Dr. Steven Pinker Shares Why People Are Better Off Than You Might Think
Published by Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology. Founded September 4, 1929, at the Ninth International Congress of Psychology, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Member of the Association of College Honor Societies, Eye on Psi Chi, ISSN 1092-0803 (print) and ISSN 2164-9812 (online), is published quarterly by Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology. All contents ©2020 by Psi Chi. The publication schedule follows the academic year: fall, winter, spring, and summer. All opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors and/or Psi Chi.

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ABBREVIATIONS
APA American Psychological Association
APS Association for Psychological Science
EPA Eastern Psychological Association
MFA Midwestern Psychological Association
NEPA New England Psychological Association
RMFA Rocky Mountain Psychological Association
SEPA Southeastern Psychological Association
SWPA Southwestern Psychological Association
WPA Western Psychological Association
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Think Bigger: Going Beyond What We Think We Can Do

Regan A. R. Gurung, PhD
Psi Chi President

I have advised students for over 20 years and worked with wonderful faculty for even longer. Surprisingly, both groups share many similar issues. Yes, both groups procrastinate. Both groups plan on getting a lot more work done over the weekend than they actually get done. Both groups report taking longer forays into social media than they would like. But, this is not what I want to talk about. Instead, I want to draw attention to goal setting. Both students and faculty often sell themselves short. Whether it is a blend of modesty, limited exposure to options, or a history of resistance or barriers, too many of us do not aim as high as we should. Let's change that. Let's Think Bigger!

It is impressive to me when students come to my office. Yes, for many students, even going to a faculty member's office can be intimidating. Once we talk about course matters, our discussion often goes to taking advantage of all the school has to offer. I share information about internships and research opportunities and then discuss career options and potentially graduate school. Faculty will see a disproportionate number of students who want to talk about graduate school because many of the straight-into-workforce students often make campus career centers a first stop. What strikes me is how many students never consider independent research, working in a faculty member's lab, or honors projects. It is great to see them thinking big like aiming for a good grade in their courses, but they need to think bigger.

The good news is many of them do. I always maintain that faculty can suggest many opportunities to students, but only a few students take them. Those students take the initiative to think bigger than they had originally planned. This is something I work hard to do. It is certainly the case that not every individual may have the chops for graduate school or for a leadership position (say in management in the workforce), yet for a lot of students, college is the time to develop those key skills. Doing well in class is certainly important, but faculty need to be ready to help students think bigger. Many students aim for high B grades, yet with the right modification of study techniques, they can probably earn an A.

Psi Chi membership opens many doors. Whenever I have the chance to address students at inductions, I love asking what they will do with their membership. Although hard work and being in the top 35% of psychology majors earns you membership in our International Honor Society, what’s next? Getting into Psi Chi is big—think bigger. The Psi Chi website has a wealth of useful information from helping students

• get into the workforce,
• go to graduate school,
• conduct research,
• participate in service projects, and
• much more.

I hope all Psi Chi members push themselves to think bigger and go beyond their prior preset goals.

Faculty often do not remember that they have skills that can go beyond their classrooms, departments, and home universities. Although many faculty feel encumbered by the rigors of academia, they may be surprised to discover that thinking bigger, as paradoxical as that can be to the tired mind, may actually provide the balm to the tired soul. When faculty reallocate time to sharing their passions, this may help make the tedious tasks more palatable. Even better, serving the field and discipline and getting psychology out there to the public, can be thoroughly enjoyable. Doing it well and making a contribution may even get some of your mind-numbing activities reallocated from you!

Another way for faculty to think bigger is to consider joining Psi Chi if you did not when you were an undergraduate. If you are thinking Psi Chi is only for students, then read how our Executive Director Martha Zlokovich, PhD, (page 5) discovered a wealth of resources and opportunities when she joined as faculty at Southeast Missouri State University. Spread the word among faculty on your campus. Graduate students and faculty members can easily join Psi Chi (your PhD satisfies all entry criteria—no need to share your undergraduate GPA). Are all the faculty in your department Psi Chi members? If not, why not? I found that many faculty do not realize they can join Psi Chi through the chapter of the school where they teach. Many faculty who join as faculty (versus as undergrads) not only inspire undergraduate students to join but also get to tap into Psi Chi grants and awards.

For students and faculty who want to Think Bigger, I invite you to join the #PsychEverywhere effort. I have been working to create resources for students and faculty to supplement all the great material available from Psi Chi. The PsychEverywhere podcast has 14 episodes on topics from getting the most out of the major (Jane Halonen) and effective group work (Carolyn Brown Kramer) to getting tenure (Guy Boysen) and how to best learn (John Dunlosky). Students at University of West Florida are creating a “What faculty members should know about students” and students at Oregon State University are working on “Why we do research and love it.” These are great examples of students and faculty thinking bigger. There is always room for more. Do you have something you want to share with the world? Is there an element of psychological science that you would like to see better utilized and spread to the masses? Get in touch.

Let’s think bigger together. #PsychEverywhere
Confession: I did not join Psi Chi until I was a tenure-track faculty member. Furthermore, it is no exaggeration to say that I would not be where I am today if it were not for having joined Psi Chi—finally—as a faculty member. If you join Psi Chi as a faculty member, the course of your career may not change as much as mine did, but you will be able to both support the society’s many student members and reap the benefits of being a member yourself.

But before I go on, just a reminder to faculty who did join Psi Chi as an undergraduate or graduate student; you are a lifetime member. You have access to many benefits for yourself and your students. If you’re not already doing so, you can obtain your username and password, update your profile, and subscribe for the latest news on accessing those benefits.

The more faculty in a department who are members of Psi Chi, the better equipped the department is to let students know about Psi Chi opportunities, including those available to nonmembers. Student members are eligible for research grants, scholarships, and awards, and can learn leadership skills as officers of the chapter. Nonmembers who work with member coauthors can submit research posters to most of the Psi Chi regional convention programs, submit for publication in our magazine, submit a manuscript with a Psi Chi member coauthor in our research journal, and attend chapter meetings. They can’t vote or serve as chapter officers, but they can participate in chapter events before they have the credits and/or grades to join.

As a faculty member, you have access to many Psi Chi opportunities even if you are not a member of Psi Chi, but more if you are. Benefits available to all faculty include being able to access free psychological measures for research purposes, participate in cross-cultural, crowdsourced research projects, and read and submit articles to both the Eye on Psi Chi magazine and Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research. Both of these publications, along with our blog and podcast series, provide excellent resources to enhance faculty teaching and professional development.

But what are the member benefits exclusively for faculty who are Psi Chi members? Like student Psi Chi members, faculty may post on our website seeking research participants. They are eligible to apply for research grants, $1,500 travel grants to present psychological research at any psychology convention in the world, and to serve as chapter advisors or coadvisors. Advisors and coadvisors are eligible for advisor regional and international awards.

We are developing more benefits for lifetime members all the time. New benefits in the works include reduced cost or free access to webinars, potentially some with CE credits available.

Although I was invited—multiple times—to join the University of Florida (UF) Psi Chi Chapter as a graduate student, I did not pursue it. Even though I had started my freshman year as a psychology major, I never heard anything about Psi Chi until after completing my sophomore year and transferring to University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

UCLA, where I was accepted as a German major, was a much bigger campus than where I started. In addition to not starting there as a psychology major, I probably got lost in the transfer student shuffle and, well, ahem, let’s just say that the first couple of quarters were a big adjustment. But after graduating with a BA in psychology and concentration in German, I went on to study developmental psychology at UF. From there my first full-time teaching position was at Southeast Missouri State University as an ABD (all but dissertation) instructor.

Then came the life-altering conversation. After completing my doctorate and moving into a tenure-track position at Southeast Missouri, my department chair suggested that I become the faculty advisor for Psychology Club and Psi Chi. Psi Chi advisors have to be members, so I joined.

Regardless of whatever circuitous path led you to become a psychology faculty member who is not a member of Psi Chi, the only requirements to join now are an earned master’s or doctorate in psychology or a closely related field and to be working full time at a university with a Psi Chi chapter. Alternatively, if you graduated from a university that did not have a chapter when you were a student but does now, you can join that chapter as an alumni member. Either way, simply fill out the new member form online to join the chapter on your current or previous campus, then pay your fee. The cost is $55 (there are fee adjustments for low-income countries) for your lifetime membership.

If you are a member, encourage your nonmember colleagues to join us. If you’re not a member, join us!
Visit https://www.psichi.org/page/become_member.
Everything I Know About People I Learned From a Cat:
Comparative Psychology and the Study of Human Behavior
Through Research on Nonhuman Species

Ethan A. McMahan, PhD
Western Oregon University

Hello, dear readers. I have a cat, but not because I prefer cats over other animals. Rather, I have a cat because my children wanted a furry pet, and I wanted the minimum amount of responsibility associated with having a furry pet. A cat fits our needs perfectly. Cats, in comparison to (let’s say) dogs, are low-maintenance. You don’t have to walk them, provide them with constant attention, or scoop their droppings from your backyard. Cats are content entertaining themselves, and I suspect that not only do they not need constant attention, they don’t want it. You can see this in their utterly indifferent furry faces.

So, I spend a lot of my time observing the cat instead of interacting with him directly. This has been an enlightening experience, as through observation of this nonhuman being, I feel I understand a little more about humans. For example, Julio (that’s the cat’s name) is particularly attentive to and interactive with me when he wants something that he could not obtain without my assistance (e.g., food, water). Indeed, he is downright lovelorn when he needs food, rubbing against my leg, purring, and meowing ever so adorably. Once fed, however, he is back to ignoring my existence. This behavior is similar to that of some humans, in that they often engage, compliment, and/or otherwise positively interact with others when they need something. As they say, flattery will get you somewhere . . . and often does.

Aside from my anecdotal experience, the observation of nonhuman behavior as a method for understanding human behavior has a long history in psychology and related disciplines. For example, the research that led to the discovery of classical conditioning was conducted with dogs (ring a bell?). Much of what we know about operant conditioning comes from research with pigeons and rodents. The notion that child-caregiver attachments are developed through contact comfort emerged from research with rhesus monkeys. Indeed, the whole concept of attachment as the function of a given behavior, how that behavior evolved within a species, what biological mechanisms might account for the behavior, as well as how that behavior develops with individuals. If it is established that different species display similar behaviors, we might then assume, for example, that behavior serves a similar function.

Consider this question: Why do human babies often throw a full-scale, cover-your-ears tantrum when separated from their primary caregivers? Now, consider this observation: Other nonhuman babies (let’s say goslings) also protest when separated from their caregiver and attempt to maintain close proximity to said caregiver.1 Goslings engage in this behavior because they are helpless and vulnerable. Mother goose, in contrast, is a formidable opponent.2 Should a threat to the goslings’ well-being emerge (e.g., a hungry fox visiting the ole water hole), they are much more likely to survive if close to and protected by a mature formidable opponent.3

Comparative psychology is a field focused on the study of similarities and differences in the behavior of organisms. There is some disagreement as to whether comparative psychology is a specific, identifiable discipline within psychology or, rather, a theoretical perspective for the understanding of interspecies behavior (see Chiandetti & Gerbino, 2015). There exists further disagreement as to whether comparative psychology necessarily involves the generalization of nonhuman behavior to humans. Regardless of these disagreements, it can be said that much of what we call comparative psychology involves studying nonhuman organisms as an approach to understanding humans.

Why would we do this? Well, because of our shared evolutionary history with many species, our similarities and differences can provide insight into a number interesting questions. For example, by comparing the characteristics, typical environments, social contexts, etc., of various species, we can get a sense of the possible function of a given behavior, how that behavior evolved within a species, what biological mechanisms might account for the behavior, as well as how that behavior develops with individuals. Even if it is established that different species display similar behaviors, we might then assume, for example, that behavior serves a similar function.

1 I am referring here to the mature female goose that birthed our hypothetical goslings, not the fictional author of many well-known fairy tales and nursery rhymes. This mistake, had you made it, is less forgivable . . . given that it is pretty clear that we are talking about geese now.

2 I am referring here to the mature female goose that birthed our hypothetical goslings, not the fictional author of many well-known fairy tales and nursery rhymes. This mistake, had you made it, is less forgivable . . . given that it is pretty clear that we are talking about geese now.
goose. In other words, goslings maintain close physical proximity to their caregiver because it is safer, and throughout goose evolutionary history, those goslings that stayed close to their caregiver were much more likely to survive, pass on their genes, etc., etc. Like goslings, human babies are pretty helpless, but their adult caregiver counterparts are not (. . . most of them anyway). Therefore, it would seem quite plausible that your run-of-the-mill, shudder-the-windows tantrum (the behavior in question) functions to ensure close proximity between the human child and parent.

A History of Staring (Perhaps Too Closely) at Animals: Foundations and State of the Field
Although research on nonhuman species goes back several hundred years, the field of comparative psychology as we know it began with the work of Charles Darwin. In effect, Darwin’s model of evolution, natural selection, and the functional nature of behavior laid the theoretical groundwork and rationale for studying nonhumans as a method for understanding humans (Greenberg, 2012). His work inspired many other key figures in the history of comparative psychology and several related disciplines. For example, Douglas Alexander Spalding was widely recognized for his research on sensory development and imprinting (a concept similar to attachment) in birds. Sir John Lubbock is credited as being the first scientist to utilize mazes and puzzle devices to study animal learning. And, Konrad Lorenz is considered to be one of the founders of modern ethology, a related discipline focused on the study of animal behavior, whose work had a major impact on psychology, in particular the development of attachment theory. During the mid-20th century in the United States, comparative psychological approaches were used extensively by learning theorists (e.g., Thorndike, Watson, Skinner; Dewsbury, 1992), which is one reason why many psychology students naturally associate research with mice, pigeons, and so on with behaviorism.

Notably, comparative psychology does not have clear disciplinary boundaries, and research on a broad range of topics from several distinct areas of inquiry use a comparative approach. This is one reason why comparative psychology is thought of as a perspective for understanding behavior rather than a distinct discipline. Additionally, comparative psychologists use a number of different species for their models (e.g., apes, birds, dolphins) and several methods for studying nonhuman behavior. So, this is a marvelously diverse area in which one can explore a number of different topics. This diversity, however, does have one potential drawback. Because comparative approaches can be used in already established disciplines, there are remarkably few academic programs dedicated specifically to comparative psychology (Abramson, 2015). Yet, there exist a number of learned societies and academic journals dedicated to supporting and disseminating research in this area. For example, Division 6 of the American Psychological Association (APA) is dedicated to behavioral neuroscience and comparative psychology, with one of their journals (Journal of Comparative Psychology) being top in the field. Other notable groups include the Comparative Cognition Society, and the International Society for Comparative Psychology.

For Those Who Like Psychology . . . But Also Really Like Dolphins: Training and Careers
Comparative psychology is a primarily academic discipline, so careers tend to be heavily weighted toward the research side of things. As such, the route to becoming a comparative psychologist is a familiar one. In general, students will need to obtain an undergraduate degree in psychology or a related field such as biology, zoology, or neuroscience. Following this, a graduate program that focuses on comparative methods is essential. As noted above, there exists a dearth of graduate programs specifically identified as being focused on comparative psychology, with a few notable exceptions being at Oklahoma State University, Western Washington University, and the City University of New York. With that said, many faculty conduct comparative psychological research within other programs, and those looking for graduate training in this area should therefore focus on finding mentors, rather than programs, when exploring graduate options. Following graduate training, newly minted PhDs can look forward to what I assume will be a rewarding career (for those who like animals, anyway) in academia, at research institutions, in zoos, and other similar places of employment.

Don’t Be an Armchair Comparative Psychologist: Summary
I spend a lot of time watching my cat and developing hairbrained theories about human nature based on my observations. I enjoy this immensely, but it should be noted that I am not a comparative psychologist, and the validity of my theories are therefore questionable. You can, if you are so inclined, do better. Pursue training in comparative psychology. Develop a depth of knowledge regarding animal behavior. Use this information to better understand people. Then get a cat. Many of the most fundamental questions regarding the nature of being human might be answered by your furry feline friend . . . if so, keep me posted.

Additional Resources and Further Reading


Comparative Cognition Society. Webpage: https://www.comparativecognition.org/
Division 6 of the American Psychological Association, Society for Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology. Webpage: https://www.apa.org/about/division/div6
International Society for Comparative Psychology. Webpage: http://www.comparativepsychology.org/

References


By the April release of this article, graduate school applicants such as yourself completed their applications several months ago. Most recently, you have either received your acceptance or rejection letters, or you are (patiently?) waiting to receive these letters any day now.

