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In last year’s presidential message, “Building a Lasting Legacy,” Dr. Merry Sleigh provided a behind-the-scenes look at what makes Psi Chi a vibrant and exciting place to be (if you haven’t read it, I recommend it). I’m going to preview some of the opportunities I see in Psi Chi’s future. My goal is to complement Merry’s look at our legacy with a sneak-peek at our future. And, just as a movie trailer intends, I hope this preview encourages you to join with us and step, hand-in-hand together, into the future.

From Martha to Marianne
The biggest shift into Psi Chi’s future is the transition from Dr. Martha Zlokovich to Dr. Marianne Fallon as the Psi Chi Executive Director. Martha’s August 1, 2023, retirement concluded 15 years of exceptional service. I cannot say enough about Martha’s leadership and the growth that Psi Chi experienced on her watch (if you would like some highlights, check out this Psi Chi timeline). Thank you, Martha, for all that you did for Psi Chi.

And, now we find ourselves in the Era of Marianne™. As way of a brief introduction, let me share five observations I made of Marianne during the six months we prepared together for the Executive Director transition:

1. Marianne steps in as the Executive Director with a strong appreciation for what Psi Chi represents and the 94-year legacy of the society.
2. Marianne understands that we best honor our Society’s legacy by focusing on the opportunities of the future.
3. Marianne clearly sees both the opportunities and challenges of the future and has a vision and a plan for addressing these.
4. Marianne is an avid reader of leadership, growth, and organizational literature. If you are looking for some professional development reading, ask her for a recommendation. She won’t let you down.
5. Marianne makes awesome raspberry jam.

We can (and should) feel optimistic about the future of Psi Chi as Martha’s legacy meets Marianne’s energy and vision for the future.

New Ways to Encourage Engagement
A major focus this year will be exploring new ways to help members and friends of Psi Chi engage with the resources and opportunities we provide, including (but not limited to) the website, magazine, journal, awards, grants, and scholarships. Psi Chi truly offers a buffet of information and opportunity for our members, friends, and anyone else who is interested (seriously, we give away almost everything for free so as to benefit everyone). Stepping into the future doesn’t require a lot of (but definitely some) new initiatives and programs as much as helping members and others connect with all the existing content and programs.

That doesn’t mean we are not developing new programs and initiatives (such as the Request a Mentor and Ask an Expert features on the website). For example, Psi Chi awarded the first Inez Beverly Prosser Scholarship for Women of Color to Courtney Cabell in 2022. The Prosser Scholarship supports the future of a Psi Chi member while honoring the legacy of an outstanding psychologist and is Psi Chi’s first fully endowed scholarship. Many, many thanks to everyone who worked on the fund-raising team and all those who donated.

Building on the success of the Prosser Scholarship, we are now working toward endowing the Christian Ladd Hall Scholarship for Mental Health Advocacy. Once funded, the Christian Ladd Scholarship will provide an annual $3,000 scholarship to a student (undergraduate or graduate) seeking a career in a profession that promotes mental health. Recipients of the scholarship will be eligible for a grant of up to $1,000 to conduct a mental health advocacy/promotion event in their local community.

From Membership Fees to a Culture of Development
Securing Psi Chi’s future will require stronger engagement in and commitment to fund-raising in support of Psi Chi’s awards, grants, and scholarships programs. Psi Chi Director of Development Stephanie Maurice Beason’s team grew in mid-2023 when Awards and Grants Officer Sarah Inverstine moved into the Development Department (And let me pause here to thank Paige Ancil, our previous Awards and Grants Officer who left Psi Chi for new adventures in August 2023, for her many years of service to Psi Chi.
and our members. You did awesome work, Paige!). Psi Chi now has a fully functioning development program.

Our new development team couldn’t have come at a more important time. Historically, Psi Chi’s primary source of funding has been new memberships. In the past, new member dues sufficed to fund the various activities and productions of the Society. However, we face new challenges from inflation, the enrollment cliff, changes in higher education funding (for students and institutions), and a myriad of other sources. All of these threats magnify the importance of the support that Psi Chi’s awards, grants, and scholarships programs provide to our Psi Chi members as they will also be struggling with these challenges.

To increase the support that we provide to student members of Psi Chi, we need the assistance of our entire Psi Chi community—members, friends, donors, supporters, and psychology-related organizations and companies—to increase the available funds for our awards, grants, and scholarships. Every time I review our programs, I find myself conflicted between excitement for how many students we support each year and sadness over how few students we support each year relative to our membership.

Your support of our increased focus on fund-raising for awards, grants, and scholarships will provide the resources to support more of our members in their professional activities, development, and growth. You can learn more about how to get involved by visiting our Giving webpage, contacting the Psi Chi Director of Development, or emailing me (president@psichi.org).

We can do more, want to do more, and need your help to be able to do more to support the future generation of psychology professionals.

Becoming a Global Society

As our final preview of Psi Chi’s future, I want to highlight our globalization efforts. One of Martha Zlokovich’s greatest accomplishments as Executive Director was the expansion of Psi Chi beyond the United States. This change brought with it international chapters, the creation of the Global Initiatives Advisory Committee, the Network for International Collaborative Exchange (NICE), and a series of other initiatives to extend Psi Chi’s activities, opportunities, and resources across the globe.

Although we saw success in these initial efforts, Psi Chi now steps into the future by focusing on building Psi Chi into a global community. Installing Psi Chi chapters in universities across the globe is a part of this process, but the most important step is creating opportunities for meaningful exchanges such as those with the NICE program. We can draw from lessons learned during the COVID pandemic to harness technology for real-time connections and collaborations in a way that strengthens a global community focused on “recognizing and promoting excellence in the science and application of psychology” everywhere.

In addition, the leadership of the Global Initiatives Advisory Committee also changed as Brien Ashdown completed his term (thank you, Brien!) and Celia K. Naïvar Şen of Özyeğin University (Turkey) became the Global Initiatives Director (welcome, Celia!). Celia brings great energy, perspective, and vision to this position.

How Does Psi Chi Fit in Your Future?

My objective in writing this message is to present a teaser of what excites me about Psi Chi’s future. And I truly see Psi Chi’s future as bright, exciting, and meaningful.

But the truth is that Psi Chi doesn’t exist without you, and Psi Chi only exists for you (yes, that sounds a lot like a cheesy line you might hear in Twilight 5: Imminent Sunset: “I don’t exist without you, Bella. And I only exist for you,” but it is still true).

You fit in the future of Psi Chi because you are the future of Psi Chi.

So, as I conclude, I extend to you a sincere invitation to come get engaged with Psi Chi. As you engage with Psi Chi, you will find activities, opportunities, and resources to strengthen your future, no matter the stage of your professional or personal life (yes, we have something for everyone). And your engagement with our global Psi Chi community will make everyone better.

Wondering where to start? My suggestion is the Psi Chi website. Head on over and see how Psi Chi can be part of your future and how you can be part of Psi Chi’s future.

The Christian Ladd Hall Scholarship

A Personal Invitation to Donate

I want to extend a personal invitation to you to donate to the Christian Ladd Hall Scholarship for Mental Health Advocacy. Donations of any size bring us closer to our $75,000 goal. Psi Chi accepts individual and organizational donations (donations are tax deductible).

I am invested in the success of the Christian Ladd Hall scholarship for both professional and personal reasons. Professionally, there is a need for more voices championing mental health, and Psi Chi is in a strong position to be one of these voices. As we look to our future (and I don’t mean just Psi Chi’s future but OUR future), our ability to promote positive mental health along with addressing growing and pervasive mental health challenges is key for many social and global challenges. The Christian Ladd Hall scholarship increases Psi Chi’s and the scholarship recipient’s capacity to contribute to these critical mental health activities.

Personally, Christian Ladd Hall was a close family friend. Christian struggled with challenges and obstacles related to Bipolar II before losing his life to an accidental Fentanyl overdose in July 2022. By the time he and his family became aware of the underlying cause of his challenges, the coping mechanisms and negative habits developed to manage these challenges had become mountain-sized obstacles in his life. Unfortunately, Christian’s story is becoming all too common. My wife Veda and I worked with Psi Chi and the Hall family to develop this scholarship to honor Christian and to give greater opportunity—and hopefully a louder voice—to Psi Chi and the scholarship recipient.

Together we can make this scholarship a reality. If you would like to know more about how to support this scholarship or how to get involved with the fund-raising team, please visit the Christian Ladd Hall scholarship page, contact the Psi Chi Director of Development, or email me (president@psichi.org).
Now Is the Time to Join the Conversation: Psychology Advocacy and You

Shawn R. Charlton, PhD
University of Central Arkansas

As Veda and I continue our work with the Christian Ladd Hall Scholarship (for details on the scholarship or to donate, please visit the scholarship page; donations of any size are meaningful and appreciated), we have spent time honing our advocacy skills. Our advocacy training has convinced us that: (a) everyone can have a meaningful voice regardless of where they are in their professional and personal journey, and (b) now is the time for all of us to raise our voices on the psychological issues that matter to us (and the nonpsychological issues, of course).

Learning about how to be an effective advocate helped me overcome my belief that a single voice doesn’t matter and my fear that local and national influencers will discount my views if they do not align with theirs (an empirically validated concern; Butler & Dynes, 2016). As I’m certain many of you hesitate to engage in advocacy conversations for these same reasons, I want to share three specific skills that help us to engage in advocacy conversations effectively:

1. **Engage in the conversation at all levels.** I find it is easy to get wrapped up in national and global issues at the expense of what is happening locally. National/global issues often demand more attention as they (a) receive more media coverage and (b) tend to be issues that more people are aware of, increasing their psychological and emotional weight. It is important to engage in conversations at the national and global level (and the American Psychological Association has an incredible team and set of tools to assist with this, check them out!), but we must also engage at the local level. For one thing, your voice will be louder with local and community influencers. Also, your access to local and community influencers will be greater. If you live in the United States, this Google-data-driven website can be useful for finding elected officials at multiple levels: https://myreps.datamade.us/

2. **Tell a story with emotion.** When we want people to attend to and remember our message, we need to tell a story that engages their emotion (Green & Brock, 2000; Hamby & Jones, 2022; and see, *Made to Stick* by Chip and Dan Heath, 2007). When possible, an emotional narrative that connects on a personal level with your audience is even better! Recently I attended an advocacy training at the APA headquarters where they highlighted the importance of telling an emotional story. I was so frustrated when they did this! My frustration came from wanting to believe that elected officials are not influenced by emotion while knowing that they absolutely are influenced by emotion. (A warning: keep your emotion in check. The narrative brings emotion. We bring reason—see below).

3. **Back up your position with psychological science.** The research skills and scientific reasoning that are foundational to our psychology training and practice prepare us to be especially powerful advocates. Once we catch our audience’s attention with an emotion-inducing story, it is time to turn to psychological science. As trained consumers of psychological science, we know how to read, synthesize, and communicate about what the psychological literature tells us. Using scientific literature to support our position demonstrates our preparation and our argument’s validity. As Daniel Bergan (2023) commented, “When communicating with a policymaker, especially one with whom you disagree, you want to stop them from discounting your opinion. One way to do this is by citing quality evidence to support your position.” (Warning: do not overgeneralize beyond the evidence or twist findings to fit your position. Doing either of these undermines your credibility and decreases the attention given to science-supported arguments).

I hope you find these suggestions helpful as you begin your advocacy journey. Our modern world provides us so many opportunities to raise our voices. Remembering to communicate at all levels, tell a story with an emotional element, and employ your research skill set to craft a science-supported argument will increase the volume and impact of your voice. Globally, we are living in a time where every voice matters and where every person has a voice. I hope you will speak up.

**Reference**


The Psychological Implications of ChatGPT: A Comprehensive Analysis

ChatGPT

Editor’s note:
What follows is the exact response provided by the August 3 Version of ChatGPT on August 7, 2023, when given the prompt "write me a 400-word essay on the psychological implications of ChatGPT with APA style references." For educational purposes, I include multiple editor’s notes below in teal about ChatGPT’s writing abilities. However, I did not edit or change the response provided by the AI in order to provide the best illustration of ChatGPT’s response. For the sake of transparency, please note that ChatGPT also wrote the title of this article that is shown above.

Introduction

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has introduced novel ways of human-computer interaction, with ChatGPT being a prominent example. ChatGPT is a language model developed by OpenAI that employs deep learning to generate human-like text responses. While it offers numerous benefits, its utilization also raises psychological implications that warrant examination. This essay delves into the potential psychological impacts of interacting with ChatGPT, focusing on its effects on user cognition, emotions, and social interactions.

Cognitive Effects

Interacting with ChatGPT can influence users’ cognitive processes in various ways. Research suggests that individuals might rely excessively on AI-generated responses, leading to a decline in critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Johnson & Feigenbaum, 2020).

Over time, habitual usage of ChatGPT might hinder cognitive development by reducing opportunities for genuine intellectual engagement. Moreover, users may become susceptible to cognitive biases as the AI may inadvertently reinforce existing beliefs or preferences (Hannak et al., 2017). The repetitive exposure to AI-generated information may contribute to echo chambers, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives.

Emotional Impacts

The emotional consequences of ChatGPT interactions are another important aspect to consider. Engaging with AI can evoke a range of emotions including amusement, companionship, and frustration.

While AI companionship might alleviate loneliness for some individuals (Gaggioli et al., 2019), reliance on AI for emotional support could potentially lead to the erosion of genuine human relationships (Huang & Rust, 2021). Furthermore, the inability of AI to fully comprehend and empathize with human emotions might result in misinterpretations, leading to user frustration or disappointment (Luger & Sellen, 2016).

Social Interactions

The integration of AI like ChatGPT into social interactions raises concerns about the impact on human-to-human relationships. Conversing with AI may provide a perceived sense of control and safety, leading users to prefer virtual interactions over face-to-face conversations (Wang et al., 2020). This inclination could exacerbate social anxiety and hinder the development of essential interpersonal skills. Additionally, the influence of AI-generated content on online platforms raises ethical concerns, as users may unknowingly interact with AI-generated content, blurring the lines between human and machine contributions (Fiesler & Proferes, 2018).

Conclusion

The proliferation of AI-driven technologies like ChatGPT has revolutionized human–computer interactions, offering convenience and efficiency. However, it is essential to recognize and address the potential psychological implications associated with its usage. The cognitive effects, emotional impacts, and consequences for social interactions have the potential to shape individuals’ perceptions, behaviors, and societal dynamics. To ensure a balanced integration of AI into our lives, it is crucial to understand, monitor, and mitigate these psychological implications through continuous research, ethical guidelines, and responsible design.” (OpenAI, 2023)

References

ChatGPT wrote this APA style References list too. Although generally correct, notice how it incorrectly capitalized article titles throughout. This version does not have formatting capabilities, so it was also unable to italicize publication titles.


