to assess GRIT and we hypothesize that GRIT is the hallmark trait of highly successful people. Among Penn undergraduates, GRIT predicted college grade point average above and beyond high school GPA and SAT scores. Currently, we are using the GRIT scale in a large-scale, longitudinal study of academically advanced middle and high school students at a local magnet school, as well as with the entire class of 2008 at West Point. GRIT predicted which cadets dropped out during the first summer of West Point, even when statistically controlling for numerous other West Point predictors of performance (e.g., SAT scores, ACT scores, interview scores, community leadership experience, etc.).

**Discipline Outdoes Talent.** In a longitudinal study of 140 high IQ eighth grade students, self-discipline predicted school attendance, final grades, school attendance, and selection into a competitive high school program. In a replication with 164 eighth graders, self-discipline again predicted attendance, final grades, high school admission, attendance, hours spent watching TV (inversely), hours spent doing homework, and the time of day students began their homework. The effect of self-discipline on final grades held even when controlling for first marking period grades, achievement test scores, and measured IQ.

**The Pinnacle Program.** In 2001 and 2002 as a Trustee of the American Psychological Foundation, Dr. Seligman initiated a program to foster genius among high school students. We selected 15 students (one or more from physics, math, psychology, music, history, and creative writing) deemed to be the single most talented in the United States by virtue of achievement: e.g., the winner of the most elegant mathematical proof contest, the winner of an essay contest involving 2,000 teachers, a much-performed 14-year old composer, etc. We paired each child with a world class achiever in his or her field. For example, Josh Ledeborg became the tutor of the biology whiz, the artistic director of the Philadelphia Ballet became the tutor of the composer, and the chair of Math at Harvard became the tutor of the elegant proof winner. The student remained with the tutor through the end of high school. Funding was discontinued in 2003, but we intend to reconstitute this program.

### **3. Learned Optimism Prevents Depression Among College Students**

The purpose of this large-scale, longitudinal, NIMH-funded study is to prevent depression and anxiety among young adults who are at risk for depression, using a classroom-based cognitive-behavioral intervention in combination with Web-based resources. We are tracking participants for three years following the intervention, assessing depression, anxiety, physical health, grades, and cognitive mediators. We hypothesize that the intervention group will have fewer episodes of depression and anxiety, better physical health, and higher grades than the control group. In a previous similar study, students in the workshop had significantly fewer episodes of depression and anxiety than those in the control group. For the current study, initial results are encouraging: those who received the workshop have significantly fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety after two years of follow up.

Our ultimate goal is to provide school settings, such as universities, colleges, and high schools with easily implemented prevention programs against depression and anxiety. If this intervention can prevent depression and anxiety robustly, it is possible that such programs can be widely disseminated in a cost-effective way, producing nationally measurable mental health benefits.

### **4. Learned Optimism Children's Program**

The Penn Resiliency Program (PRP) is a school-based intervention funded by NIMH and designed to promote resilience and prevent depression and anxiety in adolescents, using a cognitive-behavioral intervention. We have also taught these skills to parents of the adolescents in the study, so that the parents can use them in their own lives, as well as modeling the skills for their children, and coaching their children in the use of these skills. Findings from previous research are promising. In our first study, PRP improved optimism and prevented depressive symptoms through two years of follow-up.

### **5. Predicting National Elections**

For the past two decades, we have been predicting U.S. presidential elections based on the content analysis of optimistic explanatory style using nomination acceptance speeches. In the twentieth century, 80% of the elections were won by the candidate with the more optimistic explanatory style, partialling out standing in the polls and funding. This effort continues and has been used for international elections as well as for senatorial and house elections with promising results. We have also used this CAVE technique to predict risky versus conservative military decisions in the lives of Hitler, Roosevelt, Churchill, Saddam Hussein, and George Bush (the elder.)

## **6. Teaching Positive Psychology in High School (Strath Haven School)**

This U.S. Department of Education-funded project, called Positive Psychology for Youth (PPY), investigates the effects of a Positive Psychology curriculum developed for high school students. The major goals of the curriculum are to increase positive emotion, character strengths, citizenship, and sense of meaning or purpose in young people. The curriculum includes approximately 25 lessons, integrated into the Language Arts class. The program aims to increase positive emotion through lessons and activities on savoring and mindfulness, gratitude, optimism and resilience. Character strengths are promoted by identifying students' signature strengths and having them employ these strengths in their daily lives. Students also have the opportunity to develop non-signature strengths that are important to them. Finally, students are encouraged to think about the activities and experiences that increase meaning in their lives. The curriculum emphasizes that experiences that increase meaning often involve connections to others and causes that are larger than ourselves. Students develop plans for engaging in activities (individually or with others) that increase their sense of meaning and fulfillment.