Looking back, it took a lot of time and dedication to complete your applications—probably a lot more time than you ever dared to believe! But you persevered, and now your work is finally done. All you have left to do is to sit back and wait to reap the rewards of graduate school, right? . . . Well, maybe not!

In this issue of Eye on Psi Chi’s Three Heads ARE Better Than One series, our graduate school experts, Drs. Handelsman, Landrum, and VanderStoep, each share their thoughts and wisdom about how to spend the final three months before you start your first semester in graduate school.

**Question:** I’ve been accepted into grad school! What should I do between now and the start of my first semester?

**Mitch:** What a great question! I’m assuming you are referring to after the party and other celebrations.

I’ve written elsewhere (https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-ethical-professor/201205/open-letter-college-freshmen) about the transition from high school student to college student. The message is similar in the transition from undergraduate to graduate: Rather than thinking about graduate school as “school,” think of it as your first (or next) professional position. Graduate school is not a stepping-stone to anything—it’s now your job. Even if it’s part time. You are much closer to being a professional and further away from being a student.

Two major tasks for you are saying goodbye and saying hello. Your current relationships with family and friends will be changing—even if you don’t move away. You need to say “goodbye” to them, and—to some extent—to parts of the person you’ve been (You might be able to reconnect with those parts after you get licensed, tenured, or retired!). And you need to say hello, by making contact with your advisor, your new cohort of students and advanced graduate students, and others. See what you can learn about the atmospherics and the logistics of your program. And make sure to set up your lines of communication with the program so you don’t miss important information about courses, registration, finances, etc. Of course, if you’re moving to begin a program, you have to think about the logistics of housing, moving, locating nearby pizza places, etc.

My final word: balance. No, wait—mindfulness, that’s the final word. OK, there are two final words. In any case, be aware of what you feel like personally, and what is now expected of you professionally. Be grateful for the opportunity (as you know, not everyone gets the chance you have) and make the most of it.
Eric: My colleague Mitch has offered some wonderful advice, and I cannot disagree with any of it! Let’s think about the typical timeline under which this might be happening. If your graduate program informed you by April 15 of the offer, and you accepted soon after, and school starts in the fall, you probably have three solid months from the time you accept until the time you start school.

Three months can seem like a long time. It will, in reality, be no time at all. My recommendations are really not that different about spending “time” compared to those that Mitch made, especially if you are reading carefully:

1. **Take the time to say thank you.** Write thank-you cards to those who live far away or to those who are close by and contributed a little. To those who are nearby and contributed to your success a lot: thank them by spending time with them. If it works for you, have coffee with them. You are still networking, and connections are important.

2. **Take the time to research your future.** Where will you be living, what professors will you be working with, when can you set your fall class schedule, and so on. Do as much as you can in advance so that when you get to graduate school—especially if that program is in a new location—you can concentrate on the work and not how to navigate the city.

3. **Take some time for yourself.** Spend time with your undergraduate friends before they all scatter. Take some time to rest, recharge, and be mindful as Mitch suggests. You are likely going to be a working professional the rest of your adult life. This “break” you are about to have between your undergraduate and graduate education in some ways may be considered the last break you’ll ever have. Take it. Take an occasional day (or part of a day, whatever works for you) and just watch Netflix, spend it with your dog in the dog park, go to three movies in a row, sleep all day, take a road trip, read an entire book in one day, binge listen to your favorite podcast, or do that thing that makes you happy and recharges life’s batteries.

Those three months are going to fly by.

Scott: Congratulations. I decided on my grad-school destination in March of my senior year. I spent the last eight weeks of undergraduate soaking up friendships that I knew would get depleted after we parted in a pre-Internet world, working hard in my classes, hanging out in the psychology department with my professors and fellow students, and being nostalgic.

In the summer, I lived on a friend’s boat in a Lake Michigan harbor (still the best summer ever). And I read. I was fortunate enough to have minimal expenses so I only worked a few hours a week in the evening. In the day, I read journal articles from many of the faculty at the program that I would soon join.

The first couple of weeks I felt inept. Even though I had strong undergraduate training and felt prepared, the concepts were complex and the writing was dense. But by the end of the semester, I felt more empowered and confident. I was still a rookie, to be sure, but that summer of soaking up sun and psychology was wonderful personal and professional experience.

**Question:** Should I load up on classes with one professor who I think I’ll like or take classes with a variety of professors instead?

Mitch: My impression is that in most programs you won’t have that many options—to choose courses or professors. My hunch would be to err on the side of variety in courses, because (a) you will be somewhat limited in people with whom you will be doing research, and (b) you don’t want to come out as a clone of your advisor.

Eric: For some graduate programs, the first-year curriculum is preset for most students, with very little wiggle room. Often, a cohort starts the first year with a very similar curriculum, and then depending on the specialty areas, students separate onto different curricular paths in the second and subsequent years.

Thinking ahead a bit to after you complete your graduate program and the next “thing” in your life, you will likely need three references for a resumé/CV or three letters of recommendation for some sort of application to something. So in keeping with this idea of three, it may not be best to stack all of your classwork with one professor, because that might result in one fantastic letter of recommendation and two lackluster letters. Hopefully your letter from your thesis/dissertation advisor will naturally be the strongest of multiple letters. My advice is for students to be strategic and think about two additional strong letters, just like they should be strategic as an undergraduate when thinking about applying to graduate school.

Scott: In most undergraduate and graduate psychology programs, the subspecialization is high, especially in graduate school. I think it would be more advantageous to do an independent study or join the professor’s research lab and start on one of her projects. The value and availability of course work will diminish over time in graduate school.

**Question:** I haven’t received an acceptance or rejection letter yet. How long should I wait before reaching out?

Mitch: The day after the application deadline is too soon, right? But if you have received word from other programs, if the program is high on your list, if they indicated that you’d be hearing by now, or if you are in the midst of making a decision, you can certainly make a very polite inquiry to the program’s assistant, or to the person whose lab you applied to (if that’s your situation).

Eric: I was just asked this recently! First, no news is good news (in my opinion). Not hearing anything means that you are still under consideration. Taking a super-long time might mean that you are not in the top list of students to be made offers, but the wait list (sometimes this is called being “on the bubble”). That is, if a graduate program has 10 new student “slots” to fill, that graduate program makes an offer to their top 10 candidates who qualify based on their admissions criteria and “match and fit.” But it is unlikely that all 10 of those candidates will say “yes” to this program, because those students also applied to multiple programs, and when they say “yes” to one they say “no” to all the others. That takes time.
So let’s say you have applied to the graduate program, and the school has ranked its applicants in the order they are going to make offers, and you are 13th in order. The school makes an offer to the top 10 applicants—you don’t hear anything. The top 10 applicants have until April 15 to decide, and at that time, six applicants accept, and four applicants decline. Now the graduate program turns and makes offers to the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th people on the list because of the four rejections the graduate program received. Now you have an acceptance (hooray!), but it took a while. That’s why I say no news is good news.

To answer your question, I’d wait until the third week of April to inquire. If you really must ask sooner, go ahead and ask. But you will be asking incredibly busy individuals to stop what they are doing (making graduate admissions decisions) to give you an update on graduate admissions decisions that they are not yet finished with; the graduate admissions committee wants to finish the task just as much as the applicants want the task finished.

Scott: My colleagues might disagree, but I would call and not email. Emails are easier to ignore. Find a friendly office manager in the grad office. Faculty members create the lists but support staff are more likely to manage the list (imagine a faculty member saying to the administrative assistant, “Student #6 just declined, who is next on the list?”). Unlike Dr. Landrum, I would call sooner than April. Most programs have made their initial decisions after three weeks, so I think you could know your status after a short period of time.
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Psychological, Health, & Learning Sciences
Last year, the highest opened Psi Chi email to our student members was the annual message about Psi Chi’s summer scholarships program. This came as little surprise; the scholarships announcement has consistently been one of the highest opened emails ever since the program launched five years ago.

In summer 2019, 78 undergraduate students and 87 graduate students completed applications to receive one of sixteen $3,000 Psi Chi Scholarships. Of these 16 scholarships, eight are designated for undergraduates and the other eight are provided for graduate students. Specifically, their purpose is to help students pay for school tuition, institutional fees, required textbooks, and other educational expenses vital to their futures.

We are incredibly grateful for the many individuals and organizations who, together, help us make Psi Chi Scholarships a reality. In addition to Psi Chi’s other pre-existing $400,000+ in annual awards and grants, it is exciting to be able to provide another $48,000 in scholarships this year. Over the past five years combined, a total of $168,000 in scholarships has been awarded to deserving students! Thank you to all Give Back to Psi Chi donors (https://donate.psichi.org), Psi Chi’s Board of Directors, and our sponsors.

So far, students of all types and backgrounds have sought out Psi Chi funding in order to help them advance their educations and careers. This includes first-generation college students, international students, and even survivors of natural disasters. We believe that each of these high-achieving individuals in well on track to become respected and important opinion leaders in their various fields of psychology.

With the costs of a college education so high, it is no wonder that Psi Chi scholarships have become so popular in such a short amount of time. Congratulations to the 16 recipients* of this prestigious scholarship program. It is an honor to recognize their outstanding dedication to psychology and bettering their communities and beyond.

*Three of the 16 scholarships recipients wished to remain anonymous.
UNDERGRADUATE RECIPIENTS

Tiffany Abrams is an undergraduate student at Saint Xavier University (IL). She is double majoring in psychology and criminal justice. She is dedicated to research, academia, and getting involved on campus to better her community. She plans on applying to PhD programs for clinical psychology in the near future.

“This scholarship has made an amazing impact on my academic journey. I can focus on excelling in my undergraduate studies rather than having to worry about the financial aspect of university, which will give me the opportunity to make myself a stronger candidate for clinical psychology PhD programs.”

Sarah Elsayed is a senior at Towson University who is pursuing a dual degree in psychology and biology. Sarah is interested in obtaining her MD/PhD and working with pediatric patients both clinically and as a medical researcher.

“This scholarship allows me to focus on being academically excellent. With the help of this scholarship, I will be able to overcome financial hardship in order to focus on working toward my dreams of obtaining a MD/PhD and becoming a pediatric psychiatrist and a medical researcher.”

Madison Palmer is a senior psychology major at Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklahoma, and currently the treasurer for the local Psi Chi chapter. Madison loves the field of psychology and is particularly interested in multicultural and cross-cultural psychology.

“Through the undergraduate scholarship provided by Psi Chi, I will be able to finish the last year in my program, go on to continue to develop my knowledge and understanding of psychology, as well as hopefully give back to the field that has so greatly shaped me.”

2020 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS OPEN THIS SPRING

Students: complete information to apply for the next round of scholarships will be available this spring. Learn more about the application guidelines.

Undergraduates: http://www.psichi.org/?PsiChischolars

Graduate Students: http://www.psichi.org/page/GradScholars

SUPPORT A SCHOLARSHIP

The demand for additional Psi Chi Scholarships is clear and great; next year, we are seeking to help more students than ever before. Thank you in advance for your generosity.


“Through the undergraduate scholarship provided by Psi Chi, I will be able to finish the last year in my program, go on to continue to develop my knowledge and understanding of psychology, as well as hopefully give back to the field that has so greatly shaped me.”
RECOGNITION

UNDERGRADUATE RECIPIENTS

“As a first-generation student, this award has granted me the opportunity to focus solely on my educational goals, without worrying about finances. It has helped lift a burden not only for myself, but also for my family, making this school year a blessing for us all.”

Elena Sandoval is a senior at Dominican University majoring in psychology and serving as vice-president of her chapter. She enjoys working with children and wishes to obtain a master’s in social work. Her dream is to work with families from low-income neighborhoods.

“This scholarship has financially unlocked me to comfortably finish my last year of university and pursue graduate studies, academically recognize years of commitment and involvement, and demonstrate that great scholars can maintain academic excellence while concurrently creating waves to help others in their professional pursuits.”

Aaron Zhuo is a psychology honors student at the University of British Columbia. Aside from spearheading community involvement with five presidential positions, Aaron is passionate about research intersecting happiness and decision-making and intends to pursue a PhD in business to better the lives of others through behavioral nudges.

GRADUATE RECIPIENTS

“The Psi Chi Graduate Scholarship gives me the invaluable gift of time. Rather than working a third job, my time is instead spent preparing for client sessions, conducting research, and consulting with others. This award is instrumental in my academic success.”

Merry Cappozzolo is earning her MS in mental health counseling at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA. She works as a coordinator for adolescent grief support groups, performs research on Dialectical Behavior Therapy efficacy, and looks forward to a career of counseling families and children.
GRADUATE RECIPIENTS

Michelle Justice is a third year PsyD student at the Michigan School of Psychology and a first-generation college student. Michelle's professional goals include providing services for those involved in the criminal justice system and teaching at the university level. She is the president of her institution's Psi Chi chapter.

"I am very honored and thankful to receive this award. This award eases the financial burden I accepted in pursuing a PsyD degree. I have found the Michigan School of Psychology to be a personal and professional haven at which I am continually grateful to be a student.”

Kaleigh Fidaleo graduated summa cum laude from Stetson University where she served as Psi Chi chapter president, worked as a research assistant in a neuroclinical psychology lab, and presented her own research at the Southeast Psychological Association’s 65th Annual Meeting. She aspires to earn her PhD in clinical neuropsychology.

"As a recipient of the Psi Chi Graduate Scholarship, I can more feasibly attend Fordham University’s Clinical Research Methodology Master’s Program. This program will provide me with the knowledge and research experience I need to support my future in a PhD program.”

Ellie Leighton is a graduate student in the school counseling program at Husson University. She plans to work with children in grades K–8 to improve social emotional states, and overall well-being of the upcoming generations. She is grateful for opportunities to work with her community and build connections with others.

"This award allows me the opportunity to fulfill my career goals and become a school counselor. With rising amounts of student debt, it is difficult to pursue higher education. I am grateful for this opportunity to gain more knowledge and work with a new Psi Chi chapter.”

Samantha Reis is a first-year graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is pursuing her master’s in social work to combine her passions of social justice, psychology, and criminal justice.

"This award helps to alleviate a huge financial burden. I am now the first person in my family to attend graduate school. This scholarship allows me to fully immerse myself in the program and focus on my classes and internship. I am so grateful for this award and the ability to pursue my passion of psychology.”
GRADUATE RECIPIENTS

Emily Rickel is a graduate student working toward her master of science in human factors at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU). Along with her academic and research pursuits, she is active within the ERAU Psi Chi Chapter and is excited to be president for the 2019–2020 academic year.

“Because of this generous award, I am able to work fewer hours at my part-time job so I can make my education a full-time endeavor. I am very grateful for the opportunity to focus on my studies, research opportunities, and extracurricular activities as I finish my master’s degree.”

Emily Rickel

Candice Villarreal earned her BA in psychology from The University of Texas at San Antonio, where she served as president of the Psi Chi Chapter. In fall 2019, Candice began her PhD in clinical psychology at the University of Texas at Tyler. Her research interests include military mental health and investigating factors that affect functioning.

“Because of this generous award, I am able to work fewer hours at my part-time job so I can make my education a full-time endeavor. I am very grateful for the opportunity to focus on my studies, research opportunities, and extracurricular activities as I finish my master’s degree.”

Candice Villarreal

Crystal Venegas is a master’s student in clinical psychology at CSUN. She will begin her PhD program in psychology in fall 2020. Through research and practice, she aims to inform mental health policy and increase access to equitable mental health services for underserved populations.

“As a first-generation Latinx scholar and mother, this award has helped alleviate the financial cost of pursuing a graduate degree. I was able to focus on my area of research and successfully apply to doctoral programs in my pursuit of a career in academia.”

Crystal Venegas

Candice Villarreal

"The Psi Chi Graduate Scholarship removed the financial stress of moving to a new city, and allowed me to pay for presenting at national conferences. It has afforded me the opportunity to focus on my research and achieve my goals.”

Candice Villarreal

Crystal Venegas
Every year, Psi Chi recognizes two individuals for publishing the best diversity-related article in *Eye on Psi Chi* magazine and *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*. We would like to congratulate the 2019–20 recipients, each of whom received $600 for their hard work!