Importance of Play for Children Navigating a Diagnosis

Rosanna Mendez
Holy Family University (PA)

For many children and adolescents who require intensive medical care and intervention, extended hospital stays are accompanied by increased feelings of stress, loneliness, and irritation. Those who spend extensive stays in hospital rooms face certain challenges, such as difficulties coping with a new diagnosis and trouble adjusting to the fairly isolated environment of the hospital. Especially with hospital precautions and lasting effects due to Coronavirus and other transmissible illnesses, many children may not be able to interact with other children in the hospital. They may only be allowed to interact with their care team and family members. When an individual is placed in an environment that differs from what they are familiarized with, presenting play opportunities can be one low-risk option that offers cognitive, emotional, and physical benefits. For example, play in hospital settings can serve as a distraction, reduce anxiety associated with an individual’s situation, and assist the individual in becoming accustomed to their new environment (Grissim et al., 2020). The combination of educational and therapeutic play also allows children to reach developmental milestones even while in a controlled environment. Additionally, the opportunity for play in hospital settings also allows for the displacement of energy, improvement of mood, and reduction of fear prior to performing any operations (Zeigler, 1964).

The introduction of play in medical settings may reduce anxieties, fears, and uncertainties throughout a child’s treatment plan. One type of play which may be beneficial for children with health anxieties is medical play. During medical play, child life specialists will give patients the opportunity to play with model items of medical equipment that they may be unfamiliar with or scared of. Allowing for a mixture of educational and therapeutic medical play facilitated by an adult has been able to help reduce anxieties, increase coping skills, and exhibit emotions such as relief and an understanding of medical procedures in children (Grissim et al., 2020). After the adult initiates this type of play, the child can control the play and choose what actions to perform with the model medical equipment. Allowing the child to have freedom of choice during play allows the individual to feel empowered and engage in a meaningful educational experience (Canning, 2007).

Although any type of play experience in a hospital setting is imperative for self-growth and development, ensuring that a child has the space, free time, and control can make the play experience significantly more enjoyable for the clinician and the child.

References

No, You Can’t Play With That Toy! Gender Norms, Stereotypes, and Child Toy Selection

Gordon Hermansen and Wyatt Read
Southern Utah University

The success of the Barbie movie has once again raised awareness and conversation about the influence toys might have on gender development and stereotypes. How would you feel if your son were to take a girls’ toy to school with him? How comfortable are you with children participating in gender-atypical play? Traditional gender norms dictate that this type of behavior is not acceptable in society, and research shows parental reactivity to violating these norms (de Vries et al, 2023). However, in recent years, views on gender have shifted toward being more accepting and understanding of nontraditional behaviors.

In a recent study at Southern Utah University, parents were interviewed with regard to their views on the toys that their children play with, the kinds of toys that they promote, the toys that they discourage, and the influence that gender has on toy selection. Parental responses yielded four themes:

**General openness:** Overall parents were very accepting and open to their children playing with the toys they desired. This openness was characterized by a nonchalant attitude about children’s toy selection. Some parents showed an attitude of tolerance where parents questioned gender-atypical play, but still allowed it. Additionally, there was evidence of generational change. Parents consistently claimed that older relatives would not approve of gender-atypical play, but that younger generation parents do.

**Social element of toys:** Toys have a strong social component. Parents reported that their children tended to be interested in toys that their friends were interested in. Toys that helped children make friends and have unique social opportunities were depicted as strongly promoted by the parents. The purpose of toys is also important. Toys that had an educational benefit, or encouraged being outside, were promoted, whereas those that encouraged realistic violence and unrealistic ideals were discouraged.

**Need to protect:** Parents conveyed a strong need to protect their children with regard to toys. Parents wanted to protect their children from physical and social harm by discouraging dangerous toys or toys that might cause their children to be bullied. Moreover, parents felt the need to protect their sons’ masculinity. Parents wanted to avoid having their sons being viewed as weak or unmasculine.

**Social norms:** Although parents were very open with the toys that their children wanted, they still followed the gender stereotypes in their toy selection. They reported that their boys play with boy toys and their girls play with girl toys. Although this may be due to the children’s interests, it still follows the social norm.

In discussion, parents should be conscious of gender stereotypes and decide how they want their children to be raised. This could also be applied to toys sales and manufacturing (Nash & Sidu, 2023), and to the education system.

**References**


When we think of the word “selfish,” the first thing that comes to mind is usually negative. Somewhere you probably learned that the definition of selfish was someone self-absorbed and inconsiderate of others. Another definition, however, can applied to people who take responsibility for getting their emotional, social, and physical needs met. There is even a phrase “healthy selfishness,” which describes a person that is self-focused rather than self-absorbed.

Now, apply these definitions to the average college student who has roommates, financial pressure, maintains high academic responsibilities, is pulled in multiple directions socially, and is adjusting to adulthood. A lot of important things occur at the same time for college and university students without enough time to do them all well. Juggling all these responsibilities and challenges is a full-time job, and we haven’t even mentioned self-care and mental health.

The purpose of this article is to give you permission to add a little “selfishness” into your routine so that you can be more present and able to focus better on all your responsibilities.
1. Alone time can be a major key to your mental health.

One of the major adjustments to college life is that there are people everywhere. Roommates, study partners, and classrooms with hundreds of fellow students. Meals are usually eaten in groups, and you walk to class with thousands of other people doing the same thing at the exact same time. If you add socializing and romantic interests, then “alone time” is a very rare commodity. Only when you are truly alone can you do good self-reflection and experience personal growth. Take some time to focus on yourself and decide if any subtle changes are needed in your life. Decide if you like the way things are going and the person you are becoming. It is okay to take a pause every now and then and take a good look at yourself. The best way to make sure you do this is to formally put it in your schedule.

2. If you are burned-out, you cannot be fully present.

When working with college and university students, I hear the word “burnout” all the time. It represents a condition where you are so worn out and so overwhelmed with responsibilities that you find it hard to be focused and productive. Students in this condition tend to get things done, but not at their best. They turn in assignments that are below their best work and attend events without really being in tune with those around them. Burnout usually stems from a combination of too many responsibilities and too little time, with a sprinkle of sleep deprivation thrown in. A little bit of self-care and selfishness can go a long way to help you manage your responsibilities. Healthy foods, a little more sleep, moderate exercise, and avoiding negative social media and topics that upset you may be the best way to recharge your batteries so you can make an impact academically and be truly present with your friends.

3. Stop putting yourself last.

To be your most efficient and productive, consider putting your needs above those of others. Being a great friend sometimes means you are always available for a talk or to help with problem-solving. Who hasn’t needed to talk about family problems, dating concerns, and even some healthy gossip? In fact, social life is one of the biggest commitments during your college experience and where you may make your lifelong best friends. Socializing and being a good friend is often a top priority for students, but there must be a limit. If you find yourself spending more time resolving your friends’ issues than your own, this could become a problem over time. By making time for your own reflections and self-care, you will have the ability to fully support your friends and roommates in their time of need. Being selfish with your time makes you more focused and productive over the long run. Your friends will appreciate it when they notice how present you are with them in their times of need.

4. Take time to review your goals.

College is an experience that occurs over several years. The person you were when you started and the one who graduates may be very different. You have probably set academic goals along the way including your GPA, internships, major/minor, job opportunities, etc. You probably also have some expectations about your social interactions, clubs, interpersonal growth, and intimate relationships too. Each of the goals you set has small readily attainable components and overarching, or big picture, implications. Goal setting theory says that the process of setting goals works best when you periodically review your goals and progress toward them. Give yourself credit for what you have achieved, each of the small components lead to the big goal and provide opportunities for accomplishment, building self-esteem, and confidence that the big goal will be reached. It is even healthy to make small or significant changes to your goals based on your current needs and thinking. For this process to work, you have to regularly set time aside to reflect on your progress and future direction. If you are overscheduled, burned-out, or focusing too much on others’ needs, then you will not have the time or focused energy to update your goals and give yourself credit for smaller components you have already completed.

College life is very demanding, it is probably the most time-consuming thing you have ever done. It is likely to be stressful and full of responsibilities you never considered on your first day of school. During this complex time, you have probably discovered that you often run out of time to get everything done. When this happens, we make sacrifices. It may be that you eat easily attainable overly-processed foods, fail to exercise as much as you intend, and of course you sacrifice your sleep. School work and friendship may suffer too. The best way to avoid over-extending yourself and experiencing burnout is to be a little bit selfish from time to time. When you put yourself (and your needs) first, you are improving your mental health, creating opportunities for self-reflection, and prioritizing self-care. As a result, you will be more effective academically and socially. A small bout of alone time can create a big payoff in the long run. Don’t be afraid to prioritize yourself and your needs once in a while.

Ronald A. Stolberg, PhD, is a professor and associate program director for the Clinical PsyD doctoral program at the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University in San Diego. In addition, he maintains a private practice focusing on family therapy with adolescents and young adults. His favorite work is helping students and their families with the transition from high school to college.
IQ vs EQ for Career Success

By Diane A. Safer, PhD
Albert Einstein College of Medicine

As a college student and undergraduate psychology major, you have, no doubt, invested considerable time and energy to get good grades. Your hard work and intelligence have led to excellent educational opportunities and have probably guided you through numerous challenges. In the hallowed halls of academia, your intelligence has played a pivotal role in your success. However, as you prepare to step into the professional world, armed with a diploma highlighting your skills and abilities, you will find that in today's rapidly evolving professional landscape, success is not solely determined by one's intelligence. Rather, in today's workplace, employers seek individuals who also have the critical skills essential for effective teamwork and leadership. In such an environment, it is emotional intelligence (EQ) that emerges as a central trait.

What Is Emotional Intelligence?
Psychologists John Mayer, who studied emotions and thought, and Peter Salovey, who studied emotions and behavior, formulated the concept emotional intelligence: the ability to recognize, understand, and express one's emotions, as well as the ability to recognize, understand, and respond to the emotions of others (Mayer et al., 1990). Emotional intelligence is also referred to as emotional quotient, with the abbreviation EQ (which I use here). The term became a business buzzword when Daniel Goleman, a science reporter for The New York Times, published his book: Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ (Goleman, 1995).

Why Is EQ Important to Employers?
Research has shown that EQ is a better predictor of success than intelligence quotient (IQ) or technical skills (Feist & Barron, 1996). Individuals with high EQ focus on the positive, listen before making decisions, admit mistakes, show empathy, and deal appropriately with negative emotions (Cherry, 2022a). Employers consider EQ when hiring and promoting, recognizing the significant impact it has on fostering a healthy and thriving work environment. In fact, one study found that 59% of employers said they would not hire someone who had a high IQ but a low EQ (Fouts, 2019) and there are a number of reasons why.
EQ makes for better teammates. People with high EQ work well with others. They are adept at building positive relationships, resolving conflicts, and fostering a harmonious atmosphere within a team. Their ability to empathize with others and respond empathetically to others’ needs allows for stronger connections.

EQ leads to more effective communication. People with high EQ are better able to communicate with others and are more likely to understand others’ perspectives. This enhances interpersonal relationships and leads to better collaborations (Cherry, 2022b). Further, with strong social and relational skills, people with high EQ make a positive impact on workplace culture and strengthen their team, which is pivotal for business success.

EQ yields more resilient employees. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are able to handle the pressures of their jobs. When things get tough, they manage stress more effectively. They are able to bounce back from crises and adapt during changing circumstances. They are also able to advocate for themselves and proactively seek support when needed. This makes for happier employees.

EQ benefits both the company and the employee. Studies have found that individuals who are emotionally intelligent have greater job satisfaction, are more productive, and find more opportunities for advancement (Wong & Law, 2002). In summary, emotional intelligence provides you with the skills to be a better, happier, more engaged employee, who works well with others, positively impacts the workplace environment, and increases productivity. It is a win-win for everyone!

Can You Strengthen Your EQ?
Yes! The good news is that you can improve your own skills to increase your emotional intelligence. EQ skills can be roughly broken down into four aspects: (a) self-awareness, (b) social awareness, (c) emotional management, and (d) relationship management. To strengthen your EQ, you need to develop skills in these four areas.

Self-Awareness. Emotional intelligence involves being self-aware. That means recognizing your own emotions and identifying your triggers and hot buttons. Take a moment to consider your personality. How do you manage conflict or disappointment? How do you communicate or collaborate with others? Self-awareness helps you gain a deep understanding of how you react to your emotions and how your reactions impact others.

To develop your self-awareness, here are some things you can do:

- Journal, reflect, and/or meditate to become more aware of your own emotions and the impact that they have on your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
- Make a list of who and what sets you off and pushes your buttons. How do you automatically react?
- Take an online personality test for insights into the advantages and challenges of your personality type.
- Ask for feedback from friends and family to learn more about your communication style, personality, and temperament.

Social Awareness. Social awareness involves having empathy and the capacity to recognize the feelings of others. It also involves understanding that one thing can be seen from various perspectives. Do you remember the virtual phenomenon from 2015 about “The Dress?” People who viewed a picture of a party dress disagreed on whether the dress was black and blue, or white and gold (Corum, 2015; It is actually blue, by the way). The controversy left us wondering how we can look at the same thing and see something different? Anyone who has ever had an argument with a teenager, a disagreement with a partner, or conflict with a boss already knows that people have multiple ways of understanding the same situation. EQ is not just knowing that people see things differently but appreciating that others interpret and understand from their own unique perspective.

To develop your social awareness:

- Be fully present and listen actively by giving your full attention, making eye contact, responding appropriately, and asking questions.
- Learn to recognize and be attuned to the emotions of others.
- Do not invalidate, demean, or negate anyone’s emotions. Instead, try to see things from other people’s perspectives.
- Read fiction, nonfiction, newspapers, journals, and online stories to be able to meet and understand others from diverse backgrounds—people you would not otherwise meet.

Emotional Management. This ability involves managing your emotions and keeping impulses under control by addressing negative feelings, effectively handling challenging emotional states, and navigating and coping with stress. This is often easier said than done. Your ability to manage your emotions can be affected by your innate temperament. Influence from your family or culture can affect how well you sense and interpret emotions, what is acceptable to show, and how to react to others’ emotions. It gets even harder if you are dealing with chronic stress, trauma or facing discrimination, or working in a hostile environment.

Here are some tips to help you regulate and control your emotions (Katcharovsky, 2022; Parker, 2016):
• Notice your physical reactions—watch for early signs of anger such as increased heart rate, fast breathing, muscle tightness, and sweating.

• Identify and name your emotions.

• Acknowledge the presence of a negative emotion but instead of saying, “I am angry,” try saying, “This is anger.”

• Separate your emotions from your behavior—your emotion is just a feeling.

• Accept and do not judge your emotions. Feel them and consider the thoughts or beliefs that are creating those emotions to determine what an appropriate response may be.

• Determine which emotions are easier or harder for you to manage.

• Try journaling as a way to help you make sense of your emotions by allowing you to see triggers and patterns of reactions.

• Practice techniques such as deep breathing, mindfulness, or visualization to manage your emotions and stay calm in high-pressure situations.

• Take a time out if needed to get your emotions under control before you move on or respond.

Managing Relationships. To manage your relationships with others, you must improve communications, manage expectations, consider differences in perception, appreciate different working styles, and be positive. Good relationships with others can have a considerable influence on you, on your happiness at home, on your success at work, and on your satisfaction with life (Cross, 2019; Eurich, 2018).

To strengthen this aspect of your emotional intelligence:

• Schedule time to develop positive relationships by interacting and getting to know your team members.

• Find opportunities to show or share appreciation for others.