## **7. Positive Psychology as a Treatment for Depression**

Over the last five decades considerable effort and resources have been spent to treat depression through psychotherapy and medication. Data indicate, however, that the pooled effectiveness of all therapies is about 50%. We believe one of the reasons of this limited efficacy of treatments of depression is that traditional treatments focus on the weaknesses of the depressed individual. Traditional treatments of depression, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and antidepressant medications (ADM) although somewhat effective, explicitly target faulty cognitions and neural dysregulation, rather than the strengths of the individual.

We have created a treatment for depression that explicitly builds the strengths of the individual – Positive Psychotherapy (PPI). Our central assumption is that depression can be treated effectively not only by reducing negative symptoms but also by directly building positive emotions, building engagement through signature strengths and building meaning. Our treatment relieves depression by building positive psychological resources, which we believe will relieve depressive symptoms and buffer against future recurrence. In addition, we also believe that this treatment will produce collateral healthy outcomes such as social and community engagement, satisfaction with life, physical health, and better work performance.

## **8. Strengths and Virtues Across Nations**

Are the strengths and virtues that we have identified in the United States recognized and valued around the world? We are investigating this question with an Internet research strategy that asks English-speaking scholars from many nations (more than 50 to date) to tell us if a given strength of character (e.g., open-mindedness) has an unambiguous linguistic counterpart in their home culture, if it is celebrated, if it is deliberately cultivated among children, and so on. Results to date point to the ubiquity across the globe of the 24 strengths included in the Values in Action (VIA) Classification.

## **9. Strengths and Virtues Across the Life Span**

Using different research strategies, we are beginning to track the developmental trajectory of character strengths across the life span, literally from birth (using parental descriptions of infants) to death (using obituaries). We have learned that the most common strengths among children and adolescents are gratitude, humor, and love, and the lesser strengths include prudence, forgiveness, spirituality, and self-regulation. This profile is consistent with the profile for adults, although exceptions exist: hope, teamwork, and zest are relatively more common among youth than adults, whereas appreciation of beauty, authenticity, leadership, and open-mindedness are relatively more common among adults than youth.

## **10. Positive Psychology of Disabilities**

We have applied for funding with the U.S. Department of Education for a series of studies with people with disabilities. About 70% of adults with disabilities are unemployed. We proposed that interventions that increase optimism, resilience, and well-being among people with disabilities will substantially increase their employment, educational attainments, and well being. These studies will determine the effectiveness of programs that teach optimism and Positive Psychology skills to people with disabilities. We will also match the specific strengths of people with disabilities to the strength requirements of various types of jobs.

## **11. Positive Youth Development (Sunnylands)**

We received a grant from the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands to advance research in positive youth development. To accomplish this goal, Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson created a commission of experts in several areas. Each member of the commission contributed a white paper outlining his or her understanding of the current state of positive youth development and recommendations for future research. The commission members met in May 2003 to discuss gaps in the literature and brainstorm the most effective interventions for promoting positive youth development. Currently, Seligman and Peterson are working together to consolidate the individual commission papers into one publishable document. It is their hope that this document will chart a new direction in the prevention and rehabilitation of psychological disorders among adolescents. Oxford University Press is publishing the result of our commissions.

## **12. What Constitutes a “Good Day?”**

In order to make people less depressed or happier, Psychology and Psychiatry have restricted themselves to two techniques: drugs and therapy. Another technique is to discover what activities the person already engages in and what sequence of these activities produces the most happiness or the least suffering. Using diary studies, we are now investigating people’s mood and activities hour by hour, with an eye toward re-arranging people’s daily lives to produce more “good days” per week.