Learn more about Psi Chi Diversity Article Awards at www.psichi.org/?page=diversityinfo (and consider submitting your own diversity-related articles!)

George Bate
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO (IL)
**Discussing the Impact of and Adequate Responses to Microaggressions**

Unlike more overt forms of social injustice, the diversity topics discussed in my article are particularly relevant for discussion as they not only impact the mental health of many, but they are ambiguous and often imperceptible, while still being insidious and pervasive. Broadly focusing on diversity topics, including microaggressions, is important as the first step to comprehensively tackling these issues is to further an awareness of their existence. As microaggressions in particular are often unintentionally delivered and their effects appear more subtle in many cases, it is difficult to implement overarching changes at the institutional level, as discussed in the article, without first introspectively assessing if we engage in these behaviors. In that microaggressions and other forms of discrimination foster and perpetuate mental health issues, it is vital to focus on these topics in academic and clinical settings to formulate more targeted methods to lessen the prevalence of these behaviors. Although sweeping universal policies harbor issues of their own, dialogues regarding microaggressions and other forms of modern discrimination, especially in this tumultuous political climate, must be started in order to provide victims with the sense of security, free of discrimination, they deserve in academic settings.

George Bate is a clinical psychology PhD student at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science. He earned his BS in psychology from Loyola University Chicago and his AA from Oakton Community College. He is currently a student researcher in Dr. Steven Miller’s Personality and Emotion Lab studying various topics related to anxiety and depression, including stress-related physiological manifestations of these symptoms and discerning the dimensionality of psychological instruments using novel statistical techniques. In the future, George aims to conduct clinically relevant anxiety and depression research and apply this research in a clinical setting.

Jorge Cabrera
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, MONTEREY BAY
**Scholar Identity Development: A Book Writing Journey and Tips for Undergraduate Mentors**

Diversity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age, first generation status, and class), among both students and faculty, is important because the future thought leaders of the country are nurtured in institutions of higher education. Faculty mentors are encouraged to identify diverse students and help them to further develop their abilities and talents. My coauthors and I delved into the mentor-mentee relationship and its importance in the development of scholar identity within our article. The scholar identity development of underrepresented undergraduate students is essential in creating a more diverse academia. The diversity of the United States is shifting but the leadership in academia is slower to shift. The key to increasing diversity among the leadership in academia is to increase the graduation rate of underrepresented undergraduates followed by admissions into graduate school. Faculty mentors play an important role in identifying talented diverse students and guiding them through graduation by providing opportunities to collaborate in scholarly work (e.g., empirical research studies, book writing). Providing underrepresented students with such opportunities allows them to develop their scholar identity and increases the likelihood of graduation and matriculation to graduate school.

Jorge Cabrera is a first generation Hispanic college graduate. He attended a local community college and then transferred to California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB). At CSUMB he began working with Dr. Jennifer Lovell who was essential in helping him develop his scholar identity and mentored his work on a number of research studies, scholarships, and awards. During his time at CSUMB, he worked as an Undergraduate Research Opportunity Center (UROC) researcher, and he was awarded the prestigious Sally Casanova Scholarship (2018–19). After graduation, he conducted summer research at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Public Health.
Psychology and Black History Month in the United States

I open this column with a recognition of the U.S. celebration of Black History Month each February. This celebration provides an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the impact of African Americans in their communities, countries, and throughout the world. So, let’s have a little February in April as we open this column. As I reflected on the underrepresented impact of African Americans on the history of American psychology, I immediately thought of Psi Chi’s current work to honor a pioneer in this area, Dr. Inez Beverly Prosser, by providing greater support for the future of women of color in psychology:

In 2019 Psi Chi began fundraising for the Inez Beverly Prosser Scholarship for Women of Color. (Click here to contribute to this campaign.) The scholarship honors Dr. Prosser, the first African American woman to receive a doctorate in psychology in the United States. Benjamin, Henry, & Mcmahon (2005) provide the perfect explanation of Dr. Prosser’s impact and how her name and legacy represent the goal of this new Psi Chi scholarship. “[Prosser] had a reputation for service to others, especially in encouraging African Americans to pursue education . . . Bernice [Dr. Prosser’s husband] described it as follows: ‘therefore that particular person . . . was able to get a job and help the rest of her family, so it’s like a snowball getting larger and larger as it went’ ” (pg. 59). With the support of our Psi Chi community, we can continue to expand Dr. Prosser’s impact and legacy through the creation of the Inez Beverly Prosser Scholarship for Women of Color.

Although an automobile accident ended Dr. Prosser’s life at the age of 38, she made a lasting impact on psychology. Her research on the impact of segregation on Black students was featured in the 1954 Supreme Court ruling of Brown v. the Board of Education, a decision that was a critical milestone in the long and difficult road to the desegregation of American schools.

In my home state of Arkansas, the Arkansas Psychological Association celebrated Black History month with a 100-year anniversary of the first African American from Arkansas to receive a doctorate in psychology:

The 100th anniversary celebration on Friday, February 28, at Philander Smith College, in Little Rock, Arkansas, celebrated Francis Cecil Sumner of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, who received his doctorate in psychology from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1920. The event also highlighted the impact of other African American psychologists from Arkansas including Dr. Mamie Phipps Clark, the first African American woman to receive a doctorate in psychology from Columbia University and a principal investigator in the “Doll Studies” research critical to the Brown v. Board of Education ruling on desegregation; and a keynote address by Dr. Terrence J. Roberts, a clinical psychologist, CEO of Terrence Roberts Consulting, and one of the Little Rock Nine, the first group of African American students to enroll in Little Rock’s Central High in 1957, a direct result of the Brown v. Board of Education ruling. The event also honored Minnijean Brown-Trickey, also a member of the Little Rock Nine, for her lifetime contributions to social justice.

These two brief Headlines are a very small sample of the individual lives celebrated during Black History month. Taking a few moments, whether it be in February or in the summer, to celebrate the pioneers from all of the different backgrounds that make up our psychological community, is enlightening, empowering, and energizing.
Australian Bushfires Cause Long-Term Mental Health Effects

Brush fires are a part of life in Australia, but the fire season beginning in fall 2019 and running through February 2020 was record setting. The environmental and fiscal impact of these fires will be astounding. The physical destruction of these fires will have an accompanying mental and emotional impact on the impacted individuals. Bradley Cannon from the Psi Chi Central Office shared the following Headline regarding the psychological toll of the Australian fires:

The Australian Labor Party recently requested additional trauma counselling for students in bushfire zones when they go back to school. The request was based in part on a 2019 study of 25,000 kids, which found that students exposed to the 2009 Black Saturday Australian bushfires were more likely to fall behind in the classroom (Gibbs et al., 2019; Trounson, 2019). That 2009 fire claimed 173 lives. These new findings add to the results of the earlier Beyond Bushfires report, also led by Dr. Lisa Gibbs from Melbourne University’s School of Population and Global Health (2016). Based on a six-year study, the report revealed higher rates in mental health disorders in communities affected by that fire, even three to five years later. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said he would consider expanding Medicare psychology rebates for bushfire victims (McAuley, 2020).

As psychologists we understand the human experience is a product of our biology, environment, and social interactions. As such, we are well-positioned to provide insights, support, and guidance to our communities as we experience the impacts of climate change. APA recognized this critical role for psychology in March 2017 with the publication of the special report Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance (http://ecoamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/ea-apa-psych-report-web.pdf) and a special issue of the American Psychologist in 2011 (https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/special/4016605).

Coronavirus and Investor Psychology

On March 1, the World Health Organization listed 87,127 confirmed COVID-19 cases globally. One month later, a WHO situation report confirmed 823,626 cases. The uncertainty I felt on March 1 solidified into the certainty of a global pandemic. This headline highlights the impact of fear and uncertainty on the stock market, referencing work published in the Journal of Behavioral Finance demonstrating a connection between investor emotions and the stock market:

John Griffith, Mohammad Najand, and Jiancheng Shen (2019) analyzed the impact of media on four types of investor sentiment: fear, gloom, joy, and stress. The researchers used available measures on the overall positivity (positive minus negative news stories) of the daily news cycle to model the impact of both the media and investor emotions on market returns. Results from this study indicated that gloom and joy had no detected impacts on market returns. Stress showed a minimal impact. Fear, however, “has a major and lasting effect on market returns and conditional volatility” (pg. 42).

The sudden fall of global markets that occurred in early March mirrored the global fear caused by the uncertainty over COVID-19 (Pinsker, 2020). Although that initial global market downturn can be described as a psychological response to uncertainty, our current global economic challenges are a direct response to the social response necessary to slow the spread of COVID-19.

I thank the healthcare workers, public service employees, and many others who are on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. Although most people have been asked to, literally, “sit this out,” I am so grateful for those whose professional training and occupations require them to continue to work and serve.
Better Differentiation Between Types of Mood Disorders

The differentiation between and diagnosis of various mental disorders can be extremely difficult. Unlike physical disorders, which are often binary decisions (you have the flu or you don’t, a bone is broken or it is not), mental health challenges are often a matter of degrees. Fortunately, improvements in genetic technology allow for a more molecular understanding of mental health challenges. For example, Dr. Seungyeon Lee from the University of Arkansas, for a more molecular understanding of mental health challenges. Drs. Jonathan Coleman and Gerome Breen at the Institute of Psychiatry, Neuroscience, and Psychology at King’s College, London, United Kingdom worked with a team of researchers (Bipolar Disorder Working Group, In press) examining the genetic correlation between three different types of mood disorders closely associated with depression. Their meta-analysis showed that there was a genetic distinction between Type 1 and 2 bipolar disorder, and between Type 2 bipolar disorder and major depressive disorders, as they show similar characteristics. The research team seeks to develop clinical assessment skills to help clinicians predict whether the first episode of depression is more likely to persist as a disorder or progress into a bipolar disorder. Their findings were published in Biological Psychiatry in 2019.

Our refined understanding of the biological (genetic) factors involved in the development and progression of mental health challenges promises better identification and treatment of these life challenges.

As I conclude this summer installment of Psychology in the Headlines, I extend the continued invitation to submit updates on psychology from your area of teaching, research, or practice. Our Psi Chi community represents individuals working across almost all industries and the globe. Despite our diversity, we are united by an interest in psychology in all its forms and applications. We would love to hear what is going on in your part of the world of psychology.

Author’s Note: I wrote the original version of this column on March 1, 2020. I am updating this column on April 1, 2020. The world has shifted significantly in a month. The headlines that I chose to highlight in this article would look very different if written on April 1. I opted to keep the original headlines as they remain important and meaningful events in psychology that are worthy of attention, even if our current focus needs to be on our communities.

Submit to This Series:
Do you know about a major contemporary event related to one of the many areas of psychology?
Share it with us for potential publication in this series! Recurring Contributors are also wanted. Visit www.psichi.org/page/PsychologyInTheHeadlines.

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Shawn R. Charlton, PhD, earned a BA degree from Utah State University (2001) and a MS and PhD from the University of California, San Diego (2005). His research interests explore decision-making in a variety of contexts. Research on professional development in higher education is a growing emphasis for his Behavioral and Social Decisions Laboratory.

Photo Credit: iStockphoto.com/ Tetiana Lazunova
What Does It Mean to "Give Back to Psi Chi"?

Cynthia Wilson, MPA, CFRE
Director of Membership and Development

Three years ago I began my Psi Chi journey. I have a public administration background and a great deal of experience in nonprofit management, but at that time I had no experience specifically in honor societies and none in psychology other than my Intro to Psych course in undergrad. Wanting to learn all I could as quickly as I could, I delved into many aspects of psychology. Early on I wanted to know more about our Board of Directors (all of whom are PhD faculty of psychology). I read the writings of Dr. Robert Cialdini, Dr. Robert Rosenthal, and Dr. Florence Denmark (all Psi Chi Distinguished members). I also took a MOOC through Coursera on social psychology taught by Dr. Scott Plous at Wesleyan (CT).

Now, psychology is at the forefront of all my membership and development efforts with Psi Chi. I want to know who our members are. What benefits will be most attractive to them? What will appeal to them when I draft content for the *Digest* or *Eye on Psi Chi*. And when wearing my development hat, I think carefully about approaching those who donate to Psi Chi, because I know that Psi Chi members are very thoughtful and purposeful in their approach to things.

Three years ago, when I hit the ground running to develop an annual giving campaign for Psi Chi, I thought long and hard about what to call it. There were many iterations. But I landed on *Give Back to Psi Chi* and for me, at least, it stuck.

I have worked closely with many members of the Psi Chi Board of Directors, I have led focus groups with student members, and I have had conversations with Psi Chi faculty advisors about their daily work with their chapters. What was clear to me then and is still clear to me now is that Psi Chi gives to its members.

Psi Chi dedicates and invests over $400,000 each year back into our members in the form of awards, research grants, and scholarships. Through our awards and grants programs, we fund travel to conventions where valuable research is presented and where colleagues from around the world can convene and share knowledge. We fund our Membership Assistance Fund (MAF) to help students who could not otherwise afford the cost of a Psi Chi membership. Psi Chi also accepts funds to help chapters in need: we helped members at University of Puerto Rico San Piedras after Hurricane Maria, along with helping chapters in other circumstances.

So, when it came time to capture the “why” members or supporters would donate to Psi Chi, I developed the *Give Back to Psi Chi* campaign. I did so because not only have I seen and heard from members who have benefitted directly from Psi Chi and wish to give back; I have also heard from supporters, some of whom are not Psi Chi members, who nonetheless value our mission and want to be a part of building the next generation of psychology.

Not only does *Give Back to Psi Chi* mean giving in the form of donations, it also highlights what members already do on a daily basis. Faculty Advisors give their precious time and share knowledge and wisdom. Many chapters lead service projects to benefit their university or community. More still help disseminate information about the value a lifetime Psi Chi membership can offer to those who have interest or need.

In essence, all of us who care about Psi Chi give back in one way or the other. Each year, the *Give Back to Psi Chi* annual giving campaign supports all Psi Chi member programs. And all of us give back in a way that is hopefully meaningful to us and that benefits others.

So now, three years on, what do I know about psychology? I know that psychology encompasses all our inquiries to what makes things work and what makes us tick. Just like our current Psi Chi President promotes #PsychEverywhere, let’s take a moment to reflect on why we *Give Back to Psi Chi*. Did you win an award, did you travel to a convention, do you have a mentor you met through Psi Chi?

Psi Chi exists to both recognize and promote excellence in the science and application of psychology. When we give back, we are recognizing and investing in the excellence of others. Won’t you help build the future of psychology? Won’t you *Give Back to Psi Chi*? Please visit https://donate.psichi.org/
or future psychologists, educators, individuals pursuing
a career in mental health, and a broad range of other
occupational and career paths, the study and practice
of psychology involves a deep and broad understanding
of how psychology and mental health is shaped by
individuals’ as well as groups’ racial and ethnocultural identities. The American Psychological Association (APA) is a scientific
and professional organization that represents psychology in the
United States, including psychology researchers, educators, clini-
cians, consultants, and students. As such, the organization has a
responsibility to represent all members of our society, including
individuals with diverse racial and ethnocultural backgrounds. APA has established several aspirational guidelines that include
suggested or recommended professional behavior, endeavor, or
conduct for psychologists or for individuals or organizations
that work with or train psychologists. There are guidelines for
clinical practice, education, science, and others. Public interest
guidelines provide the profession with the rationale and guidance
for advancing multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice.

The Race and Ethnicity Guidelines, like other guidelines
focusing on specific cultural or marginalized groups, were devel-
oped to provide guidance to psychologists in their specific under-
standing of and practice with racial and ethnocultural groups.

\textbf{The Race and Ethnicity Guidelines} not only provide guidelines in
the practice of psychology, but they also provide guidelines in
education and training as well as in research. In addition, the
Guidelines provide a comprehensive and critical foundation in
terms of contextual information, conceptual issues, and terminol-
ogy. As such, the Guidelines can be an important, if not critical,
tool for students, educators, researchers, and practitioners alike.