• Be helpful and offer assistance when needed.

• Establish trust by keeping your commitments to others.

• Make strong efforts to help everyone feel included and have a sense of belonging.

• Avoid gossiping.

• Communicate more to avoid misunderstandings.

The skills of emotional intelligence are vital for career success in today’s dynamic and interconnected professional landscape. As psychology undergraduate students, recognizing and cultivating your emotional intelligence skills can allow you to communicate effectively and empower you to navigate complex workplace relationships. By understanding and managing your own emotions, while empathetically connecting with others, you can foster collaborative environments, build strong networks, and seize opportunities for personal and professional growth. Embracing emotional intelligence not only enhances your individual career trajectory but also contributes to creating fulfilling and meaningful work experiences, ultimately shaping you into resilient and impactful employee and setting you up for success with whatever you do!

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Psi Chi Professional Development Grants for Teachers of Psychology

GRANT RECIPIENTS

Seungyeon Lee, PhD
Faculty Support Director
University of Central Arkansas

ON BEHALF OF Psi Chi Faculty Support Advisory Committee and its entire membership, it is my pleasure to inform you that four faculty members* were selected as the recipients of this year’s Professional Development Grants! This is exciting news and recognizes various forms of their professional activities: sharing of knowledge and expertise, providing support and encouragement to our members, identifying opportunities and resources, and serving as a professional role model. Their work exemplifies high-quality teaching training accomplished with effort, motivation, and knowledge of various fields of psychology. We congratulate them and wish them continued growth and success!

This new grant program supports faculty members with the development or purchase of education materials and/or training by covering the costs of books, conference attendance, workshops, licensure preparation, and professional activities, such as teacher training. All members who hold a current, psychological teaching position, such as graduate teaching assistants, are eligible. The upcoming fall 2023 deadline is October 31, and an additional round will take place each spring.

Veda Charlton, PhD
University of Central Arkansas

Veda Charlton, PhD, is a clinical instructor II in psychology and counseling at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA). Before UCA, she worked at The Institute for Effective Education (TIEE) in San Diego, CA (a non-profit K-12 organization serving children needing specialized education). The funds received from this grant supported the inaugural meeting of the Arkansas Teachers of Psychology (AToP, www.arksps.org/AToP) on June 8, 2023. This is an opportunity for secondary and post-secondary psychology teachers in Arkansas to learn, grow, and network together.

Donna Demanarig, PhD
Wheaton College (IL)

Donna Demanarig, PhD, is a visiting assistant professor of psychology at Wheaton College. She earned her doctoral degree in clinical psychology at Alliant International University, Fresno, CA. She is a strong advocate of developing introduction to psychology curriculum to be more inclusive of diverse cultures and perspectives. The grant will support her project called “Listening to Our Students: Toward a DAARES (Decolonizing, Accessible, Anti-Racist, Equitable, and Sustainable) Introduction to Psychology.” The project is to find whether perceived efforts to create an intersectional curriculum aligned with students’ perceptions of introduction to psychology, as well as their learning outcomes of facilitating their interest and critical thinking.

Hillary Wehe, PhD
Upper Iowa University

Hillary Wehe, PhD, is an assistant professor of psychology at Upper Iowa University. She earned her doctoral degree in cognitive psychology from Colorado State University, Fort Collins with expertise in language learning and behavior. She is interested in increasing the awareness, accessibility, and joy of undergraduate mentorship and research experience. The grant will support the project, “Enrichment of Undergraduate Mentorship Through Research Experiences.” Her project is to improve mentorship skills and increase student participation and engagement in research opportunities across settings. It is also to provide long-term benefits to students, faculty, and community by fostering learning and sharing and building a collaborative culture.

* One recipient requested to remain anonymous.
Applying to graduate school in psychology can be both exhilarating and daunting. With fall fast approaching and application deadlines looming, there is no better time to seek expert guidance and demystify the process. In this article, our three esteemed graduate school experts generously share their wisdom to address the most popular questions that psychology students often encounter during the application process. Discover the keys to your successful graduate school application.

With so many students applying to graduate school, what can I do to stand out from the crowd?

**Julie:** Be uniquely yourself. No one else has your exact life experience. Describe the unique/diverse perspectives you would bring to a cohort. Tell your story and why that story motivates you to pursue psychology.

**Mitch:** It seems daunting to consider that admissions rates are so low. But fear not! About half of applicants do not really seem to understand that PhD programs are science-based approaches to psychology and thus require some exposure to prior research training. Many others unfortunately have not identified a specific area of research they are interested in, or a mentor who has agreed to take a student in the year they are applying. Beyond these straightforward issues, however, it is important to convey that you have scientific ideas and questions—some may even emerge from your prior professional or lived experiences—that you are interested in investigating. And by definition, those are unique to you!

**Jocelyn:** I agree with my colleagues—be yourself! We each have unique talents and skills that make us who we are. Highlight what makes you stand out from the rest. This includes providing specific examples that illustrate how you “fit” into the program you are applying to. Of course, be sure to research the program to identify how you connect to it. Your “story” should be interesting and should engage the reviewers from the beginning to the end.

What is the biggest mistake students make when applying to graduate programs?

**Julie:** I don’t know if it’s the “biggest mistake,” but it would certainly be doing yourself a disservice not to do your research on each program. It is poor form to ask questions during an interview about general information you can easily find on the program’s website. Nevertheless, there is nothing wrong with asking nuanced questions about information you have learned from the program’s website. That lets faculty know that you are genuinely interested in what the program has to offer.
Mitch: It seems that many applicants have a checklist mentality to their application. Get good grades + join a lab + write an essay = admission. But it’s really about the way you discuss how your academic and research experiences made you think, and how inquisitive, analytical, and thoughtful you are that makes a big difference in conveying your potential as a scientist or clinician. It is so important to convey your ability to think scientifically within your materials and not just the number of prior experiences you have had.

Jocelyn: Not doing your research. You need to know what the program is looking for in a competitive applicant. What are the requirements for the program? Do you meet these requirements? How might you stand out from other applicants? Why should the program accept you? Have you thoroughly reviewed the application? Also, ask someone to review your application (e.g., personal statement and CV).

How many schools should I apply to?

Julie: I don’t know that there is a magic number. I’d encourage you to be thoughtful and realistic based on:

- cost (money, time, and effort),
- interest (knowing that you genuinely want to attend the program), and
- requirements (having the general experiences the program is requesting).

Mitch: It is common to apply to 10–15 graduate schools, but only if those schools and mentors are a genuine match. Applying to a school just because it has a recognizable name is not a good enough reason to apply since you are matching to a lab as much as a program. And many applicants apply 1–3 times before they find that match, so it is perhaps better to be selective and patient.

Jocelyn: I typically recommend about 6–10 schools categorized into three categories: safety programs, target programs, and reach programs. Safety programs are those you are interested in and believe you are very likely to be accepted into. Target programs are those that you are very interested in and feel confident about your acceptance chances. Reach programs are your dream programs that interest you but are highly competitive with low acceptance rates. Ultimately, it is important to identify the programs that are the best fit for you.

What can you do with a master’s vs. a PhD degree?

Julie: This depends. Those with a master’s tend to be in frontline service provider roles (though there are MANY exceptions to this sweeping generality I am making, so take this with a grain of salt). Those with a doctoral degree likely differentiate themselves most in teaching, research, leadership, and assessment roles.

Mitch: This may all change quite soon. APA is working on accreditation criteria for masters-level programs, and it is possible that some jurisdictions will start to allow limited practice with a master’s only. In fact, some states already do. But in 2023, a career as a practicing psychologist, or a role as a university professor is almost always going to require doctoral degree.

Jocelyn: With a master’s degree, you are a specialist in a subfield of psychology. As a specialist, you have special knowledge and skills that may be applied in a variety of settings. For example, you may find jobs in academic settings: in local, state, and federal government; in health care and mental health services; and in business. Of course, with a PhD, your options are greater, and as my colleague mentioned, you need a doctoral degree to be a practicing psychologist. The point here is that you can do a lot with an advanced degree in psychology. You have options!

So many things are important on my graduate school application: letters of recommendation, internships, research experience, publication experience, high grades, interview skills, writing skills, grades, GRE scores, etc. Could you rank these items by importance or give me some idea of what I should prioritize?

Julie: Another great, but impossible question! The phrase “they’re the whole package” exists for a reason. Highlight ways you excel in each of these categories while remaining honest.

If I were to make a sweeping generalization, some programs are moving away from the GRE, so these scores may not be relevant. A great letter of recommendation (LOR) can really boost an application. Ask for LORs from people who really know you. It is often helpful to provide the person writing the LOR with your CV and some bullet-point information of accomplishments of which you are proud. Anecdotally, LORs that talk about an applicant’s punctuality may send a message that the writer doesn’t have much to say about the applicant.

Mitch: As indicated above, none of these are important at all if the applicant can’t articulate how these experiences and credentials made them think about science. Having said that, a student’s contribution to a paper before they begin graduate school usually does not warrant authorship on a publication. So the number of publications on the application often says more about their advisor’s generosity than the applicant themselves. Many programs are dropping the GRE. Writing and interview skills remain quite important for most.

Jocelyn: All of these factors are important to consider in a graduate school application. Graduate schools are looking for well-rounded students who have good grades and are actively engaged on and off campus. This includes active involvement in campus, community, and professional organizations. Be a joiner! If you can work or volunteer as a research/teaching assistant, this can also be helpful. Not only will you acquire great skills, but you have an opportunity to work closely with a faculty member who can write a strong letter of recommendation for you.

What kind of financial aid is available to those in graduate school?

Julie: It depends. The loans and grants available to you may
varies based on income and the type of program in which you are enrolled. Check out: https://studentaid.gov/

**Mitch:** In the case of PhD degree programs at non-profit schools, you should expect a full tuition remission and a modest stipend ($20–30K) for the academic year. This is not available at all schools, but it is common at many accredited institutions.

**Jocelyn:** You should check with the respective graduate program for information about financial assistance. Most programs offer fellowships, teaching, and research assistantships. Some faculty members may have grants that provide a stipend for graduate assistants. There is also funding available through various federal agencies such as the National Science Foundation (https://www.nsfgrfp.org/) or National Institutes of Health (https://researchtraining.nih.gov/career/graduate). Of course, check out the APA for funding opportunities (https://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/funding).

### Most of my top choices are across the country, making in-person interviews difficult to impossible. How important are the interviews to the total process? Do Zoom interviews lead to equitable success?

**Julie:** Interviews are very important. I would not attend a program if I was unable to meet faculty or current students. The program is interviewing you, but you are also interviewing them! Programs may not have returned to in-person interviewing after the COVID-19 pandemic. This may actually make the interviewing process more equitable as the cost of travel can be prohibitive for some. On a virtual interview, ask if a tour can be given of the facility or if there are videos available for you to get a sense of the facility and the local area.

**Mitch:** Interviews are extremely important—virtual or not—because your relationship with your mentor is likely to be a huge part of your graduate school experience, and perhaps even an important one for the rest of your career. Many have to make a decision on who to select based on only about 30 minutes of interaction at an interview. Whether this occurs over Zoom or in-person may be less important than the extent that you can really learn about each other’s interest and work style. It also is important to get to know the location and general climate of a graduate program, and that is much harder to determine via Zoom. Interviews with graduate students may be able to help offer important information in these cases.

**Jocelyn:** If you made it to the interview stage, you are a contender. Interviews are important and give you an opportunity to learn more about the department, prospective mentor, students, and the environment. If possible, an in-person interview is ideal. If an in-person interview is not possible, virtual interviews are fine and can lead to “equitable” outcomes. Many programs are opting for virtual interviews and have become more adept in conducting them. Just be sure to strengthen your online presence. Be camera ready, make sure you have reliable internet access, a quiet location for the interview, etc. As mentioned, ask for a virtual tour of the department to get a sense of resources available to you. If given the opportunity, schedule virtual interviews with graduate students to learn more about the program from a student’s perspective.

### I am not a psychology major, but I am interested in applying to a psychology graduate program. How will this affect my chances?

**Julie:** This depends on the program, your previous experience, and your ability to express the reasoning behind your interest. One of the beautiful things about psychology is that it can be applied to almost everything. For example, tell a thoughtful story of how your political science background is relevant in the work you are passionate about pursuing in the specialty of psychology.

Of note, you may still be required to have prerequisite coursework, so be sure to check the program’s requirements.

**Mitch:** Maybe not too much, if you have gotten some research experience in a psychology lab and can speak well to research and theories in psychology.

**Jocelyn:** Psychology is “everywhere” so no worries. Be sure to “connect the dots” by explaining how your major and experiences can be applied to your interest in psychology. If you have a minor in psychology, this will help. Depending on your program of interest, you may need to take a few prerequisite courses. As with all applicants, your application needs to stand out and make a strong case for why you should be considered for the graduate program.

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**Julie Radico, PsyD ABPP,** is a Pennsylvania licensed clinical psychologist, board-certified in clinical health psychology. She has extensive experience in multi-disciplinary patient-centered clinical care, education, research, wellness, and leadership. She earned her doctoral degree in clinical psychology and master’s degrees (clinical psychology & counseling and clinical health psychology) at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Radico completed her postdoctoral fellowship in the department of Family Medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Dr. Radico serves in leadership positions for the American Psychological Association, Pennsylvania Psychological Association, American Academy of Clinical Health Psychology, APA Society for Health Psychologists, and the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM).

**Mitch Prinstein, PhD, ABPP,** is the Chief Science Officer of the American Psychological Association and the John Van Seters Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has published over 150 peer-reviewed papers and nine books, including The Portable Mentor: Expert Guide to a Career in Psychology.

**Jocelyn Turner-Musa, PhD,** is a Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Psychology at Morgan State University (MSU) in Baltimore, MD. She is the Director of student training in the MSU ASCEND Center for Biomedical Research, funded by the National Institutes of Health. She is also a member of the American Psychological Association and is Past-President of Division 1, The Society for General Psychology. Her research focuses on understanding the role of psychological and social factors on disease management and health promotion. Dr. Turner-Musa has received numerous awards including an American Fellows Award from the American Association of University Women.
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Breaking the Glass Ceiling:
The Role of Mentorship for Women in Psychology

Cheryl Fisher, PhD, NCC, NCMHC, LCPC, BC-TMH, ACS
Alliant International University
Mentorship

A mentorship relationship is one where a more experienced person provides guidance to a less experienced person. The relationship may be formal, such as emerging leaders’ programs, or informal, such as naturally occurring relationships that may develop between students and faculty. Borders et al., (2011) found informal mentoring relationships to be more “visible, meaningful, comfortable, individualized, effective, and long-lasting.” Researchers and counselors, Stephanie Maccombs and Christine Suniti Bhat (2020), identified two areas where mentorship relationships can be most impactful. These include career development and psychosocial development. In addition to providing a way for the mentee to make connections in the industry, research consistently finds that engaging in a mentoring relationship is associated with positive outcomes for both mentor and mentee. For example, people who receive mentoring are more likely to experience career satisfaction and advancement. Additionally, students in mentoring relationships are more likely to complete advanced degrees and dissertations and take advantage of professional leadership and research opportunities. This is especially true for female students.