## **B. “Medici 2” Research Programs**

We have received a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation to fund the beginnings of the following five flagship projects:

- 1) How purpose and meaning build life satisfaction, productivity, and health (M. Seligman & C. Peterson)
- 2) The development of national well-being indicators to complement economic indicators (E. Diener)
- 3) The study of spirituality in successful lives (G. Vaillant)
- 4) The study of Psychological Capital (M. Csikszentmihalyi)
- 5) The development of Chinese & Spanish Websites for Positive Psychology (C. Peterson & M. Seligman)

### **1. Purpose, Productivity, and Health: Hardening Positive Psychology Variables**

Positive Psychology is an umbrella term for theories and research about what makes life most worth living. The psychological good life is not simply the minimization of stress and trauma. Subjectively defined happiness is desirable, but what about harder measures of well-being at the individual and societal level? There is good reason to believe that Positive Psychology constructs have a beneficial impact on group productivity, achievement in a variety of domains, and even physical health and longevity. For what hard outcome might each characteristic be more conducive?

Do individuals with pleasant, engaged, and/or meaningful experiences end up leading objectively better lives, as measured by productivity and physical health, even after controlling for initial productivity and health? And across settings, does a given work site, community, or nation with a higher proportion of individuals leading these sorts of lives do better than those with a lower proportion? Is there a tipping point or critical mass of individuals in a group, above which others are pulled up? Conversely, what is the effect on the group of some (or many) individuals with empty lives (low in pleasure, engagement, *and* meaning)? Does a leader with given characteristics make a special difference?

We are exploring a possible collaboration with Scottish colleagues, who have proposed that Positive Psychology be used to understand Scotland’s crisis of confidence. Longitudinal studies could focus on workers in commerce, health care, and government. The studies would measure pleasure, engagement, and meaning and focus on the prediction of health, longevity, productivity, and attrition.

### **2. National Well Being Indicators**

Domestic policy currently focuses primarily on economic outcomes, although economic indicators omit or misreport much of what society values. Economic indicators have risen steeply over the past decades and yet there has been no rise in life satisfaction during this period, and there has even been a substantial increase in depression and distrust of others. Economic indicators alone were good first approximations to well-being when basic resources were very scarce and when the fulfillment of basic needs was the central concern. But in the absence of scarcity there is enormous slippage

between economic indicators and the well-being of a nation. As societies have grown wealthy, differences in well-being are less frequently due to income, and are more frequently due to factors such as social relationships, purpose in life, and enjoyable work.

The major purposes of this project are to determine what set of indicators of well-being will most help policy makers at the organizational, corporate, and governmental levels, and to develop and validate indicators of well-being. We will create an optimal set of well-being indicators for nations and communities and explain in depth the rationale of these measures. The overarching goals of this project are to redirect domestic policies so that they include well-being as a major goal, and to create a compelling, reliable, and valid set of indicators that can be used by governments and institutions.

### **3. Aging Well and Spirituality**

George Vaillant will be pursuing two interrelated projects. The first project is on the role of spirituality in successful living. Spirituality will be defined as consisting of six facets: faith, hope, love, joy, forgiveness and the care (healing) of others. The second project will be the elaboration and comparison of eight empirical research models of positive mental health. Vaillant's project will combine the integration of findings from cultural anthropology, brain imaging, and evolution with study of individual lifetimes that reflect a deep spiritual component. For 10,000 years mankind has been fairly comfortable with a basic premise: if you don't believe your religion is the only religion, you have no religion. However, in the last fifty years an exponential increase in the public's awareness of cultural anthropology and the public's realization that we are indeed one planet has made that premise untenable. Unfortunately, instead of general acceptance of this paradigm shift, there has been a distressing polarization of much of the modern world into either intransigent fundamentalism or a revulsion at anything that even suggests a religious base.

We will address the split that currently exists between science and spirituality. The goal will be to render the universal importance of spirituality in human life acceptable to the skeptical academic mind and at the same time to increase tolerance in the minds of fundamentalists. Over the next three years, questions asked of a person's spirituality would be: when does it reflect self medication/healing, when does it reflect personal enlargement and when does it reflect projection and religious prejudice?

### **4. Psychological Capital**

Psychological capital refers to the psychic resources a person develops so as to secure rewards from the present moment, while also building resources for obtaining such rewards in the future. The ability to use psychic energy is the main resource that makes possible the formation of psychological capital. There are vast individual differences in the ability to use psychic energy, and these account for some of the most important differences in the outcome of individual lives.

The main questions that we will pursue are the following: What is the best way to operationalize psychological capital? What early experiences are likely to build it? What are the best ways to keep it? How does one "spend" it in later life? In what sense is the quality of life improved by owning it? What do we know about the voluntary control of attention? We will investigate the practices that lead children to develop control over attention and to invest it in challenging goals that are enjoyable at the moment.