Fundamental guidelines provide a broader framework for striving
to approach the process of building awareness, knowledge, and
skills related to race and ethnicity as ongoing, interdisciplinary,
intersectional, and systemic. It is important to recognize the
influence of race and ethnicity in our own personal lives, in our
professional experiences and spaces, and in structures that shape
the field of psychology itself. Students of psychology, including
students studying any of the many areas within the discipline
e.g., clinical, cognitive, developmental, social), can use the
Guidelines to learn and reinforce many of the conceptual foun-
dations and terms pertaining to how race and ethnicity relate to
current psychological scholarship and research, the contexts and
systems within and outside of psychology that shape social ineq-
uites and injustices, and individuals’ own positionality both per-
sonally and professionally. Students and faculty who are pursuing
any kind of research can use these guidelines to help ensure they
are attending to and integrating racial and ethnocultural concepts
into every step of the research process. For example, one of the 17
guidelines discusses how to maintain racially and ethnoculturally
ethical standards in conducting research. Another guideline discus-
ses the importance of as well as process of centering ethnicity,
race, and related constructs in research to further operationalize
these constructs and promote practices that ensure racial and
ethnic equity in the research process.
Faculty in both undergraduate and graduate training programs can benefit from the guidelines that discuss how to create an inclusive curriculum and educational environment as well as how to maintain and utilize updated and culturally relevant scholarship. The education and training guidelines also discuss how and why being racially and ethnoculturally responsive involves an ongoing and reflexive process of building one’s self-awareness, knowledge, and critical thinking skills. For students and psychologists focused on clinical work, the practice guidelines offer ways to consider racial and ethnic biases, diverse worldviews and perspectives, and Indigenous/ethnocultural strategies and resources in assessment, individual and group intervention, consultation and outreach, and other forms of professional practice. Engaging in self-awareness and reflective learning, again, is integral in working toward racially and ethnoculturally responsive practice.

Regardless of one’s role or level of training in the broad field of psychology, the process of building racial and ethnocultural responsiveness is both a professional as well as personal imperative. Over the past several decades, the United States has seen and will continue to see a significant growth in racial and ethnic diversity. Along with this growth, the United States also sees continued and pervasive experiences of discrimination and bias that contribute to large disparities in wealth, health, poverty, and incarceration among racial and ethnic groups. Large, continually growing bodies of research demonstrating the vast adverse consequences of oppression, inequality, and stigma for the health and well-being of racial and ethnic groups, as well as many other diverse groups, support that these guidelines and the issues they discuss are central to the field of psychology. Importantly, the Race and Ethnicity Guidelines present an opportunity for those studying and practicing in this field to also consider how their own backgrounds shape their behavior, their interests and goals, and their relationships both personally and professionally.

References

Susanna Gallor, PhD, joined the faculty of the University of Massachusetts Boston Psychology Department in September 2014. Professor Gallor has a BS in psychology from the University of Florida and a Ph.D. in counseling psychology from the University of Maryland College Park. Prior to working at UMass Boston, she worked for eight years as a staff psychologist at the University of New Hampshire Counseling Center and had a small private practice. She currently leads and supervises the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program’s outreach and consultation service UMB-U-BEST (University Resources for Behavioral and Educational Skills Training). She teaches two graduate practica for advanced clinical psychology doctoral students in Outreach and Consultation Intervention as well as in Assessment. Professor Gallor teaches several undergraduate courses as well, including Personality Theories, Race, Culture and Relationships, and Principles of Psychotherapy.

Stephen L. Chew, PhD
2020 Distinguished Member of Psi Chi
SAMFORD UNIVERSITY (AL)

Congratulations to Dr. Stephen L. Chew for his selection as the 2020 Distinguished Member of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology! Dr. Chew was chosen by Psi Chi’s Board of Directors in recognition for his international contributions to psychology and Psi Chi in the areas of research, service, and teaching.

This is truly the highest award available in our organization. In Psi Chi’s 90-year history, it has only been bestowed upon 40 individuals. Other Psi Chi Distinguished Members include Drs. Albert Bandura, Elizabeth Loftus, B. F. Skinner, and more. View the complete list at www.psichi.org/?Dist_Members

Stephen L. Chew became a member of Psi Chi as an undergraduate psychology major at the University of Texas. He earned his PhD at The University of Minnesota in Cognitive Psychology and is now a professor of psychology at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. His primary research area is the cognitive basis of effective teaching and learning. His research interests include the use of examples in teaching, the impact of cognitive load on learning, the tenacious misconceptions that students bring with them into the classroom, and the importance of student trust in the teacher on academic motivation and perseverance. He is the creator of a groundbreaking series of YouTube videos for students on how to study effectively in college (http://www.samford.edu/how-to-study/) which have been viewed more than three million times and are in wide use from high schools to professional schools. Chew was awarded the Buchanan Award for Classroom Teaching Excellence from Samford in 1999. In 2005, he received the Robert S. Daniel Teaching Excellence Award from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology as the outstanding teacher of psychology at four-year colleges and universities. He was named the 2011 Outstanding Master’s Universities and Colleges U.S. Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In 2018, he received the Charles L. Brewer Distinguished Teaching of Psychology Award from the American Psychological Foundation.
We’ve probably all had bad experiences with group work, perhaps including an overbearing member who commandeered the project, group members who expected to share the rewards without having made a fair contribution, interpersonal conflict and drama that made it hard to work together, and anxiety about having to work with others when it’s more comfortable to work by oneself or with friends (Nilson, 2016). With all these potential pitfalls to group work, why do instructors keep assigning group work? And what can be done to make group work better?

Done properly, group work helps students (Cashin, 2011; Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014):

- **Engage actively** with course material by practicing, engaging, and critiquing, rather than passively receiving information as in lecture (Bean, 2011; Cashin, 2011).
- **Engage in higher-level cognitive processing**, engaging in tasks that involve creating, evaluating, analyzing, and applying, rather than simply remembering, with corresponding increases in their content knowledge and critical thinking (Bloom et al., 1956; Cashin, 2011; Hattie, 2015; Nilson, 2016).
- **Improve metacognition.** As any teacher can attest, you are never more aware of what you *don’t* know as when you try to teach it to others. Working with others can be a lower stakes opportunity for students to metacognate and identify knowledge gaps (Cashin, 2011; Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014).
- **Create complex, sophisticated work that they couldn’t do alone.** Student brainstorming, project planning and implementation, scientific reasoning, writing, and presentation can all be improved by working with their peers (Nilson, 2016).
- **Develop transferable skills** such as active and critical listening, presenting evidence and argumentation to help others understand ideas and plan projects, giving feedback that is both critical and supportive, and developing “orderly task-oriented procedures” (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014, p. 194; Cashin, 2011).
- **Develop interpersonal connections** including professional relationships that may be beneficial in the future and social relationships that increase students’ sense of belonging on campus (Bean, 2011; Nilson, 2016). This sense of belonging is especially important for underrepresented minorities, first-generation college students, and international students.

This article presents recommendations for instructors to make group work more effective and beneficial to all students. There is also a section especially for students (see page 27), which includes useful tips to get the most out of group work.
Recommendations for Instructors

1. Creating effective groups

**How big should groups be?** If groups are expected to work extensively outside of class, groups of 3–4 work well to ease scheduling difficulties (Nilson, 2016). For group activities that take place primarily or exclusively within class, groups of 5–7 students allow for different opinions and skills while reducing social loafing (Michaelsen & Sweet, 2011). For discussions in which a diversity in ideas and opinions is desirable, larger groups of 10–13 can work effectively (Bean, 2011).

**Should I assign students to groups?** In most cases, yes (Michaelsen & Sweet, 2011; Nilson, 2016). Assigning students to groups reduces off-topic chatter, splits up cliques, and increases diversity within groups by mixing together domestic and international students, those with different majors, students of different genders and ethnicities, and so on (Nilson, 2016; Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014). Random groups are OK, especially in larger classes where it’s not feasible to create groups based on student characteristics. For quick interactions, it’s often sufficient to ask students to “turn to a neighbor” without creating formal groups at all (Nilson, 2016). Personally, I like to create intentional groups that are homogeneous in procrastination tendency but heterogeneous in introversion/extraversion. This cuts down on early submitters’ frustration at working with late-completers, and vice versa. Putting introverts and extraverts together helps students learn to interact with and benefit from those who have different personalities than themselves.

**Should I rearrange groups or keep them consistent?** Obviously, for a long-term project you need consistent groups. But even for shorter-term group work, consistent groups are helpful so the students can harrenk back to conversations from previous weeks, develop strong group norms and positive interpersonal connections, etc. (Michaelsen & Sweet, 2011).

2. Establishing clear shared expectations

**How can I start groups off on the right foot?** By using feed-forward, you can clarify your expectations and help groups set their own expectations and positive norms immediately, and help them self-regulate throughout their time together (Brank & Wylie, 2013; Cashin, 2011). In feed-forward, you alert students ahead of time of the likely stumbling blocks throughout the assignment or project. Rubrics are one form of feed-forward, as a strong rubric should make students aware of your expectations and how to meet them (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2011). As you create your rubric for a group task, consider whether you are more interested in the “product” that students create (e.g., quality of their presentation or paper) or the “process” they go through to create it (e.g., clear communication, doing their fair share, making every effort to resolve problems). Then, be sure your rubric reflects what you really care about (Nilson, 2016).

**What expectations should we set ahead of time?** In large classes or when groups will shuffle frequently, I provide class guidelines for group work for everyone to review before group work begins (Bean, 2011; Cashin, 2011). In smaller classes, especially when groups will work together for an extended time, it’s helpful to have groups create their own guidelines (Brank & Wylie, 2013; Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014). In any case, students need to know the expectations regarding:

- Group meeting locations and times.
- Individual contributions, including effective speaking and listening.
- Response time to emails, texts, and group chats.
- Interactions that are honest and respectful.
- Quality of work.
- Attendance and contributions at group meetings.
- Efforts to work out problems as a group before going to the instructor.
- Voluntarily or involuntarily leaving the group.

3. Ensuring students arrive prepared for group work

**What should students do before class?** Assign students to complete a task with some tangible product before they arrive to class (Cashin, 2011; Connor-Greene, 2005; West, 2018) or have some other means of ensuring they are fully prepared (Michaelsen & Sweet, 2011). By asking students to “Write down three questions this article raises for you” instead of simply, “Read this article,” you can encourage active preparation and accountability for arriving ready to work.

**What should students do during class?** It’s helpful to get all students thinking about the same thing before you send them to work in groups. There are lots of ways you can capture students’ attention and get them all on the same track: show a TED Talk or an interesting photograph, ask a framing question, present a controversial statement, ask them to generate examples from their own lives, have them compare and contrast two related concepts, etc. Then give students a chance to gather their thoughts individually before they get into their groups, perhaps through a two-minute free-write, drawing a diagram, or writing down a guess that they can show to their group mates to start discussions in which a diversity in ideas and opinions is desirable, larger groups of 10–13 can work effectively (Bean, 2011).

**Make the task appropriately challenging. If you’re giving groups the same task that you would give individual students, it’s too easy.**
For specific tips for strengthening small-group or whole-class discussions, see Cashin (2011) and West (2018). The team-based learning framework provides detailed recommendations on group-based application activities (see, for instance, Michaelsen & Sweet, 2011).

4. Assigning effective tasks for group work

Students often view group work as “busy work” or a chance for the professor to slack off while they do all the work. To dispel that notion, make it clear what they’re doing, why they’re doing it, and how they should do it.

How is the task related to the learning sequence? Put another way, what is the purpose of this group work? Are you trying to get the students prepared for lecture material? Focusing their attention on key points of an argument? Generating ideas to be explored in written work? Understanding challenging readings? Discuss the purpose of group work early and often so students can see why it is valuable and how it will help them achieve the course objectives (Bean, 2011).

What exactly is the task, anyway? Clearly defined tasks help students manage their time and attention and increase performance (Bean, 2011; Nilson, 2016). This is true both for large projects completed over several weeks and brief standalone activities within a single class meeting.

Provide an explicit time frame for whatever you’re asking groups to do. “Take five minutes to discuss...” and “Take one minute to discuss...” convey that you are seeking different depths of conversation. When in doubt, err on the side of too little time, as you can always extend as needed. When students have too much time on their hands, they tend to get off topic, view group work as a waste of time, and start pulling out their smartphones (Bean, 2011; Nilson, 2016).

Make the task and desired final product very clear (Nilson, 2016). Consider two instructors assigning a brief discussion topic. The first instructor says, “Take five minutes to discuss Piaget’s theory of psychosocial development.” The second instructor says, “Take five minutes to identify three criticisms of Piaget’s theory of psychosocial development, and formulate an argument on whether this theory should still be taught. Be prepared to present your argument to the class.” Naturally, students who receive the second prompt will likely be more on-task, generate more specific responses, and will be more ready to share their discussion points with the class (Bean, 2011).

Make the task appropriately challenging. If you’re giving groups the same task that you would give individual students, it’s too easy (Nilson, 2016) and students will perceive that it’s busy work and a waste of their time. If you have four students in a group, try giving them something that’s four times more challenging than what you would give a single student.

What should the instructor do while groups work? As groups work in class, I take attendance and eavesdrop to evaluate individual group members’ contributions (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014). I also keep all groups in one room whenever possible even though it can get loud (Bean, 2011). Whenever possible, I make a point of visiting with each group at least once to do any of the following:
• Rebalance contributions if there is a student dominating the group or a student not making any contributions,
• Get a group back on task if they start talking about unrelated topics,
• Stimulate further discussion or play devil’s advocate if a group has not fully explored an idea or reaches consensus too quickly,
• Praise particularly insightful points or questions,
• Encourage deeper discussion, or
• Check in to assess understanding.

I also encourage groups to flag me down if they have questions. That said, I rarely answer questions straightforwardly, instead redirecting questions to the group (e.g., “What’s another way you might approach this problem?” or “What would Theorist X think about this argument?”) to convey that I believe in students’ ability to solve most of their own problems.

5. Building students’ skills throughout the course

Who should be the group leader? Randomizing or rotating roles within a group can reduce bias (e.g., the recorder is usually a woman; the spokesperson is rarely an international student) and help students to build a broader variety of skills (Nilson, 2016). You can lighten the mood by assigning groups based on silly criteria: “The spokesperson is whoever has the shortest pinky finger, the recorder is whoever most recently watched a horror movie,” etc. It’s easy to randomize the recorder even in large classes; simply tell them to pass the paper around their group so each answer is written by a different person.

How can I build skills over time?
Consider giving students individual feedback throughout the semester or project based on the criteria from the rubric. After an in-class work period, give feedback on the contributions you noticed each student making. For longer term projects, consider conducting repeated peer evaluations with feedback to each group member (more information below). Self-reflections can be especially helpful because students have insight into their own affect, cognitions, and behaviors that you can’t see (Nilson, 2016).

6. Facilitating Effective Feedback to Students

How can I give feedback to my students? Summative feedback says how the student has done, such as at the end of the project or course. Although summative feedback provides an informative evaluation of student performance, it may not produce any behavioral change or learning benefit to students. Formative feedback, in contrast, says how the student is doing while it can still make a difference (Taras, 2005). This can be either a red flag or a kudos, but the goal is to let students know what they can expect if they keep doing what they’ve been doing. Formative feedback also makes the grading rubric more salient throughout so that students can adjust to meet expectations.

How can students give feedback to each other? Peer evaluations are helpful for knowing what has occurred in a group beyond what the instructor can see in class, and can help you evaluate the process of group work, not just the product (Angelo & Cross, 1993, p. 349–351; Michaelsen & Sweet, 2011; Nilson, 2016; Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014). Repeated peer evaluations can be especially helpful (Brutus, Donia, & Ronen, 2012) because they combine summative and formative feedback. For instance, if a group is working together over a 16-week semester, you could have students complete peer evaluations for all group members in Weeks 4, 8, 12, and 16, and give students their average ratings after each wave. You could average ratings across these four waves, weight later ratings more heavily than earlier ratings, or use only the ratings from Week 16 after encouraging groups to negotiate and work out any problems identified in previous waves (A. Hiatt, personal communication, April 12, 2019).

Should peer feedback be anonymous? I recommend keeping peer feedback confidential but not anonymous. If a student makes an allegation about misconduct in their group, I want to be able to follow up with both parties involved. I also find that students are more professional in their comments and are more likely to explain their ratings if their names are on the feedback they provide (Michaelsen & Sweet, 2011).
Recommendations for Students

If you are a student who will be working in a group for an assignment, project, or discussion, congratulations! You have a fantastic opportunity to learn course material at a deep level, build your marketable skills, make social and professional connections, and create something that you couldn’t do alone. It won’t always be easy, but it will be more beneficial and even fun if you:

1. Choose your group wisely (if you are allowed to choose). Rather than simply choosing your friends, consider: Who in the class is reliable, responsible, and hardworking? Who will push the group toward deeper thought rather than just agreeing with what others say? Who will bring a different voice or skillset to the conversation? Who works at a similar pace as you, to cut down on frustration from others who want to complete work much earlier or later?