Upon graduating, students are armed with the clinical skills and dispositions to perform as provisionally licensed mental health providers. However, many lack the skills, beliefs, and networking that is inherent for career advancement. This is particularly true of students whose intersectional identities of gender and ethnicity has resulted in marginalization. For example, female students are 2.5 times less likely to ask questions or ask for help in academics than male students (Carter et al., 2018). This contributes to both gender disproportion and female invisibility in academia. According to Silver (2022), “We need networks of mentors, advisors across age, gender, race, cultures, and skill set” (p.167) to bring equity to the disproportionate and inherent networking advantages of privileged communities. Research suggests creating a formal and informal system that connects female graduate students and marginalized students with mentors to help navigate the unspoken rules of graduate school and advancement (Casto et al., 2005; Fisher, 2022; Silver, 2022).

Formal Mentorship Relationships

Many universities and local affiliates offer formal leadership and learning opportunities. Emerging Leaders programs allow students to work with faculty and community leaders providing not only mentorship but opportunities to network. Participating in Psi Beta, Psi Chi, Chi Sigma Iota honor societies demonstrate academic scholarship and strengthen resumes (McGibbon et al., 2017; Wahesh et al., 2018). These programs are student run with faculty support and
Informal mentorship relationships develop through the more casual conversations that can occur during office hours or before and after class time. Scheduling time to talk with a favorite faculty member about their clinical and research interests can catapult into the development of a new program, lecture series, or club. For example, my graduate students would often stop by my office and join me for a coffee break and conversation. Several great projects were born of those informal conversations. For example, the love of Superhero Therapy resulted in our development of a workshop that we presented (in complete superhero attire, I might add) not only to our university, but at our state counseling association’s annual conference.

Additionally, after having students use my lunch hour to discuss the integration of complementary and alternative approaches (CAM) with traditional psychology, we got permission from the university to create an Energy Psychology in Counseling (EPIC) club. Each month, we invited a different CAM practitioner to present, and we discussed the research and ethical considerations of each modality. One month we invited an acupuncturist, while another a massage therapist, and still another month we had a researcher from NIH present on his work with psychedelics. In addition to learning about different treatments, students networked and developed research ideas and writing projects based on their experiences.

Conclusion

Research indicates that mentorship relationships promote growth and satisfaction, professionally and personally. Women are often disadvantaged by historical academic and professional structures. Whether it is collaborating on a research project or presentation, providing feedback to hone clinical skills, observing ever-so-gently illuminating countertransference in a session, or simply bearing witness to the struggles of navigating work, family, and graduate school, mentors craft a web of support as well as strategy that is sustaining.

I am forever grateful to the wise women who not only taught me how to be a strong clinical counselor but also guided me into my role as a counselor educator so that I too may mentor women entering the mental health field.

References


Cheryl Fisher, PhD, is a certified trauma specialist with over 20 years of clinical experience and has deployed locally and nationally with the American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health Team and Maryland Responds Medical Corp. Her research interests include the role of spirituality in overall well-being, and the therapeutic benefits of engaging in nature. She is an international speaker, columnist for Counseling Today Online, and author of Mindfulness and Nature Based Therapeutic Techniques for Children.

Author Note: In appreciation to my mentors, Sharon Cheston, Genny Fialkowski, and Rev. Anne Stewart.
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Obtaining Letters of Recommendation for Graduate School

John C. Norcross, PhD, University of Scranton (PA)
Michal A. Sayette, PhD, University of Pittsburgh (PA)
Jack D. Burke, University of Scranton (PA)
Letters of recommendation count heavily toward graduate school admission. In fact, they are the top-rated criterion for entry into doctoral programs in psychology. Those criteria are, in order, letters of recommendation, personal statements, grade point averages (GPAs), interviews, research experiences, and, when required, scores on entrance examinations (Norcross et al., 2005). Most undergraduates underestimate the value of letters of recommendation (and research experience) in admissions to competitive graduate programs (Augusto, 2021; Nauta, 2000). The implication for enhancing your application is thus crystal clear: secure positive and detailed letters of recommendation!

In this article, we aim to assist you in doing just that. We consider why admission committees request letters, whom to ask for letters, what to prepare for asking, how to ask for them, and when to waive your right to inspect that letter of recommendation.

Why Letters Anyway?
Graduate school admission committees gain a lot from letters of recommendation. They provide a personal yet objective evaluation of your work from a professional experienced in the field. An application written solely by yourself would be limited by your knowledge and comparison. Admission committees desire a more independent appraisal of your abilities and experiences than what you could provide.

Admissions committees look for positivity and detail in letters. A two-paragraph generic and terse letter will not make a case for your admission into competitive graduate programs. One set of researchers (Elam et al., 1998) queried members of admissions committees and discovered the five least helpful aspects of letters of recommendation:

- Repetition of irrelevant information, such as religious beliefs or hearsay
- Inclusion of irrelevant information, such as religious beliefs or hearsay
- Therefore, it is your job as the applicant to provide your referees with sufficient and detailed information about your personal characteristics, academic strengths, and interpersonal skills so that they refrain from filling in your recommendations with irrelevant content. This point underlines the importance of asking someone who already knows you reasonably well.

Whom to Ask?
Most graduate programs request three letters of recommendation. At a practice-oriented program, one letter from a clinical supervisor, one from a professor, and one from a research advisor might prove the ideal mix. At a research-oriented program, two letters from research advisors and one from a clinical supervisor or professor would probably be better. All things being equal, having your letters come from faculty is preferable. However, if a letter from an employer would prove substantially more helpful than that of a professor with whom you are not well acquainted, then it is probably a good idea to use the employer.

Our general advice was confirmed by an intriguing study (Keith-Spiegel & Wiederman, 2000) that asked members of admissions committees to rank sources of recommendation letters. Raters assumed that the letters from these sources were equally positive so that rating variations were due solely to the referee’s characteristics. The most valuable sources of letters of recommendation were (in descending order):
1. A mentor with whom the applicant has done considerable work;
2. the applicant’s professor, who is also a well-known and highly respected psychologist;
3. an employer in a job related to the applicant’s professional goals;
4. the chair of the academic department in which the applicant is majoring; and
5. a professor from another department from whom the applicant has taken a relevant upper division course.

By contrast, a letter from a graduate teaching assistant was rated, essentially, as no help. Moreover, a letter from one’s psychotherapist was rated negatively!

You may be tempted to ask a “nice” professor to write a recommendation. As long as you have worked extensively with this professor and they know your capabilities, this is an acceptable plan of action. Students usually ask nice professors in the hopes that they will write a pleasant recommendation.

However, asking nice professors who barely know you instead of credible, respected professors can result in trouble. Even the kindest, student-centered professors cannot directly comment on what they do not know about you. Avoid securing brief, diffuse letters from friendly folks who say nothing of substance or import. Follow the research and seek high-impact letters that yield both gravitas (seriousness) and veritas (the truth).

Ideally, you want to ask a professor whom you like, but most importantly, who knows you and your academic capabilities. Thus, it is ideal to ask a professor whom you have worked with for an extended period of time, preferably for a year or more.

Avoid asking professors that you simply took a class with. Even if you got a high grade and participated well, the best the professor can say is, “This student was always on time, participated in discussions, attended office hours, and tested very well. On this basis, I consider her an intelligent student and a good candidate for graduate school.” This reference is generic and neutral.

By contrast, admissions committees want to hear detail and uniqueness. “This student has worked with me for an entire year and completed two of my courses. In both courses, the student performed exceptionally well on exams and written assignments. During that time, she scored MMPIs, tested participants using a polygraph, analyzed data, and conducted her own honors thesis. She was dependable and worked beyond what was required by the department. Given this student’s intelligence, motivation, and responsibility, I think she would make an outstanding doctoral student.” Though the above is a strong example, the point is that you want someone to attest to your ability and responsibility.

It’s not unusual to seek letters of recommendation from faculty members who have retired or relocated. Ask the department secretary or chairperson to contact the faculty member for you, or perhaps they will give you an email address to do so yourself. Do not worry about asking: academics and researchers understand job changes and
expect to contribute recommendations for years after they leave an institution.

If applying to doctoral programs, it is best to have at least two of the people writing your letters be at the doctoral level in psychology or psychology-related disciplines. One strong letter from a master’s-level clinician may prove acceptable, but they will not be in a position to attest to your ability to complete doctoral studies. These individuals are experts within their field of work; hence their letters of recommendation will hold value.

By the same token, bachelor’s degree recipients, friends, and relatives should never write letters of recommendation to doctoral programs. They simply do not possess the experience or knowledge of what it takes to earn a doctorate. Letters from politicians, clergy, and your psychotherapists typically are inappropriate as well—they tend to write personal and psychotherapeutic testimonies instead of academic letters of reference.

Another author of a letter of recommendation to avoid is yourself. We are receiving disturbing reports that more and more professors are asking students to write letters of recommendation for themselves, which they will subsequently sign. Never participate in this ludicrous action. This is a breach of ethics in numerous ways. As we recommend in the following section, it is fine, however, to provide the writer with information on your time working together.

Unfortunately, a connection with faculty mentors is not possible for a number of students due to several reasons. These reasons include students who transfer to a new university or switch majors late in their college career, students who attend a mammoth state university where they took huge lecture classes, or students who attend college part-time.

These students may receive neutral letters of recommendation through no fault of their own. We are sympathetic to these plights. If you fall into one of these categories, then you need to double your efforts to get involved in clinical experiences, research activities, and departmental matters—and do so quickly.

**What to Prepare Before the Ask?**

It is essential to be organized before approaching a person to ask for a letter of recommendation. This is the last impression the recommender gets of you.

We recommend that you prepare as packet of documents for each person you will ask for a recommendation. Give your referees sufficient data to render detailed and positive letters about your personal characteristics, academic strengths, and interpersonal skills so that they do not resort to filling your recommendations with irrelevant content. If you worked on this professor’s research team and it was reasonably large, provide an outline of the tasks you conducted, scientific or professional discussions you’ve enjoyed with them, etc., while working there. This will help refresh the professor’s memory and make for a stronger letter. You can be powerful in shaping a professor’s letter of recommendation!

On the top of the packet goes a cover letter (see Figure 1) outlining a summary of your accomplishments (classes or research completed) with that person (usually, a professor) to remind them of the details and dates. Next comes a summary table of the graduate programs to which you are applying and their respective application deadlines. These documents should be accompanied by a resume/CV, an unofficial copy of your academic transcript, and other forms as necessary. This orderly and complete packet demonstrates that you respect their time and highlights that you are a dedicated student. A disorganized and incomplete packet will probably frustrate the person and remind them of your weaknesses.

Deliver the entire recommendation packet to the recommender at a single time. Do not send in dribs and drabs: another form a week later, a forgotten program added later by email, a transcript added two weeks after the packet was delivered. Provide the packet all at once in a complete fashion. Double-check everything.

Play it safe and provide the reference packet at least six weeks before the earliest application deadline. Completing your recommendation will not be the top priority of the person you have asked to write it, or they may be out of town prior to the deadline. Do not take any chances that a letter will be late. Allow three weeks and ask if the letter has been sent. Be politic: Do not pester, but do follow up.

**How to Ask?**

The action of asking the professor is an anxiety-provoking step in securing a letter of recommendation. You must be clear and direct: “Can you write me a good letter of recommendation for graduate school?” and the person is hesitant or indicates reservations, ask someone else! A bad letter of recommendation is deadly. Better to have one brief letter from a professor who gave you an A than from someone who might express reservations about your abilities.

If the person is hesitant or indicates reservations, ask someone else! A bad letter of recommendation is deadly. Better to have one brief letter from a professor who gave you an A than from someone who might express reservations about your abilities.

“I don’t know” is better than “I know, and I have reservations.”

After “Can you write me a good recommendation for graduate school?” and the

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**Photo Credit:** Shutterstock.com/GORODENKOFF
person responds in the affirmative, then you provide that person with the information packet. You have accomplished your goal: A trustworthy person has agreed to provide you with a positive letter of recommendation, which will contain a positive tone and supportive detail. This is the sought-after result of your extra work in providing references with factual information and assertive requests for letters of recommendation. A liability letter is one that communicates limited knowledge of the applicant, leading an admissions committee to conclude that the person was only minimally connected to professors in their undergraduate or master’s department (Halgin, 1986).

Do all of these steps in person if possible. Yes, it is interpersonally anxious to ask someone, “Can you write me a good letter of recommendation?” And, of course, all of these steps are painstaking and time-consuming. However, that is precisely the point: You are demonstrating your interpersonal skills, responsibility, and work ethic to the professor even as you are requesting a letter of recommendation attesting to those attributes. Thus, ask in person during a formal meeting—not in a few minutes before work or class, not by placing a recommendation form in the person’s mailbox. Take the initiative and do it directly in real-time (Norcross & Cannon, 2008).

Of course, for professors rarely in their academic offices and working primarily elsewhere, you might need to ask via email. But make it a detailed and personalized email.

Table 1 summarizes the 10 steps in asking for a letter of recommendation. It can serve as a friendly guide when the time comes.

What If the Person Declines?
Contrary to popular belief, professors are not mandated to write letters of recommendation. Letters are a common and voluntary courtesy, but not a job requirement.

The single most common reason faculty members don’t write a letter of recommendation is because they don’t know the student well enough (Keith-Spiegel, 1991). Other frequent reasons given by faculty are that they question the student’s motivation level, emotional stability, academic credentials, or professional standards. If faculty defer your request for a letter, then...
politely inquire about their reasoning and graciously thank them for their candor.

One clever study asked psychologists how they would handle requests for a letter of recommendation from a student exhibiting particular problems (Grote et al., 2001). The majority indicated that they would not write a letter for a student abusing substances or showing unethical behavior. For most of the other student problems—interpersonal problems, lack of motivation, paucity of responsibility, marginal clinical skills—psychologists routinely would tell the student about their reservations, then write the letter including the negative information.

If faculty members tell you they have reservations about your behavior, then they will probably include the negative evaluation in their letter. Politely inquire if their reservation will in fact appear in the letter. If so, thank them for their honesty and perhaps withdraw your request for a letter.

**When to Waive Your Right?**

Recommendation forms, by law, will contain a waiver statement asking whether you do or do not waive your right to inspect the completed letter of reference. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA or the so-called Buckley Amendment) mandates that students over age 18 be given access to their academic records unless they waive the right. This is a complicated topic, but we invariably advise applicants to waive their right of access, providing the person writing the letter knows you well and has agreed to provide a strong recommendation. Do not waive access—or better yet, do not request letters—from persons you do not trust or do not know.