This set of issues involves not only the acquisition of habits and strengths in childhood and adolescence, but also the way in which new forms of enjoyment are developed in the second half of life. As the demographic profile of the population gets skewed further towards old age, it is important to consider not only how accumulated capital is spent in the later years, but also what new forms of meaningful experience can be accessed, and how the older population can access these forms.

## **5. Chinese and Spanish Websites**

Coinciding with the growth of Positive Psychology, research data have been increasingly gathered through the Internet. Benefits of Web-based research include the ability to recruit large and diverse samples quickly and at little cost. Data coding errors are minimized, and open-ended questions can be posed without the need for transcription. There is an emerging consensus that Web-based research is as reliable and as valid as more traditional strategies. Respondents who have registered on our Websites are often willing to participate in further studies.

In little more than two years, the Authentic Happiness Website ([www.authentichappiness.org](http://www.authentichappiness.org)) has seen over 265,000 individuals register and complete numerous Positive Psychology surveys, for which we provide individualized self-improvement feedback for each test-taker. We continually add new surveys, refine old ones, and share data with other researchers (asking only a nominal fee to cover data management expenses). This Website has allowed basic research to be conducted that would not otherwise be possible, and it has sparked a great deal of interest in Positive Psychology.

However, the Authentic Happiness Website is in English, which limits who can participate. We therefore intend to develop parallel sites in other languages, starting with Chinese and Spanish. Such Websites would reap all the benefits just described plus pay the dividend of allowing comparisons and contrasts across a large number of nations and cultural groups.

## **C. Positive Psychology Network (M. Seligman, Director)**

The Positive Psychology Network at the Positive Psychology Center sponsors the following eleven initiatives. We have received funding for these initiatives from several sources, including Atlantic Philanthropies, the Templeton Foundation, the Annenberg Foundation, the Mayerson Foundation, and the Hovey Foundation.

### **1. Positive Emotion Center (E. Diener)**

One of the major centers of Positive Psychology has been on subjective well-being - the scientific study of life satisfaction, fulfillment, and positive emotions. This center has sponsored a number of activities, and has been very successful on a number of fronts. It is not an exaggeration to say that ten years ago the topic of subjective well-being was hardly mentioned in psychology, and it is now a major force. The Positive Emotion Center has been involved in stimulating a number of activities that have added to the rigor and vigor of the study of well-being.

### **2. Positive Character Center (M. Csikszentmihalyi)**

The Positive Character Center at the Claremont Quality of Life Research Center (QLRC) has three

major research initiatives: a) The study of good work in higher education. A preliminary article on this work is slated to appear later in the year in *Daedalus*, the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, b) A study of flow in chess, and c) A study of venture philanthropy and the effect of giving on the donors.

### **3. Classification of Strengths and Virtues (C. Peterson)**

Central to the Positive Psychology Center is the classification and measurement of strengths and virtues. The Mayerson Foundation provided funding for this mission, dubbed the Values-in-Action (VIA) Classification of Strengths and Virtues. We wrote introductory chapters for the manual, commissioned literature reviews from experts on the specific strengths, and devised self-report questionnaires measuring strengths suitable for children, youth, and adults. Oxford University Press and The American Psychological Association have published this 800-page manual as *Psychology's Un-DSM*.

### **4. Positive Psychology Curricula in Education**

The purpose of the teaching task force is the dissemination of Positive Psychology curricula in high schools and colleges. Publications include a unit plan on Positive Psychology (published by the APA for TOPSS) and a high school psychology textbook, resource binder, and teacher's edition (published by Worth Publishers). These publication efforts will result in long-term promotion of Positive Psychology as high school students are introduced to the movement at the same time as they are introduced to general psychology. In addition, Positive Psychology has been presented to high school and collegiate psychology teachers through various presentations, including most notably the National Council for the Social Studies annual convention in Chicago, Illinois. This annual convention serves over 5,000 attendees, and the session on Positive Psychology was attended by over 50 teachers.

### **5. Twenty Eight Research Pods across Fifty Universities**

We support 28 pods of scholars to write books, to pioneer scientific discovery or to obtain a major grant for research on Positive Psychology.