2. Learn your instructor’s expectations. Carefully read all materials provided to you. Find out everything you can about both the product your group is expected to create and the process by which your group is expected to work. Ask questions about anything you don’t understand. If a rubric isn’t provided, ask for one.

3. Set positive group expectations and norms. When your group first meets, suggest taking 10 minutes to discuss and set expectations about contributions and duties of each group member, timelines for completing work, how you will challenge each other and disagree in a respectful way, when and how you will communicate outside of class, and how you will work out problems that may arise.

4. Use class time wisely and plan out-of-class meetings carefully. Try to keep off-topic chatter to a minimum to be as productive as possible during in-class work periods. If out-of-class work is needed, take a few minutes at the end of class to find a time that works for everyone. Then designate someone to send a reminder to all group members so no one misses the meeting.

5. Document your meetings and contributions. Track when you meet outside of class, what you do during those meetings, and what your individual contributions are. This can make meetings more efficient, help you plan your time wisely, and clarify who is (and isn’t) pulling their weight. If you do get stuck with someone not doing their fair share, this documentation can be helpful to make a case that your outcome (e.g., grade) shouldn’t be tied to theirs.

Closing

Group work is challenging, but that’s not a bad thing. It encourages high-level cognitive processing, builds transferable skills and interpersonal connections, helps students identify gaps in their knowledge, and helps students produce academic products that they could not create alone. Whether you’re an instructor or a student, I encourage you to see what group work can do for you.

References


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After months of suffering through GRE preparation, gathering letters of recommendation, preparing your curriculum vitae, writing your individualized personal statements, and then being rejected by several institutions, your years of hard work finally pay off. You receive the news that you have been accepted! You are overcome with joy, relief, gratitude, and optimism—a combination of powerful emotions you have never felt before in such a manner. You start to think of how bright your future will be and how your friends and family will be so proud of you. You may even be nervously hopeful in anticipation of your newly invited endeavor. However, what many individuals may experience as they continue their journey throughout graduate school is the wonder of what happens to these emotions and why do we think about it so infrequently. As psychology graduate students, it is easy to become caught up in the chaos of our profession and lose track of how hard we worked to get where we are and why we decided to start this journey.

As current psychology graduate students, we often joke about how attending graduate school is a fairly portentous decision. These witticisms seem to be a running joke among many graduate students across the country, spoken with sarcasm and cynicism, but sprinkled with seeds of truth. Those sparring bits of truth mean more than we would like to, or can currently, acknowledge. We could have written this article like many other published articles concerning graduate school—it will be a transformative experience, you will be doing what you love, and you will become an expert. Although those experiences are true and uphold that graduate school is a rewarding path filled with growth, there are sides to graduate school that are often not spoken about and do not get the public recognition that they warrant. In the current article, we hope to provide you with an honest and open discussion of several aspects of pursuing a graduate degree in psychology that are often overlooked.

Coping With Sacrifices
Pursuing a graduate degree in psychology may require making sacrifices, which as you progress further in your field, may become more apparent. Many people in graduate school begin their journey in their late twenties and do not finish until their early or mid-thirties (Comeau, 2018; Dechant, 2019)—an important stage of development that influences the trajectory of your life. Depending on your program, you will have to dedicate anywhere from 2 to over 7 years obtaining your degree (Hoffer & Welch, 2006). Further, covering the living costs while paying for graduate school can create a financial burden (Wei et al., 2009). Finally, you may spend very little time with your friends, family, and significant others, seeing them only a few times a year if you move away from home, which may negatively impact your functioning (Kapadia, 2015). These sacrifices begin to add up as you continue to pursue your advanced degree.

To cope with these sacrifices, you must first recognize that they are a normal part of the graduate school experience and worthwhile to your ultimate goal. Students eventually come to find strategies to reduce the impact of these sacrifices on their lives. Although sacrifices are inevitable, there is also a degree of flexibility in graduate school. For example, if you have children, it may be possible to schedule work to accommodate your family. If you are pursuing a graduate degree in psychology, then learning or helping others may be some of your values. However, pursuing some value at the cost of your other values (e.g., family or fitness) leads to an unbalanced and less fulfilling lifestyle. We stress that making these sacrifices may not be a choice, however, finding balance with these sacrifices and moving toward all of your values is a choice and a possibility.
Imposter Syndrome and Graduate School Guilt

We would like to elucidate two psychological phenomena that graduate students in psychology may experience. First, after working tirelessly to get into one of the graduate programs, you may find yourself doubting your own abilities and thinking that someone will find out that you are unqualified. This effect is called the imposter syndrome (Langford & Clance, 1993). The imposter syndrome occurs when individuals have difficulty internalizing their successes and often attribute their success to external sources (e.g., the only reason people talked to me at my poster is because they did not want to be rude; Clance & Imes, 1978). This may lead to having thoughts about why the admissions committee accepted you. For instance, “their decision must have been a mistake or a fluke.” Despite contradictory evidence, the fear creeps in that people will find out that you do not actually have the skills or intelligence to keep up with the demands of graduate school in psychology. These anxiety-fueled and self-sabotaging thoughts can be roadblocks that inhibit your ability to actually flourish in graduate school. It is critical that you challenge those thoughts and make efforts to recognize your successes as your own. Do not discount your skills as a student. You may find that you are more qualified than you feel.

Graduate school guilt is the feeling that slowly sneaks up on you after a normal 40- to 60-hour work week when you are out having a casual drink with friends. It is the experience when your mind starts to nag you to call it a night and go home and work on one of your ongoing projects. Graduate students tend to work until they have nothing left to give, potentially sacrificing well-being in the process (Beaumont, Durkin, Hollins-Martin, & Carson, 2016). Graduate school guilt can be difficult to manage because the only temporary remedy seems to be more work, more reading, or more time in the lab. The first step we recommend is that individuals experiencing this phenomenon accept that it is a normal part of the graduate school experience. Some individuals recommend keeping a healthy separation between your identity and your job (Pronovost, & Bienvenu, 2015). This distance may allow you to recognize that your whole world is not your job, and taking breaks should be liberating, not penalizing.

Burnout, Self-Care, and Productivity

Navigating graduate school is a challenging journey. As graduate students, we are pushed to be as productive as possible for future success in obtaining internship, postdoc, and eventual employment. In some cases, this productivity can lead to clinically significant depression symptoms and burnout (Beaumont et al., 2016; Peluso, Carleton, & Asmundson, 2011). In any helping profession, you may have difficulty helping others while you are struggling. Thus, one must vigilantly balance self-care and productivity during tenure in graduate school. Although some students are incredibly productive, they often suffer from overworking, experiencing burnout, and neglecting self-care (Colman et al., 2016). On the other hand, some students prioritize self-care, family life, and relationships, which may improve their productivity (Burton, McCalister, Chen, & Edington, 2005). Thus, being an effective graduate student involves a balancing act that requires constant self-monitoring and introspection.

Self-care is a topic of discussion throughout psychology graduate education and often addressed in introductory courses in graduate training. A recent meta-analysis found that graduate students who engage in regular self-care tend to have better outcomes than those who do not (Colman et al., 2016). However, self-care is not a one-size-fits-all prescription, and what works for one student may not necessarily work for another. Further confusing the implementation of effective self-care is the amount of self-care practice required to produce benefits. Although researchers have not yet found an empirically driven answer, self-monitoring, introspection, and experimentation may be a crucial step in determining how often and for how long you need to practice self-care to recuperate and stave off burnout.

Productivity is another topic prevalent in graduate education. In any one day you may be completing coursework, writing manuscripts, conducting research, engaging in therapy, or grading. Although numerous resources exist that can help boost productivity, similar to self-care, individual differences are paramount in determining which strategies work best for each person (Phillips & Russell, 1994). Identifying when and where you work best are essential to enhance productivity, and more advanced elements may include eliminating distractions and setting boundaries. Again, there is a learning curve regarding these factors at the start of graduate school. For example, setting a specific time of day to check emails or learning which tasks you can complete when mentally fatigued can help graduate students’ complete responsibilities without wasting time and energy. Similar modifications may not be apparent during your first few semesters of graduate school. Productivity in graduate school is important, and prioritizing self-care will make the experience more manageable.

Mental Illness, Suicide, and Seeking Help

Mental illness is very common among graduate students and can have irreparable side effects. Researchers have demonstrated that graduate students experience unusually high levels of anxiety and depression (Evans et al., 2018; Garcia-Williams, Moffitt, & Kaslow, 2014). Regarding suicide, approximately 7% of students had suicidal thoughts, 2% reported making plans, and 10% reported having attempted suicide in their lifetime.
It can be difficult at times, the process and all that comes with it will mold you into a knowledgeable and empathic person and psychologist. Graduate school also presents a unique opportunity to challenge yourself, find your boundaries, and hone your sense of identity. It makes you keenly knowledgeable in a vision that has the ability to make a real difference in our world, both on a larger scale and a smaller one. Finally, you will develop invaluable friendships with your colleagues, which will be the support you need to thrive in the program and life outside of it. After all, life still goes on while you are in graduate school. In the end, the sense of accomplishment and resilience through it all will outweigh the trials and struggles of the arduous, yet worthwhile journey.

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While touring China, American students had an opportunity to visit a university and learn about the psychology practices that were being taught. The Chinese students and faculty members were excited to show the Americans the latest psychotherapeutic advances. As each Chinese student spoke about their experiences and successes they had achieved, the American students began to whisper to one another. One could see the Chinese students begin to falter in their speech and look toward the professor for assistance. Some lowered their heads as if in shame while others spoke more and more softly. Finally, one of the American students asked them to “speak-up.” That request resulted in the professor issuing profuse apologies and ushering the Chinese students out of the room to the dismay of the American students. The American students did not understand that their whispering signaled a disinterest and disrespect to the speakers. The American students were impressed with the successes and were expressing those thoughts among themselves so as not to disrupt the presentation. If the two sets of students had understood some of the cultural norms of the other, this awkward situation could have been avoided.

International psychology (IP) can be defined in many ways; however, its foundations are based on the acknowledgement and respect for intercultural interactions (Stevens & Wedding, 2004). IP promotes social justice, embraces indigenous psychologies, and recognizes the need for participatory action and collaborative efforts. Psychologists who operate as international psychologists have acquired a skillset that allows them to operate with cultural humility. Cultural humility recognizes, appreciates, and understands that each person is a unique individual deserving of acceptance and respect (Hook & Davis, 2017). Additionally, cross-cultural competency understands that cross-cultural engagement requires language and actions that are rooted in one’s cultural history, values, belief systems, and traditions. This also means centralizing the work on meaningful acts and engagement as defined from the perspective of those from within the culture.

To interact with individuals from diverse cultures, effective communication tools are needed to understand and convey meaning. To achieve effective intercultural communication, an international psychologist must use cultural tools which include communication through language, text, and other forms of media (Scollon, Scollon, & Jones, 2011).
To understand how communications in all forms can affect national and international relations, one must start with a basic understanding of constructivism. Jean Piaget forwarded the Constructivism Theory, which says that people obtain knowledge and understanding based on their experiences (Wadsworth, 1996). These experiences generate ideas, develop character, and produce behavioral patterns. Constructivism looks at the interactions between experiences and behaviors (Ültanır, 2012). Ultimately, the field has a responsibility of conducting research to gain the understanding that will allow for effective collaborative communications and mutually beneficial interactions.

It is important to bridge the gap between academic discussions about IP and the practical applications of international interactions. It is easy to teach IP principles through on-line or on-ground instructions, but it is another thing to truly embrace the IP mindset in practical application. How will individuals utilize IP when faced with real-world situations that call for cultural understanding, acceptance, respect, and humility? IP, if misunderstood, can harm rather than heal by the actions that one takes, the words that one speaks, or by the thoughts that inform one’s behaviors.

**Harmful Actions**

Systemic oppression, racism, discrimination, and marginalization permeate societies all around the world. The actions and responses we take when working with marginalized and stigmatized groups can be detrimental, causing damage, or be positive and result in powerful connections. An example of harmful actions include the touring of a home of a marginalized citizen in Shanghai under the pretense of learning about the historical background of Chinese and Jewish interactions during WWII. The underprivileged family had been pressured by financial concerns to allow a group of Westerners to poke through their belongings and trample around their home for mere pennies. It didn’t matter that the group believed that the house was a museum reflecting the integration of two vastly different cultures, what mattered was that the actions taken violated the foundational tenets of respect for the rights and dignity of others.

The awareness of unethical behaviors toward marginalized groups is one step in the right direction of our work across cultures, but it is not enough. In our interactions with marginalized groups, we can advocate to work collaboratively alongside and with thoughtful consideration of the needs, dignity, and sustainability of the local residents. Being aware of the power dynamics is the first step; we can then take action to reduce the risks of oppression and exploitation that can ultimately lead to community empowerment and restoration.
Respect for Others
Another example of a detrimental action involves the lack of awareness of the impact of traumatic loss. A humanitarian group decides to take Haitian youths on a field trip to purchase supplies soon after an earthquake left 5 million people displaced. The youth were brought on a bus from a shelter that housed other victims of the devastation. Many of the youth had lost their parents in the disaster and had not left the shelter, nor had they seen the desolation that lies outside the shelter. As the bus drove past remnants of the neighborhoods that the children had once lived in, the children broke out in tears, leaving the humanitarian workers ill-equipped as to how to respond to the trauma.

The use of reflective thinking to look at all scenarios is one IP option that could have resulted in forwarding several courses of action from which to choose when discussing field trips for youths in Haiti. Risk assessments that take into account safety as well as retraumatization is another tool that could have been utilized by the well-meaning humanitarian group. Also, discussing with the local leaders the potential impact of the trip and the potential effect on the children’s well-being could have also prepared the humanitarian workers to respond with support and empathy. IP seeks to prevent and or mitigate further harm, especially to those who are already suffering.

Harmful Words
Words as simple as the mislabeling of organizations can produce behaviors that ignore past experiences. This was found to be the case in the country of Rwanda, where an appalling 90-day period of country-wide genocide resulted in the slaughter of 800,000 citizens. The loss of so many people to mass exodus, death, and subsequent incarceration resulted in a large population of displaced children. Today, the idea of having orphanages is a distasteful reminder to the people of Rwanda as the population is striving to progress toward a more positive message and outlook. To continue referring to group homes for displaced children as orphanages sends a message that is disrespectful, demeaning, causes division, and ultimately refuses the attempt by Rwandans to move forward.

Being aware of the use of language is critical in our work with diverse cultural groups. It is important to take the time to learn the nuances of the local language as well as the origins of terms according to the group’s political, historical, and social context. As one learns and is instructed concerning the use of various terminologies, one must take every opportunity to acknowledge, respect, and accommodate the language and social preferences of the host culture (Street, 1993).

Harmful Thoughts
Thoughts are the highest form of ignoring the basic tenets of IP as they inform actions, words, behaviors, and prejudices. Aboriginals in Australia have suffered from oppression and marginalization on a scale that can be compared to that of Native Americans in North America. Their struggle for equality mirrors that of African Americans during the tumultuous 1960s. Preconceived notions and antiquated beliefs about the history and culture of Aboriginal Family Kinship Groups have led to mass incarceration of Aboriginal citizens, contributed to higher than average mortality rates, and supported policies that continue to oppress members of the Aboriginal population. For over one hundred years, the Australian government implemented forced assimilation policies, the last ending in 1961. Although officially discontinued, these policies continue to inform behaviors of both the Australian majority and Aboriginal populations alike. Despite being the original inhabitants of Australia, Aboriginals were not considered as citizens until 1967 and were classified as Flora and Fauna until the late 1960s. After being turned out of orphanages and private homes with nowhere to go, Aboriginal women and men were summarily arrested and incarcerated for loitering and often spent 10 to 15 years in overcrowded prisons. The refusal of hospitals to treat Aboriginals in the past still causes many to distrust the medical profession in general and non-Aboriginal providers specifically. Western doctors routinely disregard the knowledge and understanding of indigenous healing practices and reject recommendations from traditional Aboriginal healers. The rate of improvement for Aboriginal life in Australia is slow and is further hampered by the political rhetoric that ignores the historical evidence and allows mainstream Australia to continue the misappropriation and exploitation of Aboriginal culture.