A confidential letter carries more weight. By waiving your right to access, you communicate confidence that the letters will be supportive, and you express trust in your reference. In fact, over 90% of health profession schools prefer letters of recommendation that are waived by the student (Chapman & Lane, 1997). Our experiences and naturalistic studies (e.g., Ceci & Peters, 1984; Shaffer & Tomarelli, 1981) indicate that professors’ honest evaluations will be compromised when you have access to what they have

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**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in Asking for a Letter of Recommendation</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2. Go during office hours</td>
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<td>3. Bring the organized packet of forms</td>
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<td>(a cover letter, CV or resume, unofficial transcript)</td>
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<td>4. Begin with small talk (schmooze)</td>
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<td>8. Reiterate your earliest deadline</td>
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**Steps in Asking for a Letter of Recommendation**

1. **Identify appropriate professor**
2. **Go during office hours**
3. **Bring the organized packet of forms** (a cover letter, CV or resume, unofficial transcript)
4. **Begin with small talk (schmooze)**
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9. **Thank the professor for their time**
10. **Follow-up on or after earliest deadline (if letter not yet sent)**
written. By waiving the right, you are communicating an intent to have the “truth” told. Otherwise, admissions committees may lump the letter with all the other polite and positive testimonials (Halgin, 1986). Worse, admissions committees may suspect that your unwillingness to waive your right means that you are worried that your letters might be weak.

In making your choice to waive or not, be clear about the law. Most students correctly know that, if they waive their rights, they may never see the letter. However, many students erroneously think that choosing not to waive their rights means that they can see their letter if they do not get accepted or that they have a right to preview the letter before it is sent (Ault, 1993). These are common fallacies, but fallacies nonetheless.

The laws do not dictate that professors must show students the completed letter. One study (Keith-Spiegel, 1991) of college faculty found that 17% never show students their letters of recommendation, 46% usually do not, 8% only to students they know well, 15% only if students ask, and 14% routinely show students their letters. Nor does the law guarantee a student access to letters if the student is rejected from a graduate program; in fact, students may inspect their files at a graduate school only after they have been accepted at and enrolled in that graduate school (Ault, 1993).

What Does the Final Letter Look Like?

The letter of recommendation is the final piece of the puzzle. There will be a letter written on the recommender’s letterhead but often containing a rating form as well. These forms are submitted electronically to the graduate program. You list on your application the names, positions, and email addresses of people writing you letters of recommendation. The graduate schools then directly contact your referees via email and provide them with the URL and a password to submit their letters of recommendation to your application file electronically. Online submission of recommendations streamlines the entire process and has become the standard.

The recommendation form used by PSYCAS (psycas.liaisoncas.com/), the application service for graduate study in psychology, asks evaluators to rate applicant characteristics. The ratings are made on a 5-point, Likert-type scale (1 = poor to 5 = excellent) on:

- Adaptability
- Hardworking
- Oral communication
- Reaction to criticism
- Written communication
- Empathy
- Interpersonal relations
- Organizational skills
- Self-awareness

The rating forms from graduate schools may appear to be quite different at first glance; however, closer inspection will reveal that they all request essentially similar information. On most forms, an open space is presented for recommenders to list their strengths and weaknesses.

Forms usually conclude with a request for a summary rating, ranking from “not recommended” to “highly recommended.”

Researchers have identified the most frequent applicant characteristics that recommenders were requested to rate on these forms (Appleby et al., 1999). Based on the analysis of 143 forms, the top dozen are as follows:

- Motivated and hardworking
- Research skills
- Writing skills
- Teaching skills/potential
- Creative and original
- Character or integrity
- High intellectual/scholarly ability
- Emotionally stable and mature
- Speaking skills
- Works well with others
- Strong knowledge of area of study
- Special skills, such as computer or lab

What Is the Result?

The ideal outcome of this whole process is that a trusted person or professor writes the letter of recommendation and submits a positive, detailed statement. The admissions committee will obtain a solid sense of who you are and your probable performance in graduate school. The letter will be a crucial component of your application. Love or hate them, letters of recommendation play a huge role in graduate school applications; so harvest the research and our experience in obtaining them. Best of success in doing so!

References


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Jack D. Burke is a psychology major in the honors program at the University of Scranton, where he is a Redington Scholar from his native Ireland. He was recently awarded the Psychology Royal Summer Internship Award.
Virtual Graduate Education?
Possibilities and Probabilities for a Virtuous PhD Degree

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Michael C. Amico, PhD
Housatonic Community College
The ideal graduate program can offer a seemingly life-altering recipe for a new professional menu. Still, finding the ideal ingredients for a graduate degree isn’t as clear-cut as the dish once inspired by past generations. Just as a basic menu of meat and potatoes—or one academic dish entailing a campus-based PhD—may no longer satisfy all palates, so too, some students looking at a plate of current graduate offerings may write with anxiety if only presented with a single selection. Fundamentally, though, students are active participants in their learning, and choice and options are key. In fact, in the same way menu choices may range from fine dining options to basic dishes so the modern academic tariff, while hearty, is (nowadays) somewhat overwhelming in complexity. In contrast to traditional brick-and-mortar estates on charmingly historic campuses, the option of a modern online academic community using virtual technological formats can present as an entirely different kind of a la carte offering. Different can be, well, scary if options are unknown or not fully understood (after all, some ingredients may not fully mix in the Bouillabaisse of a personal and professional life). However, with exploration and curiosity, one’s academic palate can expand, potentially yielding a winning recipe for your life.

A participant in one of our conference presentations on graduate education, describing deteriorating physical health, asked for opportunities for a PhD given that physical limitations and health challenges suggested an exploration of selections other than a brick-and-mortar campus. Although once a difficult inquiry, we were able to offer a selection of palatable choices. Truly, these come in differing varieties, offering diversity able to fulfill and enrich an array of palates.

Join us at our virtual table. Sample a new menu of offerings. Be open to possibilities. Be curious. Be brave. Explore and discover unknown flavors that may enrich your personal and professional life.

Potential Benefits (To Whet Your Appetite)

Today, a virtual blackboard classroom may seem more akin to a European menu offering transport to another culinary world than a doorway into a classroom in a graduate program. Typically lacking time-honored faculty offices and without traditional face-to-face meetings on a brick-and-mortar campus, a distance program offers a more novel educational plate for learning.

Diverse Faculty

Although distance programs may not provide traditional classrooms and campuses, distance learning programs do offer diverse faculty based nationally (if not internationally) while providing a full tariff of classes. This diversity extends to classmates as well, increasing worldviews shared and discussed in relation to course material. Just as one’s palate may be best satiated with a diverse menu, these distinctive educational experiences may also satiate a hungry learner.

Increased Freedom

In some ways, online technology has transformed graduate education in the same way modern food delivery has transformed culinary shopping. Just as students no longer wait in long lines to register for classes, distance learning has eliminated long, late, evenings in a campus library. No longer must a student put life on hold to advance educational goals. Whereas students once walked or biked across historic campuses to a classroom, today a student sipping coffee at Starbucks in Boston may be learning in an online blackboard classroom pursuing a virtual degree. In fact, educational opportunities are now available for those working nights, coping with health limitations, caring for family, or living in isolated geographic regions.

Disability Friendly

Virtual education truly offers an easily accessible menu of educational opportunities. It has leveled the playing field for some circumstances in life that are out of one’s control, such as physical disabilities that might prevent some students from attending a brick-and-mortar campus. Similar to a confidential code for securing a reservation to a restaurant, distance programs offer admission to students previously not easily accessed.

A Brief History

Honestly, this menu is not new. At the postbaccalaureate level, the National Center for Education Statistics (2019) showed that, as of fall 2017, 1.1 million students at the graduate level had already tasted some type of distance education course, and 868,000 took their graduate education exclusively online. By 2019–20, some 2,219,904 students had taken distance education courses at the post baccalaureate level, and 594,325 had taken one, but not all of their graduate education using a distributed educational format. At the same time, this data reveals that 1,625,579 students had taken their graduate education exclusively online (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020a).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020b), 503,390 students were enrolled with 265,966 full time and 237,424 part time in fall 2020 at primarily online institutions (defined as 90% of students enrolled in distance-only learning). The degree conferral numbers for these institutions that year were 144,692 awarded a master’s degree and 14,380 awarded a doctoral degree ranging from the PhD to the JD.

Specific to psychology students, Snow et al. (2018) reported more than a quarter of counseling students in graduate programs with distance education options. The National Center for Education Statistics (2016) reported that, as of 2016, the number of graduate students who have learned through distance education in the Social/Behavioral Sciences rose to 29% from 3.4% in 2003.

Weighing Options for Virtual Programs

Just as traditional degree programs can range from a large state university campus to a small enticing private college, distance programs can range from entirely online web-based classrooms to blends of synchronous and asynchronous classes mixing weekend or weeklong intensives with online or distributed educational formats. This is truly about finding a choice that fulfills your personal and professional goals and desires akin to choosing certain foods for meals that satiate the food desire of the moment. Different days may have different hunger desires, so carefully thinking through choices is the best way to fulfillment.
Within this menu, for illustration, Capella University uses a combination of online systems and weeklong residencies. With residencies held throughout the country, from Phoenix, Arizona, to Jacksonville, Florida, and offered multiple times through the year, these experiences provide students the ability to meet peers and faculty in person. In addition, this allows students workshops or roundtables sometimes best addressed face to face, including a dissertation seminar. These summits can humanize the educational experience while helping to quell fears or anxieties regarding distance learning. These sessions also create a linkage with faculty who can mentor and offer assistance throughout their program. These sessions also provide an opportunity to meet classmates and develop deeper relationships with those that one has met in virtual classes. Thus, opportunities to develop support networks, once thought to be acquired only via traditional brick-and-mortar campuses, exist via these gatherings. This support can help when working through coursework, comprehensive exams, or dissertations.

Accreditation
Critically, accreditation can also vary. Although some programs hold both regional accreditation as well as elite programmatic approvals, others may only hold state approval while lacking various regional and association markers. According to the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (https://www.chea.org/regional-accrediting-organizations), one facet to consider involves regional accreditation through one of the commissions: New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), Middle State Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Higher Learning Commission (HLC), WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). These commissions fundamentally ensure quality of education and training received by students with accreditation often occurring every 10 years through visitations and programmatic reviews encompassing student to faculty ratios, financial security of the college, as well as course and programmatic assessments. These steps fundamentally help to ensure that institutions meet their missions and that students have the skills and abilities schools claim attendees acquire. It is the equivalent to a top rating from the Michelin Guide for a dining establishment or chef.
In general, regional accreditation essentially offer a stamp of approval sometimes pivotal for job postings as well as licensure and certification. This type of qualifier can also apply to psychology faculty positions. Notably, it is not atypical to see union contracts or state statutes requiring a degree from a program with regional accreditation. Further, specialty accreditations, such as through APA, AAMFT, or CACREP, are typically supportive of licensure and/or certification in areas including clinical psychology, mental health counseling, or marriage and family therapy. Of note, not all programs hold such markers, thereby potentially limiting attainment of licensure while raising cautionary flags including title usage. For example, the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, n.d.) reported more than 69 CACREP accredited master’s programs with a distance education format.

**Recent Developments**

New opportunities for a dynamic smorgasbord of educational degree programs using modern web-based learning platforms are opening a complex array of educational selections. In truth, the COVID pandemic spearheaded new opportunities as well as amplifying a level of uncertainty. Today, past ideals and principles connected to traditional campuses do not necessarily capture the appeal of all students. Nowadays, an online menu for graduate distance learning creates a larger plate of offerings and distance education provides one alternative.

Understandably, when COVID first closed college campuses, higher education faced new challenges. Universities quickly embraced distance learning with online classes rather than risk closure or a crisis halting educational delivery. From highly esteemed Ivy League universities to state colleges, schools found classwork was able to be completed, portfolios submitted, exams proctored, and the academic mission met via virtual online formats. Methodology shifted, but the core objectives were still met and course and program assessment were still able to be completed. This said, would the public wish a dentist who learned to “drill and fill” online or a surgeon who learned to reconnect bones and muscles via the game Operation? What is best taught face to

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE

Looking toward a career teaching at a university, one conference participant in a talk on graduate education asked if a virtual degree would of her access to a faculty position at one of the major research universities located near the conference. We discussed with her that she could acquire a clearer picture by examining faculty profiles. One morsal of a clue we noted would involve degrees held by faculty. We noted another crumb could entail evidence suggesting faculty embrace of distance learning in terms of teaching experience and in terms of any visible data suggesting interest and commitment to distance learning pedagogy. We also noted that graduate education entails more than solely acquiring a degree but includes supportive research and professional experiences, such as grant writing and scholarly presentations and publications, that might be important for success in many university careers.

Distance education requires more than a passing glance at the fare of selections. Acknowledging the complexity of her query, we suggested she look online at faculty resumes and publications at two nearby brick-and-mortar regionally and APA accredited programs, one granting a PhD and one a PsyD, and at a regionally and APA accredited distance programs awarding the PhD. Although she seemed deeply impressed with faculty scholarly publications and presentations at the campus-based PhD program, she voiced confusion at the lack of scholarship within the PsyD faculty teaching in the campus-based PsyD program. Subsequently, she noted impressive credentials and scholarship at the distance PhD program. As we spoke, she realized the complexity of these decisions and recognized the importance of a deep dive into each program’s menu. Looking at the PsyD program, she inquired if faculty lacking scholarship could effectively teach and mentor the scholarly skills she desired and if that degree would be competitive at a major research university? She asked if all PsyD faculty lacked scholarship? Clearly, her questions were worthwhile. While voicing mentoring concerns with faculty lacking scholarly productivity at the PsyD program, she voiced a different concern relative to mentoring in a distance program where faculty are often widely dispersed geographically. As we compared her choices to a menu with many entrees, we pondered those ingredients fostering long-term fulfillment rather than solely providing a temporary solution to one’s hunger pains.

Seeing her confusion and recognizing her desire for mentoring in order to cultivate both scholarship and a degree able to open wide choices for different university teaching, we also highlighted a range of PhD programs available both on campus and virtually that are regionally accredited in areas including general experimental psychology and developmental psychology. We also noted that, although only one distance PhD in clinical psychology is approved by APA, in marriage and family therapy, the American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (AAMFT) has approved several DMFT programs as well as a unique PsyD in marital and family therapy based in California. As she reeled with the DMFT degree representing one’s hunger pains.

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face? What can comfortably be taught and learned using online modalities? What and where is the blend and balance? How do these different options meet both personal and career objectives?

Universities have and are shifting their plate of offerings.

Although schools such as Fielding Graduate University based in California and Capella University based in Minnesota have offered online and distributed education formats for years, this modality has spread. We noted the California School of Professional Psychology—part of Alliant International University—offers PhD and PsyD programs both on campuses in California as well as through online modalities. CSPP is one of the largest training programs in the nation, and we noted that they also offer a unique AAMFT approved PsyD in marital and family therapy, both on ground as well as through online technology. Still, CSPP also offers an online or campus-based PhD in industrial and organizational psychology. This type of diversity meets an ever-expanding palate of student desires.

For our conference participant, this kind of data was, well, delectable. For our conference participant, this kind of data was, well, delectable. Don’t avoid exploring a larger plate of offerings.