- 1) Jon Haidt (Virginia) and Dacher Keltner (Berkeley): [Awe and Moral Elevation](#).
- 2) Paul Rozin (Penn), Claude Fischler (Paris), Joel Kupperman (Connecticut), Daniel Kahneman (Princeton) and Alan Fiske (UCLA): [Comfort and Joy](#).
- 3) Lisa Aspinwall (Utah), James Gross (Stanford), and Lisa Feldman Barrett (Boston College): [Thriving During Change](#).
- 4) Sonja Lyubomirsky (UC Riverside), Ed Diener (U. Illinois Urbana-Champaign), and Laura King (U. Missouri-Columbia): [Positive Emotions](#).
- 5) Ken Sheldon (Missouri): [Insecurity, Priming, and Greed](#).
- 6) Tim Kasser (Knox College): [Happiness and the Holidays](#).

- 7) Suzanne Segerstrom (Kentucky) and Annette Stanton (Kansas): Immunology and Health.
- 8) Karen Reivich (Penn) and Shane Lopez (Nebraska): Positive Interventions and Civic Engagement.
- 9) Amy Wrzesniewski (NYU), Jane Dutton (Michigan) and Monica Worline (Michigan): Positive Psychology of Organizations.
- 10) Laura King (SMU), Jefferson Singer (Connecticut), and Melanie Green (Penn): Rising to the Occasion: Narrative Pod.
- 11) Barry Schwartz (Swarthmore), Andrew Ward (Swarthmore), Shelly Gable (UCLA), and Darrin Lehman (UBC). Maximizing vs. Satisficing.
- 12) Sonja Lyubomirsky (UC Riverside), Ken Sheldon (U. Missouri-Columbia), and David Schkade (U. Texas-Austin): The Architecture of Sustainable Happiness.
- 13) James Pawelski (Albright) and John Lachs (Vanderbilt): Positive Liberal Arts.
- 14) Jonathan Schooler (Pittsburgh), Daniel Gilbert (Harvard), and Timothy Wilson (Virginia): Mispredicting Unhappiness: Predicted and Experienced Affect.
- 15) Lisa Aspinwall, Carol Sansone, and Cynthia Berg (all of Utah): Future-Oriented Thinking, Feeling, and Acting Across the Lifespan.
- 16) Barbara Fredrickson (Michigan) and Kevin Rathunde (Utah): Experiential Education.
- 17) Paolo Inghilleri (Univ. of Verona): A Psychosocial Model of Meaningful Materialism.
- 18) Julie Bower (UCLA), Elissa Epel (UC San Francisco), and Judy Moskowitz (UC San Francisco): Stress and Thriving.
- 19) Willibald Ruch (Zurich), Rod A. Martin (Western Ontario), and Christopher Peterson (Michigan): Humor.
- 20) Fredrik Ullen (Karolinska Institutet, Sweden): Creativity.
- 21) Fred Bryant (Loyola, Chicago), Darryl Maybery (Latrobe, Australia), and Tracy Lindberg (British Columbia): Savoring.
- 22) Barbara Fredrickson (Michigan) and Kevin Rathunde (Utah): Experiential Wisdom.
- 23) Manfred van Dulmen (Minnesota) and Anthony Ong (Notre Dame): The Methodology and Measurement.
- 24) Jonathan Schooler (Pittsburgh), Dan Wegner (Harvard), John Bargh (NYU), Roy Baumeister (Florida State), and Martin Seligman (Pennsylvania): Free Will.

25) Shelly Gable (UCLA) and Jean-Philippe Laurenceau (Miami): Close Relationships.

26) Lene Arnett Jensen (Catholic Univer.), Ruth K. Chao (California, Riverside), Andrew J. Fuligni (UCLA), Jean S. Phinney (California State Univ.): Immigrant Children and Youth: Developing Skills for Succeeding.

27) Maya Tamir (Illinois) and Michael Robinson (North Dakota State): Attention.

28) Omri Gillath (UC Davis), Mario Mikulincer (Israel), Phillip Shaver (UC Davis): Attachment.

## **6. Annual Summits (International Summit & European Summit)**

Following are the Positive Psychology conferences that have or will take place in 2004:

The third International Positive Psychology Summit will be held in Washington, DC in October 2004, with the financial support of the Gallup Organization. This meeting is held annually at the Gallup headquarters the first weekend in October. For details, see: [www.gallup.hu/pps/](http://www.gallup.hu/pps/)

The second European Positive Psychology Summit took place July 5 to 8, 2004 in Italy. This conference attracted over 300 individuals from around the world and was considered a great success. The next one will be in Portugal in July 2006. For details, see: [www.positivepsychology.org/ppeuropeconferenceschedule.doc](http://www.positivepsychology.org/ppeuropeconferenceschedule.doc)

The Fourth International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter took place at the University of Wolverhampton, in the United Kingdom, September 6 to 11, 2004. For details, see: [asp.wlv.ac.uk/Level2.asp](http://asp.wlv.ac.uk/Level2.asp)

The Philosophical History of Strengths and Virtues Conference took place at the University of Pennsylvania September 2-4, 2004. For details, see: [www.positivepsychology.org/pawelskiconference.htm](http://www.positivepsychology.org/pawelskiconference.htm)

The first South African and Asian Positive Psychology Summits will likely take place in the next 24 months.