IP encourages the use of research and education as tools to inform and create spaces for collaborative engagements that provide opportunities for personal development and bridge social, religious, racial, and ideological divides. IP also encourages participatory action and advocacy programs that address human rights violations, obstacles faced by marginalized groups, mental health outcomes, and other challenges that occur as a result of the implicit biases that inform negative behaviors and actions.

International Psychology’s Reconstructive Principles and Strategies
To effectively work with diverse cultures and groups, it is important to adopt a contextually informed mindset that takes into consideration not only the behaviors, values, belief systems, traditions, and norms of the people one engages with, but one’s own values, belief systems, and assumptions. To do so requires a lens that sees individuals within the context of their family, neighborhood, cultural group, and social and political environment, as well as the histories and experiences that their people have been exposed to (Fox, Prilleltensky & Austin, 2009). One must understand their own contexts as well as the contexts of others. By adopting the practices of self-reflection and awareness, intercultural communication and collaboration, we can work ethically and effectively across diverse cultures.

Cultural Humility
International psychologists are guided by the Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles (2016) which incorporate respect of all cultural customs, beliefs, and experiences. Additionally, this framework requires international psychologists to view the cultural companion as the expert on their cultural traditions, values, belief systems, and norms. Cultural humility (Hook & Davis, 2017) for international psychologists has to do with the posture of listening, learning and centering the work on cultural traditions, definitions and perspectives within the culture where one is working. It is common in Western
psychological models for psychologists to operate as the expert. International psychologists decentralize the power dynamics by acknowledging that the people within the culture are the experts of tradition, experience, and norms. Advocacy efforts in Australia on behalf of Aboriginals concerning their right to determine their lives in a manner that is consistent with their history, experience, values, and dignity aligns directly with the goals and interests of upholding the statutes of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the foundational tenets of IP.

**Conclusion**

IP is not considered to be a “hard science” as in other fields of psychology such as clinical and industrial psychologies. It is aspirational, participatory, inclusionary, experiential, and contextual. Unlike most fields of psychology, IP can be easily taught, readily adapted, promptly utilized, and is applicable to a variety of areas, situations, and circumstances both national and international. It is a field of psychology that can be utilized by companies, corporations, organizations, institutions, agencies, and individuals alike. The field and its practitioners are uniquely qualified to advocate, conduct research, engage in international activities, and operate within a contextual environment. The potential applications are endless and should be considered among others when seeking methods of engagement.

**References**


The social and political conditions that we live in today call for a greater and urgent need for global outreach and advocacy. As an international student in the United States, I have gained significantly from interacting with and learning from talented peers and professors. Graduate education has allowed me to feel empowered, taught me to voice my opinions, and motivated me to challenge and question the existing social injustices and institutional barriers inherent in the systems around us. The more I immerse myself in the field of psychology in general and counseling psychology in particular, the more I am pulled toward advocacy, social justice, and developing a multicultural understanding of the issues we face in the world. The global nature of the world we live in today, in fact, calls out for a greater collaboration across national boundaries and working in an international sphere through learning, unlearning, and relearning from our peers around the world.

Being a counseling psychology student and studying at a program that values social justice has granted me several opportunities to develop an awareness of the urgency and implications of social justice work. It has also afforded me the circumstances that facilitate a utilization of my skills and zeal for outreach/advocacy/awareness in the United States. However, I often feel torn and guilty for being unable to materialize the valuable skills that I am learning here and for being unable to put these skills to effective use so I can also make a difference in my home country. I feel driven to apply the skills and knowledge that I am gaining in my graduate education. Yet, trying to make a change (no matter how little) and actively be an advocate in a place that is miles away from you is a challenge. It’s a question I often try to resolve for myself. How do I become more engaged in international social justice work? How can I make a difference in my home country?

Collaborating with people worldwide is easier today with the advances in technology and the ease of reaching out to people virtually. However, simply pondering over solutions to propagate and encourage international social justice efforts would not be enough. Although we have a few international psychology programs in the United States, we are still a long way from utilizing our potential for international social justice work. The global mental health movement, which looks at the mental health needs in low and middle income nations but espouses an orientation of providing equitable access to care for all individuals around the globe, is another attractive option for those interested in international work (Koplan et al., 2009). Programs in international psychology as well as the global mental health movement are separate specializations that individuals may choose to pursue. The challenge, however, lies in integrating and possibly emphasizing international social justice work within the more mainstream clinical and counseling psychology programs.

As I think about my own experience...
being an international student in the United States and attempting to engage in meaningful work in my home country, I recognize that a major barrier to the development of international advocacy might possibly be a lack of institutional policies or program focus. Emphasizing international social justice work has the potential to not only allow international students to effectively utilize their graduate training to advocate in their home countries (or in other countries around the globe) but also offers a lucrative chance for domestic students interested in broader diverse cultural contexts to build experience. I brainstormed about some ways of encouraging or facilitating these efforts. These are, more importantly, ways in which I would envision international social justice work being encouraged.

1. Discourses in International Psychology

Currently, most doctoral programs follow the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines for required classes and offer electives depending on program specializations. The more global we get in our outlook, the more we have to learn from one another as citizens of the world. Counseling and clinical psychology is in a unique position to consider the international mental health needs, making courses in international psychology (whether basic or advanced) a strongly emphasized factor, just like social justice. Counseling psychology's Model Training Program (Scheel, Stabb, Cohn, Duan, & Sauer, 2018) calls for a commitment to understanding and working in international settings and contexts. At the moment, however, it seems that, although international collaboration is a value that psychology in general embodies, more systematic efforts toward an incorporation of international psychology would be beneficial.

2. Designing Practicums and Internships Outside the United States

Developing and, more importantly, popularizing the concept of APA-approved practicums and possibly internships outside the United States is another way to allow international students or students interested in global approaches to mental health to become involved in community outreach and advocacy that extends in the world. Some schools already provide this option. However, it does not appear to be very popular or hassle free. Supervision for such practicums is usually provided remotely or arranged locally through partnerships. Multiculturally focused supervision is an important component of such an experience. Developing practicums outside the United States has benefits not only for cross-cultural understandings but also cross-cultural learnings and eventually development of better, more culturally competent interventions. This also lays the foundation for emic approaches to research that may be driven by social justice implications.

3. Startup/Mental Health Innovation

As the field of psychology moves toward having a more active role in being social justice advocates, helping students develop this skillset becomes crucial. Encouraging a skillset could take several forms. It could take the form of conducting research and filling in gaps in knowledge or developing culture specific theories. It could also take the form of encouraging social entrepreneurship and leadership development. Allowing students to collaborate with their peers in order to develop startups or create innovations in the mental health field would be great way to develop leadership. This could even replace or be an add-on to a thesis/dissertation. It could also be a social justice project, an option that some programs already have. The goal of such an approach would be to allow students the autonomy and agency to be creative, indulge in an approach that resonates with their values, and possibly carry on their legacy and work throughout their lifetime. Rather than just a “project” to get away with, it becomes a “project” that defines a student’s core values and commitment to being a psychologist.

4. Increase in International Conferences with a Non-Eurocentric Focus

There has been a rise in the number of international conferences and collaborations in the last few years. However, one must bear in mind that not everyone might be able to attend these conferences, given the costs as well as visa restrictions that citizens from different countries might encounter. Thus, any attempts made toward making international conferences more accessible as well as encouraged and funded by departments and programs will likely to be beneficial to the future of international social justice work. These collaborations provide a great opportunity to form research collaborations with peers, network, seek supervision, and attend classes with a non-Eurocentric focus. Psychology has been dominated by Western thought, and in order to be inclusive of differing viewpoints and interpretations, a conversation is necessary. International conferences provide the space for these pertinent conversations.

5. Student Led Organizations

Treating students as junior colleagues in graduate school ensures that the power dynamic is not as stringent and that student opinions are valued. An encouragement of student-led organizations would allow students to actively participate in decision making and leadership, which are important attributes to international social justice work as well as to their training as psychologists. These solutions range from systemic level changes to individual efforts. None of the solutions are simple, and some of them require more hoops to be jumped through than others. This might even seem aspirational and idealistic. However, there needs to be a starting point to encourage international social justice work. I am optimistic that, by starting to think about some or all of these solutions, the pace of international social justice work can be accelerated.

References


Urvi Paralkar (she/her) is a PhD student in counseling psychology at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. She completed a MA in clinical practices in psychology from the University of Hartford and a BA in psychology from St. Xavier’s College in Mumbai, India. Urvi feels strongly about social justice issues and hopes to create meaningful change through advocacy both within the United States as well as at home in India.
Tina Fey, a squirrel, and somebody in a Spiderman costume enter a bar. But, you’re on your phone, so you don’t notice any of them.

This limitation of the human mind is known as inattentional blindness, which can be caused by all sorts of minor tasks, events, and objects.

Does the example above seem a bit far-fetched? Actually, it isn’t. Research testing the limits of intentional blindness shows that even a minor distraction could cause you to miss details in your environment that are every bit as unexpected as the three unlikely bar patrons above. For example, in one study, participants were asked to count the number of passes during a basketball game. Then, while completing this basic task, a woman with an umbrella would walk right across the middle of the game so that the researchers could see whether the distracted participants would notice. Guess what: Many participants failed this test (Neisser, 1976, 1979; Neisser & Becklen, 1975)! And even more incredibly, researchers then tried this out with a person in a gorilla suit, only to achieve the similar findings (Simons & Chabris, 1999).

Dr. Ira Hyman from Western Washington University is an expert in inattentional blindness, among other areas of psychology such as the creation of false childhood memories and collaborative remembering. He too has conducted similarly amusing studies on inattentional blindness. Notably, one of these investigated whether students walking across campus would notice a unicycling clown (Hyman, Boss, Wise, McKenzie, & Caggiano, 2010). Amazingly, the students using their phones often did not see the clown until after it was pointed out to them. Chuckling at the memory of this, Dr. Hyman exclaims, “I had a student who actually rode a unicycle and owned a clown suit. And so, when the universe hands you a unicycling clown, you should always take advantage of that!”
Inattentional Blindness in the Courtroom

All humor aside, inattentional blindness can have a terrible cost, as many distracted drivers have learned first-hand. In addition, inattentional blindness can occur in courtroom situations. When asked what can be done to prevent this, Dr. Hyman says, “I’ve had some conversations with colleagues about this, and I don’t actually know the real answer yet. But, I think this is an empirical question, and an important one. It feels to me—and this is one of the things that we’re starting to do in our studies—that you need to ask early in your interview with a potential witness the questions that have to do with their attention.”

As an example, the questions that he encourages law enforcement to ask are: “What were you doing while you were in the situation?” and “When did you become aware of the crime or accident?” Then, once these questions have been answered, all future questions should only involve the moment that the witness became aware of the crime or accident, and nothing before that moment.

He says, “If we just ask every witness the same set of questions about what happened before and what was the start of a situation like, then we are putting them in a situation where they don’t have actual memory information because they weren’t aware at that moment. Nonetheless, witnesses will often give an answer to the questions about what ‘might’ have happened ahead of time. And when they’re doing that, they’re giving erroneous information based on sort of schematic reconstruction of what’s reasonable in the situation about how they think or believe that it must have been.”

Even worse, he continues, “Then, this erroneous information becomes a part of their memory. So, I think my hope is that some witness error may be forestalled by asking attention questions early in an interview and then being much more careful about what additional questions we have.”

Wait, Money Does Grow on Trees?

Despite the applications of inattentional blindness in the criminal justice system, Dr. Hyman doesn’t really consider himself to be a “crime” person. Instead, he actually sees himself as a cognitive psychologist interested in naturalistic or ecologically valid aspects of psychology, whose work occasionally intersects and has ramifications for memory in courtroom situations.

He first became interested in inattentional blindness when he was doctoral student. At that time, his dissertation advisor was Dr. Ulric Neisser, who actually invented the methodology for studying inattentional blindness. “Ulric created this situation where you could have overlapping visual events. He did it with triple exposure film back in the 1970s with people passing basketballs. You’ve probably seen versions of this. If you track and count the number of passes by one team, you fail to see someone else go directly across the film.”

Dr. Neisser was no longer doing that work when Dr. Hyman was a student, but the two of them spoke about it, and so it has been in Dr. Hyman’s background ever since. He says, “I got interested in doing my own research on inattentional blindness because I became quite concerned about cell phone use while people were driving and walking and whether they would get so focused on the cell phone conversation that it would lead to visual failures, failing to notice things that were directly in front of them.”

Other work by Dr. Hyman has included hanging actual dollar bills on a tree in a pathway. In this case, distracted passerby actually moved their heads to not get smacked in the face, but they still didn’t notice the money in the trees (Hyman, Sarb, & Wise-Swanson, 2014).

He says, “Your parents probably told you that money doesn’t grow on trees. And our finding is that, even if it did, you wouldn’t notice it!”

You Fail to Notice More Than You Think

According to Dr. Hyman, “We think we are aware of things that are happening around us, and we expect to notice unusual things when they occur. That expectation is built on the fact that we have occasionally noticed unusual things when they happened. But, the trick here is that, for all of the unusual things that we don’t notice, we are unaware of the fact that we’re unaware.”

“We have this illusion that we are more in touch with the world than we actually are. We think we see things. We think that we’re aware of what’s around us, but we fail to see things all the time. Dan Simons and Chris Chabris refer to this sometimes as the illusion of awareness. So, when it’s pointed out to someone that they’ve missed something, such as a unicycling clown, the response is almost always sort of a nervous chuckle. They’ll go, ‘Heh, heh, no, I didn’t notice that.’ ”

Realizing that we’ve become a victim of inattentional blindness can be especially disconcerting if we were driving or navigating and failed to notice something relevant to avoid an accident. It is also disconcerting for potential witnesses of accidents or crimes.

Further, Dr. Hyman says, “We not only expect ourselves to see something, but we expect others to see something too. So, if you were there when something happened, then you must have seen it. You should be able to give some sort of description of what happened and what a person looked like.” And yet, this often isn’t the case.
So, Is It Possible to Practice Being More Aware?

Dr. Hyman gives a brief but dramatic pause, and then he laughs aloud. “No!”

More seriously, he explains, “I might be wrong on this, right? I mean, I think if you are engaged in a divided attention task, and you know both parts of the task, then you can do both sides of it to an extent, but there’s always a cost. Attention is a limited resource, and we can’t track everything in the world around us. When we’re dividing our attention between two things, we do each of those things less well than if we were only doing one thing. So, I think there is just a fundamental limit here on cognitive capacity. Nonetheless, at every moment, we feel like we’re aware of the world around us, even though we’re probably missing lots of stuff.”

Despite the rapid changes in our use of technology in daily life, Dr. Hyman believes that this basic cognitive limit has always existed. He says, “I really do think that we’re studying something basic about the human cognitive system. At least, I hope it’s something basic about the human cognitive system.”

He adds, “I think what technology has done is trained us to be constantly distracted and to be expecting our phone to buzz or to be uncomfortable without checking our phone regularly. We are now constantly in this divided state, which means that having our attention become focused on whatever’s happening on our phone to the exclusion of the other stuff around us may be rather likely at this point. But, it has always been the case that we fail to become aware of things once we get focused on something in a complex environment.”

Flipping the Coin

Inattentional blindness can cause us to miss many details around us, both trivial and important. However, there is also a positive angle to consider.

“Let’s do flip it around,” Dr. Hyman says in order to end on a high-note. “The focus of the term inattentional blindness is on the stuff that you don’t become aware of. But, that isn’t the term that Ulric used when he was first developing his methodology of complex visual events through people passing basketballs. He used the term selective looking to emphasize how people can become selectively focused on one event, and not be distracted by other things.”

This creates a question of which side of the coin you want to look at. “One way of looking at it is that inattentional blindness is our failing to notice things that we want to become aware of. But, the other view is that, with selectively focused attention, we are actually able to maintain focus on a complex task, even when there are possible distractions around us.”