Fundamentally, virtually every university at every tier embraced this model as COVID closed campuses. As COVID spread, faculty and students gained familiarity with synchronous and asynchronous learning formats that necessitated competency with navigating Zoom, Teams, and Webex as well as fluidity in engaging in discussion boards, setting up proctored exams and designing written assignments checked via Turnitin or SafeAssign. In some cases, when students were permitted to reengage in field work at sites in the community, this distance learning format allowed for accompanying seminar classes to be run so that students could meet weekly with the professor to discuss issues at placement sites as well as serving as a forum for students to turn in practicum contracts, timesheets, and supervisor and self-appraisals. You could argue that necessity forced thinking outside the box for professors, programs, and colleges. This type of change in thinking or creativity found a new avenue for program and institutional survivability in challenging times. Simultaneously, while online delivery became better known, PhD programs, new degree programs, and new certificate programs emerged as institutions of higher education recognized challenges to campus-based programs during a pandemic while also seizing the appeal to students of distance modalities.

Still, not all programs can effectively offer all nor equal opportunities. Would you feel comfortable with that surgeon who completed substantial facets of a medical education online? Similarly, not all programs in health services psychology are comfortable teaching such facets as cognitive and personality assessment in a virtual classroom. With this in mind, recognize the complexity of challenging issues. Consider your goals. Consider your options. Consider ether opportunities.

Looking Ahead

On the positive side, given that Lederman’s (2018) work indicated a majority of public university students have enrolled in distance learning courses, it is clear a distance degree might offer a hands-on grounding in this growing educational modality. This experience could appeal to university employers seeking faculty skilled in these modalities.

Also, colleges and universities have seen an impact from changing demographics. Birthrates, for example, have changed, and the financial crisis of 2008 continues to unveil challenges. From a 2008 shift in births per 1,000 women, in 2007 this number was 4.3 million which coincides with a birthrate drop of approximately 56 per 1,000 women compared to the number that was 70 per 1,000 women decades earlier (Martin et al., 2010). In 2021, births dropped to 3.7 million (Hamilton et al., 2022). What this data indicates is that colleges have shrinking enrollment trends projected over the next decade, suggesting a need to change tactics if colleges and universities are going to ensure viability. Gone are the days when they could solely depend on a never-ending supply of students as if they were renewable resources. Today, there is a need to expand the student population. As a result, a distance learning skillset may become increasingly desirable for colleges as this modality provides an avenue to survivability.

Thoughts and Conclusions

Interested in pursuing your PhD? Is a traditional brick-and-mortar program less than ideal? Do such issues as health, family, or geographic challenges suggest that a traditional program unrealistic? Don’t give up hope. In fact, see it as an opportunity for new discoveries as if you were conducting a tasting at a fine dining establishment and were trying an executive chef’s new delicacy. Don’t avoid exploring a larger menu of graduate offerings if restrictions suggest that a traditional campus-based brick-and-mortar PhD program may not be possible.
Weigh your situation. Consider your goals. Research options and opportunities. Be realistic. Be optimistic. If possible, attend conference sessions on graduate education. In a fundamental way, the menu of choices is larger than perhaps at any time in history. At the same time, not all selections are ideal for each person. Just as some need vegan menu options or gluten free options, there are academic choices that can satisfy your academic palate if diligent. It is sort of parallel to that hidden gem of a restaurant secluded in the North End of Boston accessed through a stairway hidden on a roof, but discovered through careful research, referrals, and active exploration.

Bon Appetit.

References and Resources


Tony D. Crespi, EdD ABPP, is presently Professor of Psychology at The University of Hartford. Credentialed as a Licensed Psychologist; Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Certified School Psychologist, and Certified School Counselor, he is also a Nationally Certified School Psychologist and holds board certification from the American Board of Professional Psychology [ABPP]. He is a Past-President of Trainers of School Psychologists and the author of multiple books and articles.

Michael Amico, PhD, is presently Professor of Psychology at Housatonic Community College. A general experimental psychologist, he also holds master’s degrees in both counseling and clinical psychology. Particularly interested in both traditional and nontraditional graduate education, he is well-versed in facets related to regional accreditation and the importance of university and professional service. He has taught in several colleges and universities, has served on multiple university faculty search committees, and is deeply involved in the Annual Meeting of the New England Psychological Association.

EDITORIAL NOTE
This the first article in a two-part series addressing online, virtual, education targeting the PhD degree. The next magazine issue will include the second piece, which features a question-and-answer portion as well as a case analysis intended to help readers explore critical issues regarding the exploration of an online PhD degree.
Counteracting Implicit Bias in the Policing System
An Interview With Kimberly Kahn, PhD

Elisabeth Barrett
Psi Chi Headquarters
Imagine you are a teenage boy walking home from school. You’re wearing a backpack, a pair of trendy loose-fitted pants, an oversized T-shirt, and squinting due to the sunny day. You insert your hand into your pocket to grab your cell phone just as you happen to pass by a police officer walking the opposite direction.

Based on your behavior, are you threatening? No. Might the officer respond and treat you as if you are? Well, that depends. What shade is your skin tone?

Research shows an officer is more likely to respond to this case as a threat if an individual has darker skin or isn’t “white passing.”

The officer may associate the combination of baggy clothing and a backpack with the recent theft of a local convenience store. The squinting may be perceived as suspicious and indicate a dangerous disposition. And reaching for a cell phone may be mistaken as reaching for a weapon.

In this example, the officer is so focused on interpreting these cues as a potential threat they don’t even notice another individual walking a few feet ahead. This person is the same height, age, and sex, wearing similar fitted clothes and a backpack—also on his way home from school. However, this boy goes completely unnoticed by the officer. This boy is White.

But what happens to the first boy? Why is his outcome from the interaction statistically more likely to be influenced by the level of racial bias of the officer? Does the level of training affect an officer’s implicit (or explicit) bias? How does this racial bias impact non-White groups on a larger systemic scale in policing? And further, how can we use existing research to prevent the disparity in policing behaviors based on race? These questions are exactly what Dr. Kimberly Kahn’s research and community efforts seek to solve through analysis and intervention.

Meet Dr. Kahn

As Dr. Kahn recalls for the present interview, “I’ve always cared about action research, taking science out of the lab and into the community, and creating interventions and research to make substantive change.” Specifically, her early interest in the psychology of racial profiling stems from a young age when her Armenian family would discuss the Armenian genocide and how it had impacted them. These conversations allowed her to form an understanding and appreciation of concepts like justice and equality as a young adolescent, which, in turn, inspired her academic career, beginning with researching implicit bias as an undergraduate student at UC Berkeley.

In graduate school at UCLA, she went on to research the connection between implicit stereotyping and criminal justice with advisor Dr. Paul Davies, who was also researching shooter bias and social identity threat. Seeing the effects of implicit stereotyping on police decision-making and how decisions to shoot are influenced by racial stereotypes led her to also work with Dr. Phil Goff around 2008 as he formed the Center for Policing Equity—a new model for academics, communities, and police departments to work collaboratively to reduce racial bias in policing and advance community policing. Through police and academic partnerships such as these, Dr. Kahn has been studying bias in policing and how to foster long-term relationships in order to promote more equitable policing outcomes. For the past 12 years, Dr. Kahn has been focusing on her research in Portland, Oregon, where she’s created a similar long-term relationship with the Portland Police Bureau and other departments within the state and region.

The Psychology of Implicit Racial Bias in Policing

Stereotypes and heuristics cause people to gloss over individual differences and believe that everyone in a respective group is the same. Importantly, this can affect a person’s implicit beliefs or even their explicit actions.

Stereotypes are particularly likely to influence us during ambiguous situations where we are trying to understand what’s going on, Dr. Kahn says. In these situations, stereotypes essentially “fill in the pieces” by shifting and changing the perceiver’s views to be in line with that stereotype. Dr. Kahn takes this general psychological framework and applies it to the policing system and how it can affect individual officers on the job (e.g., visual attention, who officers are surveilling and directing their attention, how behavioral cues are interpreted). She explains,

Stereotypes can influence when force is used, how quickly, and ultimately the amount of force and decisions to shoot. This can be seen across the use of force continuum, from lower levels of force like physical takedowns to higher levels of force such as decisions to shoot.

Dr. Kahn’s research has shown that police—minority interactions are more likely to lead to an escalation of force, with higher levels of force used on Black and Latinx suspects than White suspects. She can see this in her research “by breaking apart the dyadic interaction that’s happening between police and a suspect one step at a time: what is an officer doing and what is the suspect’s response. Controlling for other relevant variables, we can see how racial stereotypes bias the interaction as it unfolds and leads to force escalation.”

These disproportionate outcomes are often due to implicit biases that occur on a subconscious level. This means that people can explicitly and wholeheartedly believe they are not racist, yet still hold these implicit biases that ultimately influence their behavior. Dr. Kahn attributes the pervasiveness of these biases—particularly the race-crime implicit association—to being exposed to stereotypes in our culture as they establish and reinforce implicit connections and associations in the mind.

An additional contextual factor for acting in accordance to implicit stereotypes involves situations and conditions that police officers unfortunately face all too often. She says, “We are more likely to rely on automatic associations when we’re under time pressure, when there’s a lot of stimuli, when stress is high, and when arousal is high. All of those things make it more likely that we rely on those automatically activated stereotypes, which can then impact our behavior.”

Applying this to an emergency or high-stakes situation, Dr. Kahn says that police actions “are often characterized by having to make quick decisions, high levels of stress and arousal, and not having full information; all the characteristics in a situation that can make it more likely to rely on schemas and bias. Those are the times
where we’re more likely to rely on our automatic processing, schemas, and heuristics to fill in the situation and ultimately lead to more biased decision making.”

**The Impact of Biased Policing for Minority Groups**

Due to these pervasive race-crime implicit stereotypes, minority groups often experience social identity threat when interacting with police. Dr. Kahn summarizes the impact this threat has on group members, stating, “Social identity threat refers to the perception that you are going to be devalued or treated poorly based on your social identity in a given context or situation. Essentially, you believe you will be treated in line with a stereotype about your group solely because of your group membership. People don’t want to be treated based on stereotypes, and this leads minority community members to experience stereotype threat or social identity threat in these situations, especially when they’re interacting with the police.”

According to Dr. Kahn, this identity threat causes decreased trust in the police compared to majority group members, and minority group members cope with this threat by avoiding potentially negatively stereotyped domains and interactions. Ultimately, this leads to avoidance of the police, due to not wanting to be seen and treated through the lens of a negative stereotype by officers. Unfortunately, avoidance of the police spills into circumstances when non-White people are a victim of a crime or need some sort of help. Additionally, Dr. Kahn’s research shows that “people with darker skin tones, even within the same racial group, experience more of this psychological identity threat, and are even less likely to trust the police.”

Some of Dr. Kahn’s current work looks into the effects of social identity and stereotype threat and how they were exacerbated by mask mandates throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. She explains, “Just the idea of wearing a mask for racial minorities—particularly for Black and Asian individuals—during the pandemic increased the level of social identity threat they feel interacting with both the public and the police. Particularly for African Americans, wearing a mask primes those stereotypes about not wanting to be seen as a criminal due to their race.” This threat affected the likelihood that racial minorities wore a mask during the pandemic. Essentially, some members within a minority group would rather potentially expose themselves to COVID-19 (though still trying to protect their health) than be discriminated against or subjected to increased racial profiling when wearing a mask around police.

**What Can Police Departments Do to Build More Trust With the Community and Reduce Biased Policing?**

Dr. Kahn brings attention to how there isn’t a nationwide level of policing policies and standardized data collection, but rather just at the local, departmental level, or sometime statewide level. Because of this, we see shifts and variations in policies and procedures among departments across the country. There is momentum for change, however. Lately, Dr. Kahn has noticed:

- more collaborations between police departments and the community;
- more proactive departments doing research;
- increased implementation of evidence-based strategies to partner with the community and ultimately improve trust and safety in general; and
- more adoption of community policing models and values.

Dr. Kahn’s research showcases the harm that racial profiling causes from the policing side, with data consistently showing that using racial profiling policies makes the police less effective at doing their job. This results in making communities more unsafe and people less likely to call the police. To improve policing efforts that bring around mutual trust and safety within the community, Dr. Kahn emphasizes the following message: “We need to be focusing on changing policies and norms: what it means to be a police officer, more specifically what it means to be an effective police officer; and measuring effectiveness, not necessarily by how many people you arrested or how much force was used, but instead by how much community engagement have you done and how you are partnering with the community.”

We need to pair changing the norms, structures, and policies within a depart-
ment on a systemic level, along with officer level training and increasing the diversity of the police force. Simply checking a box stating an officer completed one diversity training is not enough, as one can complete the training and never think about it again. However, increased training, diversity, and structural change can aid in making real change, according to Dr. Kahn’s research.

Policy changes can help reduce the impact of implicit bias on policing outcomes. She cites a movement in Berkeley, among other places, to develop policies to explicitly not pull people over for “low-level offenses” (e.g., expired tags or registrations) but instead record the license plate number and mail a ticket directly. Traffic stops can be dangerous situations for both the officer and community member. Limiting interactions in low priority scenarios can minimize the occurrence of racial bias influencing interactions and outcomes. There’s always possibility once that stop is made for bias to escalate the interaction, as we often read in the news. This is one example of structural change within the policing system to potentially lower racial profiling and negative interactions between the force and community.

What Can Change Going Forward?

People, including many police officers, may wholeheartedly believe and endorse themselves as nonracist or antiracist, however being exposed to stereotypes in our culture naturally creates implicit connections and associations that can bring bias to our behavior. It is even more likely that we rely on those automatically activated stereotypes, ultimately impacting our behavior in intense moments.

Dr. Kahn explains that the subject matter on which police are being trained to identify dangerous behavior often doesn’t account for behavioral manifestations of social identity threat, such as feeling nervous, fidgeting, being anxious—just like the earlier example of the boy on his way home from school. For this reason, when time is available, Dr. Kahn recommends “to slow down our decision making and be intentional in how we are seeing or evaluating and making judgments and decisions, and recognizing situations where bias might be more likely.”

When reflecting on what the general public can do to challenge everyday implicit biases, Dr. Kahn recommends, “Have more positive contact with members from diverse groups and experiences. Contact really creates the counter exposure to the stereotypes and helps break down stereotypes, which is a fundamental way in reducing prejudice.” She ties this back to the policing system, explaining how that’s where concepts like community policing are founded on, continuing on to point out that “Having more positive contacts with the community and partnering with the community versus seeing them as the adversary helps to reduce bias for police officers.”

To truly care about making structural and lasting change to eliminate implicit racial bias within the police system, we must first measure it, and track it. Dr. Kahn points out how there is no current national database in existence to track the use of force in police departments, or federal force at the nationwide level.

Currently, Dr. Kahn is pushing to increase awareness of these ideas as well as advancing more of her intervention work to facilitate community policing, reduce racial bias, and increase trust in policing. Ultimately, she hopes her work will advance partnerships between academics, police departments, and the community to collaboratively facilitate community engagement, non-investigatory police-community interactions, and support the pillars of Twenty-First Century Policing, a foundational document created under President Obama that focused on best practices in policing to reduce crime and increase trust.