## **7. Young Scholar Research Awards**

We received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to support research awards to young investigators in Positive Psychology. The purpose of this grant program is to recognize and encourage the best and brightest among the rising generation of researchers who share a vision for transforming psychology in a positive direction. The program offers seed grants, up to \$10,000 each, to support early-career psychologists as they develop innovative lines of research within Positive Psychology. We awarded a total of twenty-three grants.

## **8. Positive Psychology Microgrants Program**

Similar to the Young Scholar grants, the Microgrants program aims to recognize and encourage the best and brightest among the rising generation of researchers who share a vision for transforming psychology in a positive direction. The program offers small seed grants, up to \$2,000 each, to

support early-career psychologists and other social scientists as they develop innovative lines of empirical research within Positive Psychology. Since inception in 2002, we have received 114 applications and awarded 23 grants.

## **9. Summer Institute**

In July 2004, we convened the fourth weeklong Summer Institute, north of Milan, Italy. The purpose of the Institute is to provide support and mentoring for beginning researchers, as well as develop a network of young, mid-career, and senior scholars interested in Positive Psychology. There were 8 senior faculty and each scholar presented a research project in Positive Psychology. We received 115 applications from graduate students, post-docs and young assistant professors and selected 19 young scholars to attend. The increase in the number of applicants increased over the previous three years and the high quality of the applicants bodes well for Positive Psychology and are an indication that this field is growing. Further, our attempts to extend beyond U.S. borders are bearing fruit – we received 53 applications from non-U.S. citizens and selected 11 non-U.S. citizens to attend. Verbal reports of the scholars' experience have been uniformly superlative. For details on the schedule of activities and attendees, see: [www.positivepsychology.org/ppsi2004info.htm](http://www.positivepsychology.org/ppsi2004info.htm)

In June 2005, we will hold the fifth Positive Psychology Summer Institute in the Philadelphia area.

## **10. Web Site ([authentichappiness.org](http://authentichappiness.org))**

At [www.positivepsychology.org](http://www.positivepsychology.org) we have established an extensive collection of materials about Positive Psychology. These include a living bibliography, conference opportunities and summaries, reports, research summaries, calendar of events, online questionnaires for researchers, faculty and programs in Positive Psychology, teaching resources, and several opportunities for grants and awards. The sites, which have been receiving over 2,000 hits per month, are frequently updated, and there have been a total of over 225,000 hits on the Web site to date.

We have also created a Website that has generated significant public interest in Positive Psychology by offering numerous online Positive Psychology questionnaires that provide valuable self-improvement feedback for the test-takers. To date, over 250,000 individuals have completed online questionnaires at this Website. This Website can be seen at: [www.authentichappiness.org](http://www.authentichappiness.org)

## **11. Toward A Positive Humanities**

The humanities as presently taught and embodied in their canons is an unmitigated tale of human woe. English literature is emblemized by “Death of a Salesman” and “Hamlet” and American History by the tale of oppression, war, slavery, and failure. While this is good preparation for a tragic view of life and for depression, it is an unbalanced presentation. Some of the great literature sings of heroism and virtue, presenting adventures in which nobility and strength are not futile and meaningless. Some of American History is about freedom, democracy, free press, scientific progress, and spiritual striving. We will gather teachers of the humanities to plan an additional canon and a new syllabus for teaching history and language arts in High School.

## **D. Dissemination**

### **1. Penn Professional Master's Program in Applied Positive Psychology**

In the fall of 2003, the University of Pennsylvania approved a proposal to establish the Positive Psychology Center (PPC). The purpose of the Positive Psychology Center is to coordinate scholarship programs in the field, to carry out evidence-based research, to train scholars and practitioners, and to disseminate programs in the field. The present proposal for a Masters in Applied Positive Psychology represents one aspect of the goals of the PPC. The proposed degree enhances the opportunity for Penn to lead the way in research and scholarship, professional education, and the dissemination of Positive Psychology in various fields ranging from clinical psychology and education to business and organizations.