References


Ira Hyman, PhD, is a professor of psychology at Western Washington University. He received his undergraduate degree from Duke University and his PhD from Emory University with Ulric Neisser as his dissertation advisor. He has published research on memory for song lyrics, the creation of false childhood memories, collaborative remembering, memory for traumatic events, inattentional blindness for unicycling clowns, and the intrusive thought of having a song stuck in one’s head. He is the coeditor, with Ulric Neisser, of Memory Observed: Remembering in Natural Contexts.

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SUMMER 2020 EYE ON PSI CHI

43
Dr. Steven Pinker Shares Why People Are Better Off Than You Might Think

Bradley Cannon
Psi Chi Central Office

Turn to any major news platform and what will you see? Headlines about the spread of COVID-19, political parties bashing each other, continuing deaths in Syria, and streets tormented with violent crimes and even tornadoes.

With bad news constantly at our fingertips, it is no wonder that many people believe the world is in a new state of elevated chaos that is now well-beyond our control to reverse. But, is this view accurate?

One prominent psychologist in particular, Dr. Steven Pinker from Harvard University, strongly disagrees. Around 10 years ago, he began publishing books and speaking out about numerous examples of longitudinal data that indicate people are actually better off now than ever before.

Dr. Pinker is an experimental psychologist who has published 10 books and frequently writes for The New York Times, The Guardian, Time, and The Atlantic. Having also taught at Stanford and MIT, he is a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist, one of TIME’s “100 Most Influential People in the World Today,” and one of Foreign Policy’s “World’s Top 100 Public Intellectuals.”

In this exclusive interview, he explains that there is much to be gained from having a more accurate view about the overall state that people are in, namely because our informed decisions are then more likely to bring about better results. He says, “If we want to be more prosperous, happier, healthier, better educated, and more satisfied with our lives, and if we want to reduce poverty, disease, and violence elsewhere, then we’ve got to understand what drives them up and down.”

Due to COVID-19, Harvard and many other schools recently implemented an online-only format to socially isolate all students in undergraduate and graduate courses. And yet, despite this pandemic hitting close to home for Dr. Pinker and many other psychologists around the world, he continues to stand by his views. Here’s why.
In measure after measure, we are better off. But most people deny this, most people think that life is getting worse.

First, Some Facts
Although Dr. Pinker is quick to say that some people disagree with his views, his evidence just consists of numbers based on human well-being. Here are some of his examples:

- Life expectancy has increased from about 30 years to more than 70 worldwide, and to more than 80 in developed countries.
- Literacy has increased from maybe 10% of the population worldwide to 90%—at least among people under the age of 25.
- Extreme poverty has decreased from 90% of the world’s population to about 8%.
- The rate of death in war has fallen from about 20 per 100,000 in the late 1940s to 1 per 100,000 today.
- The homicide rate has fallen over time from maybe 20 or 30 per 100,000 per year to maybe 1 or 2 depending on the country.
- Overall happiness has increased in a majority of countries for which we have longitudinal data.

Dr. Pinker explains that he chose these particular measures of longitudinal data, in addition to many others, not because they are the ones that showed an improvement in human flourishing, but because they were the basic dimensions of human well-being: life, prosperity, and education. He says, “I began with violence because, as a psychologist, I had written about our violent impulses in The Blank Slate, and I wanted to note that there had been reductions. And then, as I became aware of more and more declines in violence, that became the basis of its own book, The Better Angels of Our Nature.” Other measures of importance that he included in that book were safety from natural accidents, options to enjoy cultural and natural richness, and self-rated happiness or life satisfaction, which he feels was the ultimate criteria.

Summarizing his findings and the response to them, Dr. Pinker says, “In measure after measure, we are better off. But, most people deny this, most people think that life is getting worse. This is partly because of the availability bias that Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman documented long ago where people get their view of the world from anecdotes, narratives, and images.”

Will the news always present us with wars, shootings, and famines, and now epidemics? Dr. Pinker thinks so, and that this is partly because of people’s built-in nostalgia. He elaborates, “We tend to forget how bad past times were while we were living through them. And it is partly also because of social competition. To criticize the present is a way of criticizing your contemporaries, your rivals, the other elites, and so there is always a niche for social critics. People who point to improvement are often considered to be apologizing for the status quo.”

What’s at Stake
A common confusion Dr. Pinker faces is that people sometimes hear his ideas and then assume that he is saying that there is no need for continued improvement in the world. However, Dr. Pinker definitely does not want people to become passive or indifferent to the problems that exist, nor does he believe that having a more accurate view of the world will cause this to happen.

Quite the contrary, he explains, “Eight percent of the world is still in extreme poverty. That’s hundreds of millions of people, which is far too many. So, better does not mean perfect. Decline does not mean a disappearance. But, we should look at the past successes to embolden us to continue to progress and try to bring poverty and war down as close to 0 as we can.”

To do this, Dr. Pinker believes it is important to be accurate in this assessment, recognizing the threats that exist and their severity, while also recognizing any progress. Otherwise, deluding ourselves into thinking that no progress is being made can lead to a kind of fatalism and helplessness where one might say, “Well, if decades or centuries of trying to make the world a better place have led to nothing, then why even bother? Let’s just enjoy ourselves while we can. Trying to improve human life is utopian, romantic, or idealistic!”

Another problem with perceived helplessness is that it can lead to radicalism. Voicing someone with this mindset, he says, “If everything is failing, then we should just tear the whole system down and hope that whatever rises from the ashes will be better than what we have now.” But as history shows and as Dr. Pinker reminds people, radicalism itself can lead to atrocities and catastrophes.

Incentivizing the Media
It is common knowledge that bad news sells, and so the media often focuses on stories of discontent because they make a profit in doing so. However, when asked what incentive the media has to portray a more positive view, Dr. Pinker was quick to reply with this:
“People are increasingly avoiding the news because it puts them into such a foul mood. They get anxious, they get depressed, they feel hopeless, they undergo learned helplessness. So, of course people are turning away from mainstream media in droves, particularly the newspapers. Pulling them back somewhat is the morbid appeal of violence, threats, and disasters; it sells in our fictional entertainment and it sells in our news because people are kind of gruesomely captivated by the threat of mayhem. But, this can lead to a point of diminishing returns where people avoid the news altogether.”

Dr. Pinker believes that most journalists, together with their desire to sell papers and get online clicks, deeply believe that they have an altruistic responsibility to tell the truth. He says, “I think that most people in journalism feel that they are not just in it to make a buck, because journalism would not be the most lucrative career choice. They feel that they have a responsibility to inform the world and that good things come from that.”

As a part of this responsibility, Dr. Pinker thinks that journalists should strive to present a more accurate picture of where progress has taken place. Doing so will then help people isolate the factors causing these improvements and seek to carry them forward.

What Happens Next (Is Up to You)

Dr. Pinker doesn’t see his research on this topic as a prediction so much as an attempt to identify what’s responsible for improvement. He says, “The subtitle of Enlightenment Now was The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress. ‘Progress,’ I argued was the result of ‘reason, science, and humanism.’”

In other words, Dr. Pinker’s prediction of continued program is “only to the extent that our collective norms and our institutions are dedicated to reason, science, humanism, progress.”

He says, “A better future is not guaranteed, because there can be rude shocks—like a pandemic or climate change if we don’t deal with it successfully—but if we abandon the ideals of reason, science, and humanism, then we may not see progress, because progress is not a force of nature. It doesn’t happen by itself. It happens only to the extent that we dedicate ourselves to these ideals.”

So, what are some notable improvements in the world? And, what are examples of organizations that set a positive message and have made meaningful differences that could be carried forward?

To conclude this interview, Dr. Pinker is more than happy to tell you about these:

- The United Nations set up a norm that war is not a legitimate way for nations to settle their disputes and that nation states are immortal—countries may no longer be conquered and territory can no longer be acquired as a way of settling disputes. That deserves some of the credit for the decline of war since 1945.
- The Rockefeller Foundation, which sponsored the research leading to the Green Revolution from Norman Borlaug, has been credited with saving a billion lives.
- The civil rights, women’s rights, and gay rights movements have all attained real progress.
- The Montreal Protocol to eliminate the emission of chlorofluorocarbons eliminated the ozone hole.
- The attempts to reduce child labor and child exploitation led by Kailash Satyarthi won the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize.
- Within countries, programs like Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, the Earned Income Tax Credit have reduced poverty.
- The Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Environmental Protection Agency have reduced the amount of air and water pollution in the United States.

STEVEN PINKER, PhD, is an experimental psychologist who conducts research in visual cognition, psycholinguistics, and social relations. He grew up in Montreal and earned his BA from McGill and his PhD from Harvard. Currently Johnstone Professor of Psychology at Harvard, he has also taught at Stanford and MIT. He has won many prizes for his research, teaching, and 10 books, including The Language Instinct, How the Mind Works, The Blank Slate, The Better Angels of Our Nature, and The Sense of Style. He is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences, a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist, a Humanist of the Year, a recipient of nine honorary doctorates, and one Time’s ’100 Most Influential People in the World’ today. His latest book is Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress.
**SUMMER ACTIVITIES**

Clockwise from top:
- **Captions**
  - Summer: February 28
  - Spring: December 15
  - Winter: September 30
  - Fall: June 30

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- **SOCIAL EVENT**
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- **COMMUNITY SERVICE**
- **CONVENTION/CONFERENCE**
- **FUND-RAISING**
- **INDUCTION CEREMONY**
- **SOCIAL EVENT**

EAST

**Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg**

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter sponsored the university’s annual Domestic Violence Awareness Event in October 2019. The chapter made awareness ribbons and planned the event, which included prominent speakers from the community such as Chief Deputy District Attorney Jennifer Gettle and local State Representative Thomas Mehaffie. Dr. Turkson (advisor) was the keynote speaker. Approximately 100 students, alumni, staff, faculty, and members of the community attended. The event was highly publicized and made the local papers twice.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter helped organize the Dr. Philip Zimbardo “Inspiring Heroism” talk on campus. Officers ushered attendees into the theatre, posted letters to Dr. Zimbardo, set up food, and served as “mic-runners” for audience questions. The event was sold out and included members of the community and students and faculty from regional universities such as Johns Hopkins. Psi Chi alumni also attended, and Dr. Zimbardo spent hours talking to Psi Chi members and shook everyone’s hand who attended!

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter attended a women’s rally at the State Capitol in Harrisburg, PA, in November 2019. The chapter stood on the steps of the state capitol, held signs supporting women’s rights, and read the signs at the “Zonta Says ‘No’ to Domestic Violence” rally. Zonta is an international women’s organization. State representatives and leaders of Zonta spoke against human trafficking and other violence against women. Pictures of the chapter activity made it into the Zonta newsletter.

**PILLAR COLLEGE (NJ)**

**CONVENTION/CONFERENCE:** The chapter sponsored a free community awareness conference on November 22, 2019, which was held at the Robert Treat Hotel in Newark. The theme: “The Real Truth: A Conversation About Opioid Addiction and Recovery,” aimed to bring awareness to the opioid epidemic and equip participants with tools to identify best practices in recognizing and coping with addiction and recovery. The 155 participants included students from surrounding community colleges, high schools, and universities, members from drug treatment facilities such as Integrity House (the largest drug treatment facility in New Jersey), CURA Inc., and various branches of the Salvation Army Rescue Missions. The event commenced with the singing of the Star Spangled Banner by Briana Howard (future Psi Chi inductee) followed by opening remarks by Dr. Maxine Bradshaw (advisor) and Novella Dorsey (president). Representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation Community Outreach Division: Special Agent Mary Gardocki and Community Outreach Specialist Kimberly McDonald presented the FBI documentary, *Chasing the Dragon: The Life of an Opioid Addict*, provided hands-on activities, and responded to questions from the audience. The panel discussion that followed was facilitated by Dr. Adra and included panelists Dr. Tom Coleman (founder of Sensitivity Inc.), Prof. Gerry Cleaves (founder of Anchor of Hope Alliance), James Johansen (Director of Program Services, Damon House Inc.), George Moussab (Director of Market Street Missions in Morristown), Donnie Walton (Director of Good Shepherd Mission in Paterson), and Jim Disarino (Drug Enforcement Administration). The chapter provided refreshments from Chick-fil-A and a plaque to Deliris Vasquez in recognition of her 13 years of sobriety. WAAFA organization provided turkeys to participants who arrived early and donated sandwiches. Restoration Center provided water and juice for the conference.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter sponsored a community event on December 21 to support the residents of Apostle House, a residential facility for displaced families in Newark, NJ. The college-wide collection drive amassed donations of toys, food items, and warm clothing from students, faculty, and staff of Pillar College. Psi Chi members, along with alumnae Trina Strokes and Heather Dawn Hunter, assisted with gift wrapping the items, which included toys, clothes, coats, scarves, and gloves. The event was cosponsored with Pillar College Alumna, Elmartine Josephs (CEO and Founder of the Official Rubies, a nonprofit organization for the uplift of the homeless). Volunteers from the chapter and the Official Rubies presented the Apostle House Residents with their gifts. The children of Apostle House engaged in games, sing-along, and dancing, while the adults interacted with Psi Chi members who provided life-changing information and coping strategies. Some residents were invited to attend the Pillar College Friends and Family Day, which will provide them opportunities to experience a free college classroom experience and gain instant admission to the college. The outpouring of gifts was overwhelming as there were more than enough gifts to distribute to each resident of Apostle House with leftovers to donate to the Homeless on the Streets and those at the train station at Newark Penn Station. The residents at Apostle House unanimously agreed to share the many gifts left over. Some of the remaining gifts were donated to nearby shelters as well. Refreshments were provided by the chapter and the Official Rubies. The theme for the community event was “Just One Touch of Christmas.”

**ABBREVIATIONS**

- APA: American Psychological Association
- ACHS: Association of College Honor Societies
- APF: Association for Psychological Science
- APS: Association for Psychological Science
- EPPA: Eastern Psychological Association
- MA: Midwestern Psychological Association
- NEPA: New England Psychological Association
- RMPA: Rocky Mountain Psychological Association
- SEPA: Southeastern Psychological Association
- SPPA: Southern Psychological Association
- WPA: Western Psychological Association

[Image: Left: Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg officers and members making awareness ribbons.
Middle: Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg officers and Dr. Philip Zimbardo.
Right: from left to right: Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg’s Dr. Turkson (advisor) and Natasha (officer) at Women’s Rally at State Capitol.]
CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Far upper left: Pillar College (NJ) Chapter's Novella Dorsey (president) presenting a plaque to Deliris Vasquez while Dr. Bradshaw (advisor) looks on.

Far upper right: Pillar College's (NJ) Dr. Bradshaw (advisor) welcoming participants to an opioid awareness conference.

Upper middle: A portion of the audience attending an opioid awareness conference, sponsored by the Pillar College (NJ) Chapter.

Middle left (from left to right): Pillar College (NJ) Chapter officers being acknowledged by the audience: Wilma Chininin, Elizabeth Paniagua, Nadine Heberling (outreach coordinator), Maricry Alvarez (treasurer), Merline Spratley (secretary), Thomas Smith (vice-president), and Novella Dorsey (president).

Middle: Pillar College (NJ) Chapter members and volunteers posing for a picture at the Apostle House in Newark, NJ.

Middle right (from left to right): Pillar College (NJ) Chapter's Maricry Alvarez (treasurer), Novella Dorsey (president), and Merline Spratley (secretary) at Apostle House.

Lower Left: The College of New Jersey Chapter's first-ever Graduate Admissions Fair.

Slippery Rock University (PA)

FUND-RAISER: For the spring semester, members sold Daffin's chocolate bars as a fund-raising event. Money raised contributed to a scholarship fund, socials to promote community, inviting speakers, sponsoring and participating in events, and the annual reception/induction in March.

CONVENTION/CONFERENCE: Members volunteered to help judge junior and senior high school students' research projects at the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS) regional competition. PJAS is a program that allows middle and high school students to present their own research in the sciences. Psi Chi members and volunteers were placed in different presentations as judges to vote on the best research presented. After participants presented their projects, the judges engaged in meaningful conversations to decide if participants would move on to the state competition.

RECRUITMENT: Recently, the chapter elected incoming officers for the 2020–21 school year and invited newly elected officers to attend weekly officer meetings to shadow officers. The chapter has found that it is helpful to allow incoming officers this opportunity to observe their position, ask questions, and learn their specific roles. Although holding elections in the spring semester is not ideal, the chapter has found it difficult to hold elections before recruiting new members. The combination of new and existing members opens the opportunity for multiple people to be interested in running for a position, therefore, being able to hold a true election.