Dr. Kimberly Barsamian Kahn is a Professor of Social Psychology at Portland State University and leads the Gender, Race, and Sexual Prejudice (GRASP) research lab. She received her PhD in social psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Lisbon University Institute in Portugal. As a social psychologist, Dr. Kahn’s research addresses contemporary forms of implicit bias, stereotyping, social identity threat, and subtle prejudice from both the targets’ and perceivers’ perspectives. She has conducted empirical research and interventions to reduce racial bias and stereotyping within education systems, work organizations, and police departments. Partnering with police departments, Dr. Kahn’s research has focused on reducing racial and ethnic bias in police departments across the United States.
Preparing Psych Majors to SPEAK OUT:

Advocacy and Social Justice
Interview With Apryl Alexander, PsyD

by Bradley Cannon
Psi Chi Headquarters

You probably care about all sorts of unique issues: cleaning a public eyesore near the place where you live, clarifying a misconception about your religion, asserting psychology’s role in thwarting misinformation, or even something fun, such as confessing your undying love for hugs. Some of these issues may get your blood boiling and leave you itching to boldly stand up for yourself or someone else. Others could fill you with such joy that you just want to gleefully shout about it from the rooftops, both night and day.

Well, have you?

From fear of backlash by family members and future bosses to uncertainty about whether your views will be taken seriously because you’re a student—many reasons could explain why you might not have spoken out about the issues that matter most to you. In such an endlessly noisy and controversial world, you might even have been led to believe that you aren’t suited for or compelling enough to effectively advocate on whatever matters most to you...

Enter Dr. Apryl Alexander with a message to challenge that notion and encourage you to make yourself heard. Specific to psychology majors, she says, “Whether it's critical thinking, how to discuss research in an accessible manner, or working with diverse populations, psychology training prepares us quite well in becoming an advocate.”

Are you ready to start your journey into making a difference in your community and beyond? For this interview, Dr. Alexander unpacks possible routes to advocacy and social justice efforts, addresses questions that you must ask yourself before getting started, and provides reinforcement to support your success.

Many Paths to Choose From

Dr. Alexander is an associate professor at UNC Charlotte and an affiliate faculty member at the University of Denver. Over the years, she has been involved in numerous Board positions for nonprofits, and she also advocates that advocacy engagement should be universally taught in graduate programs in psychology.

Looking back, she says, “For me, I didn’t have a lot of formalized training in how to effectively engage in this work. So as I created a public policy and advocacy course, I was almost learning alongside my students. Helping students to navigate their own advocate identity became important for me. Each and every student has a passion area, an area that’s really critical and important for them to advocate for. I want to support them in thinking about how they can accomplish those goals.”

According to Dr. Alexander, “There are multiple ways to become involved in advocacy efforts, so find out what works for you.” As examples, she points to the following four paths.
1. **Legislative advocacy.** Think about letters you could write or ways that you could work with elected officials to change laws and policies in your community. Although this may sound difficult, you may be surprised at how much you can accomplish. As a heartwarming example, Dr. Alexander points to a nine-year-old boy in Colorado, who was able to convince his town to repeal its ban on snowball fights.

2. **Research advocacy.** Research often isn’t diverse in terms of its population. Not only can you investigate diversity-related topics, but you can also incorporate diverse populations into almost any area of research that interests you. As Dr. Alexander reminds readers, “There’s a lot of questions that we still want answered, so being able to amplify those opinions in your research is important.”

**Before You Get Started**

Your actions before you speak out or engage with communities are critical to your effectiveness and how you will be perceived. As Dr. Alexander explains, “One skill that I think is important in engaging in advocacy work is active listening. I often tell students that sometimes this simply involves showing up and listening, going to city council meetings, or listening in to community forums where people are speaking about advocacy needs in their communities. Some of the things that we need to focus a little bit more on too, is how can we translate our skills into working directly with communities so that we’re not speaking on behalf of communities. We should be doing this work alongside communities.”

As you listen and prepare to begin advocating for a cause, keep in mind that no student wants their efforts to be downgraded or disregarded based on the fact that they are still in school. So if someone ever questions your right or credibility to speak out, you can share these words from Dr. Alexander (perhaps with a dry, confident chuckle for good effect):

**Students have been involved in advocacy efforts since advocacy forever. Students were involved in the Civil Rights Movements here in the United States in the ’60s and ’70s. You are never too young or too inexperienced to be an effective advocate.**

Does this statement help give you courage to speak up? It should! As Dr. Alexander elaborates, “You are a community member, and community members are really important in advocacy and uplifting voices. You might have that impostor phenomenon of being a student, but you are still a person with an important voice and narrative to contribute. Along the way, you will gain professional experience too that will help you have a sense of expertise in your area of advocacy.”

If you are still on the fence about whether to get involved, possibly because you are afraid of personal or professional repercussions, Dr. Alexander asks you to consider it this way. She says, “I think a lot of people don’t become involved in advocacy because they’re afraid of not being seen as objective or being seen as political. But we have to remind ourselves that everything is political, so even not speaking up is a political stance.” When you consider whether or not to raise your voice, always keep in mind that being silent and not engaging in advocacy can have negative repercussions too.

**Guidance and Teamwork**

The importance of finding a career or graduate school mentor is fairly common knowledge. But have you considered all the ways that a mentor for advocacy or social justice could also do wonders for your efforts?

When asked where one might look to start a mentorship like that, Dr. Alexander says, “Find the people who you look up to and have a conversation with them. Ask them about their career paths. A lot of people think advocacy is new in the field. But it’s not. We have a lot of psychologists out there who are doing the work. Throughout my training, I had professors who were engaging in advocacy work, whether it was speaking up on behalf of trauma survivors or making sure that our clients had access to the basic needs in order to thrive.”

She continues, “A second point to this is that maybe your role model isn’t in the field of psychology. There are amazing people in the community from all walks of life who are engaging in this work quite well and are experts in how to be an effective advocate. Look outside the field for those role models too.”

Faculty and other professionals can do many things to support new advocates or social justice warriors. But because they sometimes don’t receive training for this, Dr. Alexander encourages them to seek out additional training and become more aware of how to engage in these efforts. This will allow them to support students who are becoming increasingly interested in how to engage.

Dr. Alexander often invites guest speakers to her classes, such as elected officials or CEOs of nonprofit organizations. During their visits, she likes to ask them, “How can psychology help you in the work that you do?” A lot of times, psychologists’ work can become siloed, so the answers to this question help students see how psychology could be applied outside of the traditional areas.
4. **Professional advocacy.** A Psi Chi member herself, she adds, “One of the ways I often talk to students about is engaging in professional advocacy. Psi Chi might be a great forum to start that work.” One example she always gives is for graduate students to speak up about Public Student Loan Forgiveness programming that can benefit their educational needs.

“In order to be effective advocates,” Dr. Alexander says, “we need to be multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary in our approaches. It is important to have elected officials at our table, people who have lived experience, lawyers, etc. so that we can all come together and think about how we can advocate for a particular position or a piece of legislation.”

**Time for an Example!**

Considering everything discussed so far in this article, you might be wondering what “advocacy” or “social justice efforts” really look like. To help you visualize this, Dr. Alexander shares a particular assignment that she has included in her Psychology, Public Policy, and Advocacy class since it was started. For this project, students are shown one easy way to engage in legislative advocacy. She says, “A lot of people don’t realize that the General Assembly in their state is totally accessible. You can go to the state capital, listen in, and even have a voice at the legislative hearings for three minutes, during which you can speak about a bill—whether you support it or you don’t.”

Each year, Dr. Alexander’s students are tasked with selecting a bill of their choice that they are passionate about. They then prepare three-minute statements of what they would say to an elected official about that bill. She exhorts, “For example, some of my students have owned pit bulls, which in many states, are banned in certain apartments for a lot of stigmatizing reasons. They actually aren’t the most violent animal out there or the most violent dog, and there are some racial justice implications about banning breed-specific legislation.”

A few of her students actually went beyond the assignment and testified on why breed-specific legislation should end, which passed in Colorado. Dr. Alexander now lives in North Carolina, where a current student is interested in the same topic. When the student asked if she could work on this for her assignment, Dr. Alexander told her, “Yes! And I hope you take it beyond the assignment to our elected officials here in North Carolina.”

**Deciding Your Next Move**

Selecting a topic that you want to get involved in is a very personal process. Dr. Alexander exclaims, “Every time we turn on the TV, we might come across yet another issue that we care about, so choosing a topic to advocate on might require some careful thought.”

To help you make the right decision, Dr. Alexander suggests a couple different approaches: “First, you could choose what’s most important to you right now. So is it your right to vote? Is it reproductive justice? Is it climate change? A second way to think about it is, what’s timely? There are some important timely issues right now regarding our environment, and so maybe this is the time where you need to pivot to that particular issue. So what’s important to you as a person or to your family, your community, or your clients?”

As you begin on your advocacy or social justice journey, follow some of Dr. Alexander’s advice above, such as finding mentors and doing your research. From there, she recommends taking one step at a time, because you can’t do everything at once or you’ll get burnt out. Small steps can amount to big change, and when you create a step-by-step plan, the path to advocacy and social justice might be clearer, easier, and more rewarding than you think. Good luck!
CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Submission Guidelines

With more than 1,180 chapters, Psi Chi members can make a significant impact in their communities. Reviewing Chapter Activities in Eye on Psi Chi is a great way to find inspirational ideas for your chapter and keep in touch with your chapter after you graduate.

Activities are listed in the following categories:

- COMMUNITY SERVICE
- CONVENTION/CONFERENCE
- FUND-RAISING
- INDUCTION CEREMONY
- MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT
- RECRUITMENT
- SOCIAL EVENT

Share your chapter's accomplishments with others in the next issue of Eye on Psi Chi! Chapter officers and advisors are encouraged to visit https://www.psichi.org/page/eye_activity

Submission deadlines*
Fall: June 30
Winter: September 30
Spring: December 15
Summer: February 28

*Reports received (postmarked) after the deadline will appear in the next issue of Eye on Psi Chi.

EAST

Assumption University (MA)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter collaborated and fund-raised with the neuroscience club for the Walk MS. This year the Psychology Department purchased two RealCare baby dolls to be used in research. These dolls joined the chapter’s existing doll, Becky, who was named after Aaron T. Beck. The students held a baby naming contest fund-raiser in which donating to Walk MS allowed students to vote on names for the new babies. The chapter raised over $500 for Walk MS! Marigold and Phineas are shown in the submitted photo!

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: In October 2022, the chapter hosted an internship panel with invited guests. The panel was open to all students interested in completing an internship in the spring semester and those who were just curious about internships. Dr. Cirillo, the instructor of the internship course, spoke about the goals and procedures of the course. Ms. Curtis, the Director of the Career Development and Internship Center, explained how to use her office to find internship opportunities and how they can work with students to help them secure an internship. Invited guests from the New England Center for Children, Devereux, and the University of Massachusetts Medical School spoke about internship opportunities available at their sites.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter hosted a graduate school panel in March 2023. The purpose was to provide information to students on how to apply to programs and things they should think about rather than information about specific programs. The chapter invited Psychology Department alumni in master’s (counseling psychology and applied behavior analysis) and doctoral programs (developmental and clinical psychology) to speak about their experiences and answer questions. This was a cool event because it took advantage of Zoom to allow some
panelists to attend remotely while others attended in person. There was great attendance, and the students asked the panelists many questions.

The College of New Jersey

SOCIAL EVENT: The chapter organized a social networking event each semester and initiated a mentorship program for the chapter. The networking event is one of the chapter’s first social events without masks. Returning to a semester in person, many members expressed their fears of social anxiety and making connections on campus. The networking event kicked off with a round of “speed dating” to break any social tension of meeting new people in the psychology community, and to introduce anyone who had not met yet. The event provided a safe space for members to share food and form teams for Psychology Jeopardy, bonding with their peers.

Eastern University (PA)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: This academic year, the chapter completed Stress-Less Week prior to the end of the spring semester to provide students an opportunity to prioritize mental health and self-care. Stress-Less Week included various activities open to all students throughout the week, including an art night, self-care trivia night, local therapy animals, and the distribution of self-care focused kits that included tea, stickers, and self-care tips.

Fordham-Lincoln Center (NY)

INDUCTION CEREMONY: On February 28, 2023, the chapter induction featured a message by Jose Luis Alvarado, the Dean of Fordham Graduate School of Education. As a 16-year-old Mexican-American boy, his counselor advised him that “college is not for you.” Since then, he has become a dean whose passion is to open doors for all who aspire to succeed.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter resumed an active schedule in fall 2022. It offered 16 diverse in-person activities—starting with a law psychology tour of Bronx Criminal Court and ending with a forum on public safety with Liz and Arnaldo Salinas and 14 Guardian Angels. In cooperation with the Fordham Law-Psychology Seminar, the chapter hosted distinguished attorneys, Jeffrey Deskovic, Corry H. Morris, David C. Leven, Lauren Fox, and Robert Emmons, to discuss forensic issues. The chapter also hosted speakers working with the Psychology Coalition at the United Nations: Leslie L. Popoff, Ani Kalayjian, Kelly S. O’Donnell, Elaine Olaoye, Linda White-Ryan, and Elaine Congress. On December 2, the chapter hosted a memorial for Cesar Espona’s beloved wife of 50 years, Maria Andersen Espona (1955–2022).
Goucher College (MD)

INDUCTION CEREMONY: The chapter inducted 12 members, and honored their 17 graduating Psi Chi seniors at the spring Psi Chi Induction Ceremony (Baltimore, MD) on Friday, April 14, 2023.

Lasell University (MA)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: An informative event, called “Pillow Talk,” provided attendees with practical advice on effective sleep strategies to improve their sleep quality. It offered tips on developing healthy sleep habits, managing stress and anxiety, and creating a comfortable sleep environment. Attendees received sleep-related items, such as sleep masks and sleepy-time tea, and took home flyers with valuable information about sleep’s importance to overall health. Whether attendees struggled with sleep or simply wanted to learn more, Pillow Talk was the ideal event for anyone looking to improve their sleep quality.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Lasell University Counseling Center contacted Psi Chi’s officer team to help table the Check-In, Chill Out booth at the mental health promotion and suicide prevention event for colleges, Fresh Check Day. The booth included a mental health screening led by a counselor while Psi-Chi officer volunteers ran relaxation activities. Attendees could choose from goodie bags containing tea bags, fruit snacks, stress balls, and stickers, and enjoy a small area to do yoga. Both Psi Chi members and nonmembers volunteered to assist at the booth.

Stress Strategies was an event aimed at helping attendees manage their stress levels. The event provided practical advice on effective stress management strategies, and attendees were given coloring books with colored pencils, stickers, and water bottles to decorate with stickers. Unique fidget toys were also available to help attendees relax. Additionally, attendees received a journal to help them reflect on their feelings and cope with stress. Stress Strategies was an ideal event for anyone who wanted to learn new ways to manage stress and enjoy some relaxation time.

Marywood University (PA)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter participated in the annual Psychology Club Psych Fair on March 24, 2023. The Psych Fair is an event that local high school students attend to get a better understanding of the importance of psychology. The chapter hosted a table containing stress-buster activities. These activities included throwing away intrusive thoughts, leave-a-song/take-a-song, a self-affirmation mirror, a gratitude wall, and handing out fun mental health stickers.