With the science of human flourishing solidly underway, the question arises as to how the new knowledge might best be disseminated. Since this knowledge has profound implications for many areas of human development, a program is needed for training professionals in clinical psychology, education, medicine, business, life coaching, and those working with disabled populations. This program will provide these professionals with a rigorous introduction to the theory and practice of Positive Psychology, equipping them with the tools they need to transform their own professional work in the light of this new knowledge. A Masters of Applied Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania will give graduates both the knowledge and skills they need and the confidence and credibility necessary to apply the results of the science of positive human flourishing to their current or future professional settings.

The program's primary focus is to train students in the basic research methods, theory and history of Positive Psychology and especially in the applications of Positive Psychology to various professional settings. Should the program be approved as expected this fall, we anticipate enrolling our first class of 20 students in the fall of 2005. This will be the first degree program in Positive Psychology in the world.

### **2. Ph.D. students in Positive Psychology (Penn)**

A full Ph.D. with a specialization in Positive Psychology is now offered in the Psychology Department of the University of Pennsylvania. It is a research degree, in contrast to the Masters degree offered by the Center in Applied Positive Psychology. The graduate students in the Psychology Department are selected from among the very best undergraduates in the world.

### **3. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' Programs**

The purpose of this grant from the U.S. Department of Education is to increase employment rates and the resilience of people with disabilities. This could produce measurable economic and public health benefits on a large scale, given the high unemployment rates among this group (about 70%). We also aim to improve the performance, retention, and optimism among Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors who work with people with disabilities. To achieve this on a large scale, we will train vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor trainers to reliably deliver optimism training to VR counselors, who can then train their consumers, people with disabilities.

#### **4. Teaching High School Teachers to Deliver the PP Training**

We are teaching high school teachers to deliver the Positive Psychology (PP) intervention. To be a certified trainer, each of the following steps must be achieved. This certification process ensures that the program is delivered with fidelity and that the quality of the program is maintained when it is disseminated broadly.

1. Completion of Positive Psychology theory and exercises as a participant. The first step of certification is for the teacher to participate in the PP program. This enables them to experience the program first-hand and to master the basic skill set.
2. Completion of the intensive five-day trainer workshop. This workshop consists of 30 hours of didactic presentation, experiential learning, and role play with targeted feedback. During this training, the teacher receives the Leader's Manual, PowerPoint presentation, and Participant Manual, as well as background readings for Positive Psychology. A Master Trainer from the Positive Psychology Center models each of the core components, provides the rationale for the sequence and scope of the skill set, and demonstrates effective facilitation techniques. The teacher is videotaped demonstrating each of the core components and the Master Trainer uses the videotape to provide specific feedback regarding the effectiveness of the delivery (e.g. compliance with the manualized program, successfully meeting the objectives, stylistic issues, etc.).
3. Completion of the skills acquisition test. After the five-day training, the teacher is asked to complete a skills acquisition test that assesses his/her knowledge of the intervention.
4. Supervision of the first workshop. The teacher receives supervision from one of our trainers during his or her first solo delivery of the PP program. The Center trainer answers any questions that the teacher has and helps the teacher to handle any challenging situations that arise.

After completing these four steps, the teacher receives his/her certification as a PP facilitator.

#### **5. Authentic Happiness Coaching**

To disseminate the interventions, tests, and research in Positive Psychology, Dr. Seligman gives a weekly two-hour telephone course to interested professionals. To date, 850 people have taken this six-month course. The students include life coaches, clinical psychologists, CEO's, personnel managers, parents, high school teachers, nurses, university professors, and executive coaches. The syllabus and details can be found at [www.authentichappinesscoaching.com](http://www.authentichappinesscoaching.com).

#### **6. Strengths Testing and Website (VIA)**

An ongoing Internet research strategy, the Values in Action (VIA) Website allows studies using surveys to be completed efficiently and inexpensively. Adult respondents go to the Website and answer questions, and their data are automatically stored, scored, and made available to researchers. Further, we can track test-takers longitudinally. In the past four years, more than 25 separate studies have been conducted with large and diverse samples, including investigations of character strengths and life satisfaction, character strengths and trauma, character strengths at work, love, and play, parental perceptions of character strengths among young children, and orientations to happiness.