The College of New Jersey

SOCIAL EVENT: The chapter hosted its first-ever Graduate Admissions Fair on November 13, 2019, inviting nine reputable graduate programs to table at the event. The purpose of the event was not only to facilitate and encourage networking for TCNJ psychology students interested in pursuing graduate education, but also to provide general exposure to the possible academic opportunities for students after graduation from TCNJ. The event was a huge success, sparking much interest and conversation among TCNJ psychology students and graduate school representatives alike.
**University of Massachusetts Amherst**

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter is proud to announce its new inductees for the spring 2020 semester. Alongside notable opening remarks from Dr. Matt Davidson (advisor), the chapter recognized Dr. Rebecca Stowe (former advisor) with a certificate of appreciation. Under her wing, the chapter began its rebuilding process and even hosted its very first annual research symposium. Erik Cheries (keynote speaker and UMass Psi Chi alumnae) shared both good and bad news with the new inductees. He began with an anecdote that Psi Chi will not stick out on a resumé, but rather that it is the experiences and opportunities within Psi Chi that provide a robust story to tell a future employer. Cheries recalled his own memories as a Psi Chi undergraduate that immersed him in research, leadership, and community engagement. Chapter members are excited for the road ahead!

**Western Connecticut State University**

**FUND-RAISER:** On November 25, the chapter worked together to fundraise money for the Psi Chi Chapter Challenge. As one of the chapter’s events, members hosted an “Apple Cider Stand” during which they sold apple cider, apple cider donuts, and various baked goods to students, faculty, and university staff. All proceeds from this event were put toward supporting member programs and Psi Chi members worldwide.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** On November 14, the chapter hosted “Psi Chi Alumni Night.” At this event, alumni were invited back to the school to speak to current members and university students regarding available careers in psychology, how to get involved in research experience, applying to graduate school, and insight into psychology application in the workforce.

**MIDWEST**

**DePaul University (IL)**

**RECRUITMENT:** The chapter hosted a meeting in January to recruit new members. Nearly 50 students attended and listened to current officers give a PowerPoint presentation about the mission and purpose of Psi Chi. Officers reviewed the eligibility requirements, application process, and benefits of becoming a lifelong Psi Chi member. Afterward, officers informed students about unpaid and paid research opportunities available at DePaul and leadership opportunities through the psychology department’s peer mentoring program.

**MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MOORHEAD**

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter participated in Moorhead, Minnesota's Haunted Mall, a community event designed to keep Halloween a fun and safe indoor event for approximately 1,500+ attendees. In addition to candy, trick-or-treaters of all ages could spin a prize wheel to win candy alternatives such as pretzels, stress balls, dragon tattoos, and positive affirmation bracelets.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter hosted the first two of a three-part series that covered topics from the neuroscience perspective of psychology. The first, “Alzheimer’s Disease: Healthy Living From The Latest Research” took place November 19, 2019. The second in the series, “Music Cognition: How Perceptual Organization Principles Contribute to Our Perception of Sound and Music” took place February 10, 2020. Each event was attended by 40 people.

**MISSOURI WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter held a workshop for CV/graduate school applications in November 2019. Psi Chi officers were each assigned a specific component of what is required in the process of applying to graduate school. The officers collaborated in producing a presentation they delivered to members at a chapter meeting. The information and tips for each section were also posted on the Psi Chi bulletin board for members to access if they could not attend the meeting.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** On October 21, 2019, the chapter hosted a celebration for the chapter’s 30th anniversary. The chapter invited all current members, faculty, alumni, as well as supportive family members. Some special alumni attended including Dr. Phil Wann, former sponsor of the Missouri Western State University Psi Chi Chapter and chair of the Psychology Department. To show the chapter’s support of the students and members, they invited student members to present their research at the event. The officers also created a presentation of photographs and memories to commemorate the chapter’s 30 years of student engagement.
CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

FUND-RAISER: In February 2020, the chapter held a "Pie Your Professor" fund-raiser. The Psychology Department set out mason jars with slotted lids with each jar representing a professor. The professor with the most money in the jar by the end of the day on February 24 got pied during the induction ceremony that evening. The event began with a potluck dinner, followed by an induction ceremony, then the evening ended with pie'ing Dr. Jon Mandracchia. To add to the excitement, Dr. Teddi Deka (advisory) pied Whitney Davidson (vice-president) who organized the fund-raiser.

Morningside College (IA)

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter led a domestic violence simulation in October with CSADV, a local domestic violence nonprofit agency. CSADV aims to provide support, advocacy, and a safe environment for adults and children who have experienced domestic violence, and brought representatives to the campus. During the simulation, students put themselves in the shoes of a domestic violence survivor while undergoing the domestic violence situation and making decisions. Additionally, the simulation included several realistic barriers such as socioeconomic status, racial discrimination, and gender, which affect people experiencing domestic violence. Students worked in groups and worked through two scenarios; then, they described these to the group and talked about what they learned from the simulation. The goal of the event was to raise an awareness of domestic violence within the student population while providing information about the signs of abuse and resources in the community. In the future, the chapter should consider hosting this event again, and other chapters and institutions should consider this as well.

Northwest Missouri State University

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter collaborated with a fellow campus organization, Active Minds, to host a movie night and discussion open to the entire university. It's Kind of a Funny Story, recognized by the National Alliance for Mental Health as among the best movies about mental health was the feature film. Monica Zeigal, coordinator of the suicide prevention program "Hope 4 All" in the university's Wellness Services, led a strong discussion about mental health portrayals in the media and the group's opinions of the film. Overall, the event was educational and provided an opportunity for attendees to openly discuss mental health and fighting stigma.

SOUTHEAST

Charleston Southern University (SC)

INDUCTION CEREMONY: The chapter hosted an induction ceremony at New Life Baptist Church, owned by Dr. William Harmon and Professor Amanda Harmon. Arin Shivvers (president), Danielle Armstrong (vice-president), Katherine Parris (secretary), and Savanna Svoboda (treasurer) lit candles representing "Psyche" and "Cheires" while emphasizing Psi Chi responsibilities. These officers, along with Dr. Alexis Green and Dr. Christina Sinisi (advisors), inducted 13 members into the honor society. Fall 2019 further commemorated the first induction of graduate cohorts from the Master’s in Clinical Counseling Program. New members and their families then joined seasoned officers, Club members, advisors, and faculty for food and community.
MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter and Psychology Club welcomed David Daugherty, who is the directing manager for the North Carolina and South Carolina PTSD Foundation of America. David shared an enlightening message about how PTSD can impact veterans and what can be done to support them. Afterward, many students stated they felt inspired and informed by his presentation. Moreover, a few veterans took the time afterward to express their interest in David creating a veteran PTSD support group directly on Charleston Southern campus. David was then connected to the campus Veteran Affairs to further discuss establishing this service.

SOCIAL EVENT: At the beginning of fall 2019, the chapter and Psychology Club officers wrote personalized letters to new first-year students in psychology. The officers also provided their contact information for further encouragement and tips, and some officers were excited to connect with some of the first-year students because of these letters. Overall, the letters created a welcoming air within the Club for many new psychology majors while also providing encouragement for those in a time of adjustment.

Emory-Riddle Aeronautical University (FL)

CONVENTION/CONFERENCE: In January 2020, the chapter collaborated with the university’s student government association to receive funding to attend the Human Factors and Applied Psychology Student Conference at the University of Central Florida. Members presented their research, attended presentations and workshops, and networked with other students and faculty members. Additionally, several Psi Chi student officers and members won awards. Best Presentation (first place) was awarded to Emily Rickel (president), Ameer Hosein (treasurer), and Dr. Barbara Chaparro. Best Presentation (runner-up; tie) was awarded to John Kleber (member), Devin Kelley (member), Jessyca Derby (member), Ana Hoy-Gonzalez (member), Tara Fields, and Dr. Barbara Chaparro.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter partnered with the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES) student chapter to create a Human Factors Mentorship Program that matches newer students with more experienced students based on their research interests. In February 2020, a joint Psi Chi/HFES professional development workshop was hosted to provide program participants with tips and tricks for creating and improving their resumes, CVs, and portfolio websites. After a brief presentation that introduced and provided examples of each document, mentor/mentee groups got together to exchange personalized feedback on their documents. Attendees reported that the workshop was very helpful!

Stetson University (FL)

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: One of the chapter’s fall events was a screening of the documentary, Here One Day, a “visually arresting, emotionally candid film about a woman coping with mental illness, her relationships with her family, and the ripple effects of her suicide on those she loved.” The woman suffered from bipolar disorder; the filmmaker is the woman’s daughter. It was moving and brilliant. The movie was followed by a discussion on coping with suicide led by Dr. Ivan Fleischman, a local therapist who also serves as an adjunct professor in the Psychology Department. He, too, was brilliant! One student noted that the movie and discussion changed his life. To help support Jay’s Hope, a local organization whose mission is to advocate on behalf of the mentally ill, members baked goods to sell before, during, and after the event. They raised $100 for this good cause.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: This spring, the chapter collaborated with the sorority, Alpha Chi Omega, to host a conversation on “Healthy Relationships.” The room overflowed with students interested in hearing Dr. Barbara Barzilai from the Psychology Department discuss ways to create and maintain healthy relationships. Her advice included disregarding concepts such as unconditional love and 50/50 relationships that are often portrayed in love stories. She emphasized the use of the 3-Cs (commit, communicate, and compromise) and the responsibility of one’s own happiness. After the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to create personalized Valentine’s Day cards/crafts for a special person in their lives.

Valdosta State University (GA)

INDUCTION CEREMONY: At the chapter’s fall 2019 induction ceremony, the chapter inducted 12 persons (11 students and 1 faculty member). Two of the students, Karen Ramirez Rubio and Jessi Salas, are the first VSU College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) students to be inducted into Psi Chi. Both Karen and Jessi are outstanding psychology honor students, CAMP alumni, and were also among the first CAMP students to participate in the department's Psychology Live and Learn Study Abroad Program in the Czech Republic.

West Virginia University

COMMUNITY SERVICE: In conjunction with the Psychology Club, the chapter prepared a meal for clients of the West Virginia Family Grief Center. Members fund-raised to purchase food, planned the menu, cooked the food, and cleaned up. A grilled cheese sandwich bar was provided, with tomato soup, salad, and cookies. And, Psi Chi members provided some empathy and smiles to those suffering from a recent loss.

For upper left: Pins given out at Morningside College (IA) to create awareness for domestic violence. For upper right: Attendees learning about domestic violence at Morningside College (IA). For middle left: The Northwest Missouri State University Chapter and Active Minds welcoming all to a movie night featuring, It’s Kind of a Funny Story and free popcorn! For middle right: Northwest Missouri State University’s Mercedes Isaacson-Cover (historian and social media coordinator) promoting the chapter’s “Crunch for a Cause” fund-raiser. For bottom: Students from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University’s (FL) Department of Human Factors and Behavioral Neurobiology attending the Human Factors and Applied Psychology Student Conference in January 2020.
MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter welcomed Dr. Ed Jacobs and his graduate students from the Masters of Arts in Counseling program at a monthly meeting. Speakers informed Psychology Club and Psi Chi members about the opportunities available to them in the fields of clinical mental health counseling and school counseling.

SOUTHWEST

Texas State University

COMMUNITY SERVICE: At the end of one of the chapter’s meetings, members got together and made Valentine’s Day cards for older adults in the Belmont Village Retirement home in Austin, TX. A member volunteers at this retirement home and was able to get the cards to the home on Valentine’s Day.

SOCIAL EVENT: The chapter wrapped up the semester with a movie night to help destress before finals. Members brought food, potluck style, to the student president’s house to relax and watch the movie, Zodiac. Eleven students attended and discussed the movie after it had finished.

INDUCTION CEREMONY: New Psi Chi members and their families were invited to the induction ceremony via online invitation to celebrate their entrance into Psi Chi. Dr. Osborne (advisor) presented and inducted the 18 members alongside the officers.

WEST

Pacific University (OR)

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter hosted distinguished speaker, Dr. Loren Toussaint, Associate Director of the Sierra Leone Project and Director of the Laboratory of the Investigation of Mind, Body, and Spirit. Dr. Toussaint presented on forgiveness as a mediating factor for health outcomes in communities. Afterward, Psi Chi members had dinner with Dr. Toussaint and discussed psychology, forgiveness, and Psi Chi.

RECRUITMENT: The chapter conducted recruitment efforts at both the spring and fall Club Fairs at Pacific University. Many prospective members expressed great interest in becoming part of the honor society and have submitted applications.
SOCIAL EVENT: The chapter hosted a pumpkin painting event in the University Center in October. Fellow students joined Psi Chi members and discussed graduate school, psychology, and Psi Chi. Individuals present were very happy with the event and are interested in doing it again next year.

Southern Oregon University

RECRUITMENT: The chapter has been working on membership recruitment in the new year. Although psychology consistently ranks among the top five most popular majors at the university, only a handful of students participate in the Psychology Club and Psi Chi each year. Members have been tabling in a busy gathering place on campus, connecting with fellow psychology majors, and spreading awareness about the club and honor society. The chapter hopes to increase member enrollment in the spring through increased tabling and events.

University of California San Diego

SOCIAL EVENT: Members attended an overnight camping retreat to get to know each other outside of the context of school and destress in nature after the first few weeks of the quarter. Members carpooled to Palomar Mountain State Park where they camped under the stars, sang songs by the campfire, and appreciated each other’s companionship. It was also an opportunity to hike and explore Southern Californian wildlife, as well as visit the Palomar Observatory telescope and museum where they learned more about the galaxy.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: This quarter, the chapter planned a graduate school application workshop. Members were able to learn the components involved in applying to graduate schools from currently enrolled graduate students. For example, members were given advice on writing a personal statement, completing the GRE, creating a CV, gathering letters of recommendation, finding a mentor, and more.

Upper left (from left to right): Pacific University (OR) Psi Chi members Dr. Loren Toussaint, Alea Chapman, Matias Sanchez, and Nellie McAllister.

Upper right: Psi Chi students painting pumpkins with fellow Pacific University (OR) students.

Middle left (from left to right): Pacific University (OR) members Alea Chapman and Elizabeth Schueler representing Psi Chi at the Fall Club Fair.

Middle right (from left to right): Southern Oregon University Chapter and Psych Club members Kiana Salas and Nicole Paravicini sit behind a table decorated with promotional materials.

Lower right: University of California San Diego Psi Chi/Psychology Club members warming up by the fire.
FUND-RAISER: As a fund-raising event, the chapter created merchandise to sell to members at a small profit. To make the merchandise a more meaningful contribution to the community, the chapter included a “Mental Health Matters” design with a brain that is molded out of words that relate to mental health, like “Well-Being” and “Mind.” Green was chosen to represent mental health awareness and blue to represent Psi Chi. The semicolon was used for its connection to suicide prevention. Also, a brain was chosen to illustrate that mental and physical health are equally important AND deeply intertwined because mental health disorders are brain-based disorders.

University of La Verne (CA)

FUND-RAISER: Our chapter participated in the university’s Homecoming 2019, in which clubs had to decorate a booth and a wagon-sized float according to the chosen theme. This year’s theme was “The Happiest Place on Earth,” and Psi Chi won both best decorated booth and best float for its Inside Out theme. The chapter received a monetary award of $1,100.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Kindness Rocks! The chapter painted inspiring messages on garden rocks and placed them in a specially made display in front of the university's new Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research. Members at meetings painted messages. The rocks are free to the public who need a little kindness. The chapter was featured in the university newspaper and will have rocks available for the public to paint in the Center so that they can inspire others with their own messages.

INDUCTION CEREMONY: The chapter inducted 12 members on November 15, 2019. The event was hosted at the Quay Davis Executive Meeting Room on campus. Friends and family were invited to the dinner banquet, which was free for all inductees. The keynote speaker was Dr. Paul McMahon, clinical psychologist and adjunct professor in the Psychology Department.
We Want to See What You Got!

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HAVING TROUBLE DECIDING?
These Are a Few of Our Favorite Things:

- Picture Frame
- Baseball Cap
- Spirit Jersey
- Joggers
- Button
- Round Decal
- Stylus Pen
- Portfolio
- Water Bottle

Check online for additional items and special discount codes. Supplies are limited.