INDUCTION CEREMONY: The chapter hosted an induction ceremony on March 1, 2023, to welcome new members to the chapter. At this ceremony, the chapter provided lunch and sweets followed by a message from chapter members.
by formal readings of the officers and handing out of certificates to the new members when their names were announced.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter hosted a two-hour grant event called Psychology Career Exploration Event on April 26, 2023. The first hour of this event included a panel of speakers who were able to speak positively about how the skills and knowledge they gained during their bachelor’s degree in psychology have been used or how they prepared them for work outside the field of psychology and counseling. The second hour of the event consisted of question-and-answer sessions with presenters at different tables about their current careers as well as university clubs and organizations to join.

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter honored 16 psychology students during its 2023 Psi Chi induction ceremony. The virtual ceremony was held April 3 and organized by Amriah Kitchen (president) and Hafsa Dawood (officer). The following 16 students were honored with induction into Psi Chi: Ruth Abadie, Rhoda Alaribe, Migo Belamide, Corryn DeFazio, Kira Flores, Yvelisse Gonzalez, Mariam Kadiri, Nune Lliguichuzha, Charlene Martinez, Jenny Martinez, Kelsey Mendez, Alicia Rivas, Manesha Singh, Enasia Smart, Jennifer Verdfina, and Naomi Yamada-Padilla.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** On Women’s Day 2023, the chapter honored the impactful work of women in psychology and invited internationally certified therapist and psychodramatist Dr. Sennur Günay Aksoy (Istanbul Galata University). Dr. Sennur Günay Aksoy provided an exemplary psychoeducational talk and shared her experiences and expertise in posttraumatic stress and grief reaction. The event was virtually organized by Dr. Peri Yuksel (coadvisor) to also show solidarity with everyone affected by the Turkey-Syria earthquake. This bilingual event brought together expats and experts, and educated the community on trauma-informed therapy and response, and shed light on ways of teaching techniques that foster creativity, originality, and fun.

**Purchase College (SUNY)**

**SOCIAL EVENT:** The chapter participated in a graduation event to honor graduating students majoring in psychology. In addition to a photo booth and snacks, psychology students discussed summer plans and...
postgraduation aspirations. Graduating members of Psi Chi socialized with the new inductees and enjoyed the celebration.

Saint Elizabeth University (NJ)

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter inducted 18 members on April 18, including masters and doctoral students. The undergraduates all plan to continue their studies at the university, either through the MA program or the combined degree program.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** Collaborating with the Foods and Nutrition program, the chapter hosted a Smart Snacking Zoom event about how food choices affect how people feel. Participants learned how to choose mood-elevating foods that are easy to find or simple to make.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** To include students whose classes meet in the evenings, the chapter hosted the Therapy Dog Visit for Night Students in November. Before and after their classes, students got a chance to pet two trained therapy dogs and were given a flyer on the benefits of pet therapy.

University at Buffalo (NY)

**CONVENTION/CONFERENCE:** The chapter hosted the fourth annual Western New York Undergraduate Psychology Conference. There were 34 student posters and eight oral presentations. The conference included lunch, a keynote speaker, faculty judges, and certificates for the top presenters. Over 120 students, faculty, and guests from 13 different institutions (Adelphi University, Alfred University, Buffalo State University, Canisius College, Daemen University, D’Youville University, Hilbert College, Houghton University, Le Moyne College, Rochester Institute of Technology, SUNY Empire State College, SUNY Fredonia, and the University at Buffalo) attended!

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter held its biannual undergraduate research fair. The research fair is an opportunity for undergraduate students looking for research experience to hear brief presentations from laboratories across campus who are looking to recruit research assistants.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** In conjunction with the Undergraduate Psychology Association (UPA), the chapter hosted a social Valentine’s Day event. UPA and Psi Chi gave brief introductions about their respective clubs and then attendees spent the remaining time socializing while decorating and eating Valentine cookies. The officers also
created a “Psychology of Love” trivia game in Kahoot that students played. Approximately 30 students attended.

**MIDWEST**

**DePaul University (IL)**

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter hosted a card-making service project event to make and donate cards to Cardz for Kidz. Cardz for Kidz is an organization that distributes greeting cards to children in hospitals around the world. The officers reviewed a few guidelines and showed examples of suitable cards to members. Officers, members, and advisors created bright and fun cards while listening to relaxing music and talking among themselves.

The chapter effectively came together to build a sense of community and hopefully lift the spirits of children receiving medical care around the world.

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** On May 22, 2023, the chapter hosted a Psi Chi induction ceremony at the annual Psych Night event. Following poster presentations and award ceremony, the chapter’s faculty advisor made a few opening remarks highlighting Psi Chi’s events and accomplishments from this past year. After speaking about Psi Chi’s values and ideals, and inducting 38 new members into Psi Chi, the president-elect invited each new member to walk across the stage and sign the chapter roll. Finally, before concluding the event, the new officers were inducted.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** At DePaul’s spring social event, a variety of games were played throughout the evening, catering to different interests and skill levels. The attendees played a bomb diffusing game, which brought out strategic thinking, while card games like Uno inspired excitement and suspense. The chapter provided pizza to ensure that everyone stayed energized and fueled for the night. As the night progressed, attendees showcased their gaming skills and engaged in friendly competition in a light-hearted, fun environment. Overall, the game night was successful, bringing the psychology community closer, fostering new connections, and creating lasting memories.

**Hillsdale College (MI)**

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** In fall 2022, the chapter inducted new members. The president and vice-president were pleased to welcome these new scholars to the organization.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** The chapter presented a Haunted Lab event to raise awareness about the various types of equipment in the lab. Chapter members taught guests how to use biofeedback and VR equipment, as well as educated visitors about the history of experimentation.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** In spring 2023, members of the Psychology Department visited the psychology history museum in Akron, Ohio. This was made possible through grant funds awarded to the Psi Chi chapter.
Indiana University Northwest

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter hosted Dr. Stefanie Mockler (The Violet Group and IUN Class of 2011) at the 2023 chapter induction ceremony in April. Dr. Mockler shared her wealth of knowledge as an industrial-organizational psychologist, leadership consultant, and small business owner. Students, faculty, alumni, and other special guests were inspired by Dr. Mockler’s educational and professional journey, and her dedication to eliminating inequities in workplace leadership roles. The chapter thanks Dr. Mockler for her time and willingness to share her experiences!

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:**

**Lindenwood University (MO)***

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter made approximately 42 valentines to Veterans for a local veteran’s home. This activity built community, craftiness, and service!

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter was thrilled to host its induction ceremony in person this year, inducting 20 new members!

**SOCIAL EVENT:** The chapter hosted a mandala painting session. The goals this year were to balance events that were focused on community and self-care. Students enjoyed painting in the student lounge.

**Michigan School of Psychology**

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter sponsored a workshop entitled, “So You Want to Teach? Teaching Opportunities with an MA or PsyD” with Drs. Kate Cusick and Kevin Johnson, core faculty at Michigan School of Psychology. The facilitators provided information about teaching opportunities in psychology at the undergraduate and graduate level.

**Missouri State University**

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter partnered with the Psychology Club and Gerontology Club to sponsor a 50s themed Senior Prom for the older adults at The Bungalows at Chesterfield Village in Springfield, Missouri. During the dance, members provided music, root beer floats, hot dogs, and encouraged residents to dance. About 50 residents attended, which The Bungalows said was a record turnout. Not one person left without a smile on their face, and many said the experience made their day.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** In the hallway of the Psychology Department, three display cases showcased elements of the chapter, Psychology Club, and Psychology Department. Dr. Deka (advisor) wanted the cases revamped, and the chapter turned it into a community service project. Psi Chi
officers and members spent 10 hours over the span of three weeks cleaning out the displays, designing the new look, creating collages, writing new descriptions, interviewing professors for ideas, and buying supplies. The new displays captured the vision of MWSU’s psychology involvement: past, present, and future.

Northwest Missouri State University
SOCIAL EVENT: The chapter received a 2022–23 Chapter Activity Grant to fund a trip to the Glore Psychiatric Museum in St. Joseph, Missouri. This museum focuses on the history of mental health treatment, including as it relates to current practices and combating mental illness stigma. Attendees, including members, guests, and additional students from the academic unit, toured the museum and participated in an Emotional Toolbox session on stress and the brain. The trip concluded with a group dinner, giving attendees an opportunity to discuss their experiences.

Simpson College (IA)
SOCIAL EVENT: The chapter had the goal of collaborating with other clubs on campus to host various events. As such, they paired with Counseling Services for a suicide awareness event, the Exercise Science Club to bring a speech language pathologist to campus for an information session, and Psychology Club to host a pizza and pumpkin party for all new psychology majors.

St. Ambrose University (IA)
MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter hosted an informational presentation to discuss what stigma is, why it exists, and how to better reduce it on campus. The chapter also spoke about stress reduction as final exams are approaching. Students were provided with a stress relief kit to employ these strategies.

University of Nicosia (Cyprus)
SOCIAL EVENT: The chapter event Social Bonding & Discussion Dinner on February 17 offered the opportunity for attendees to get closer, get to know each other more, and discuss issues concerning the student community and field of study. The chapter also explored the cuisine of a different culture through Hot Pot, an Asian cooking method with all your favorite Asian food ready to be put into a delicious shimmering soup stock. Chapter leaders were happy to see everyone who joined and to announce that they are organizing more events aimed at cultivating team spirit, and promoting the science of psychology and solidarity toward people affected by unfortunate conditions.
University of Toronto, Scarborough

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter held its annual induction ceremony on March 16, 2023. This event was one of the first in-person celebrations for students since the start of the pandemic, and it was a joyous occasion with food and networking.

Western Michigan University

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** In fall 2022, the chapter participated in an educational outreach activity for middle school students. They conducted hands-on demonstrations of operant conditioning with rats and gave brief lab tours for multiple groups of eighth grade students.

**FUND-RAISER:** The chapter conducted two fund-raising activities to support chapter activities, including honor cord purchases for graduating members. They conducted a bottle/can drive and returned collected bottles and cans for deposit. WMU Psi Chi also sponsored a fund-raising event at a local restaurant, for which the chapter earned 20% of sales during a specified time frame one evening.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** Chapter officers sponsored several meetings with speakers advertised to all psychology majors and minors. Invited speakers included two newly hired faculty members in psychology who presented on their teaching and research activities and two graduate student panels who presented on preparation for graduate school applications, curriculum vita preparation, and advice for graduate school interviews. One of the invited speakers for the spring 2023 meeting was a professor who trains dogs for pet therapy. She gave a presentation on pet therapy and brought a trained therapy dog to interact with students.

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN**

Adams State University (CO)

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter created a Dating Zine for the Adams State community. The purpose of the zine was to inform students about the negative impacts that social isolation can have on them. The zine included content about the benefits of being socially engaged (e.g., dating) and the negative effects associated with not being engaged. For example, social engagement increases life span and decreases anxiety. The chapter distributed the zine by pinning them on cork boards, leaving them in high traffic areas in various buildings on campus, and handing them out in the Student Union Building.

Utah State University

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter completed a community service project for Common Ground Adventures in Logan, Utah. Common Ground provides life-enhancing accessible outdoor recreation activities for adults with disabilities. The chapter was able...
Georgia Southern University

INDUCTION CEREMONY: The chapter held a virtual induction ceremony across the university’s multiple campuses, making it accessible and inclusive to everyone. The dean of the Psychology Department attended along with an overall large turnout. The students were engaging and excited about their new Psi Chi journey.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter held a guest speaker event about graduate school preparation and careers in psychology. This event specifically was about different graduate school options such as PsyD programs. They had former graduate from the Georgia Southern University PsyD program and private practice owner, Dr. Erin Lawson, come to speak on various topics. She was able to walk through the doctoral application process, building a CV, and owning a own private practice in rural settings.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter held a guest speaker event about graduate school preparation and careers in psychology. This event specifically focused on careers in psychology without a graduate degree. Guest speaker, June Dipolito, is the director of Pineland Mental Health facility and a disability advocate. This facility is a 24/7 facility with rehabilitation treatments for disabilities and mental health issues within the local Statesboro community. She discussed the various counseling and mentor roles that a degree in psychology can offer. She focused on ABA therapy techniques and other nongraduate school careers that are high in-demand.

Louisiana State University, Shreveport

INDUCTION CEREMONY: The chapter held an induction ceremony where members were invited via email to participate. The chapter was inactive during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this was the first induction ceremony since. The ceremony was led by coadvisors Dr. Tracie Pasold and Dr. Margaret Gifford. The schedule of events for the evening were: dinner, general introduction of Psi Chi by Dr. Tracie Pasold, a lecture from Keynote Speaker and LSU alumni Zoe Pearl, and then the induction ceremony led by Dr. Margaret Gifford. The chapter has been revived and will continue to progress!
(associate professor), whose talk was entitled, “Focus on What You Can Control.” The speech was followed by a candle ceremony for the formal induction of new members. After the ceremony, the chapter held a reception with hors d’oeuvres.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter hosted its annual Applying to Graduate School meeting on February 16, 2023, serving pizza. This was a student-only meeting (undergraduates and graduate). The Alexandra Perrine (graduate liaison) led the meeting, and graduate students shared their experiences with the graduate school application process. They each talked for a minute or two about everything they wish they knew before they applied and anything unexpected that happened along the way. Undergraduates had a chance to ask graduate students questions.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter hosted guest speaker and professor in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Dr. Leanne Boucher. Dr. Boucher's research focused on how cognition can be affected by movement, and she examined how different forms of exercise (e.g., walking, running, bike riding) or fidgeting movements can affect one’s inhibitory control, working memory, and attentional focus. She is also the author of *Big Brain Book: How It Works and All Its Quirks* (2022 Book Choice Awards’ winner for Best Information Meets Graphics). Some of the book chapters include: What is the brain made up of and how does it work? Why can’t I tickle myself? And Why do they shine a light in my eyes when I hit my head in the game?

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter held a spring induction ceremony featuring guest speaker Dr. Hayley Cleary. In her talk titled, “A Psychologist Masquerades as a Criminologist: The Art of Living and Finding One’s Intellectual Home,” Dr. Cleary relayed the importance of following one’s passion in their career.

**FUND-RAISER:** The chapter hosted Pie-A-PSYC-Professor for the Christian Randolph-Macon College (VA)
Ladd Hall Scholarship! During the spring 2023 semester, the chapter raised donations by recruiting faculty members willing to risk getting a whipped-cream pie in the face. Donations were received in the name of a faculty member, with the faculty member receiving the most donations receiving the pie. The final tally ended with a tie across three faculty members—and all three agreed to receive a pie in support of the Hall scholarship. The fund-raiser was a huge success and fun for members, alumni, and (most) faculty.

University of Mary Washington (VA)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Every year, the chapter hosts Mental Health Awareness Week with multiple events in which people could participate. Among these events were a mindfulness-based yoga class, movie night, banner signing, rock painting, and meditation session. The chapter painted the school’s spirit rock with the dates of the events and posted on social media to promote them. People who painted rocks were encouraged to place them around campus to spread kind messages. Once the banner had been nearly filled with signatures, it was hung up in the Psychology Department.

CONVENTION/CONFERENCE: On the last Friday of classes, the chapter held its 36th annual Research Symposium. This is an event that gives students of psychological science the opportunity to share the research that they conducted throughout the year. At the end of this event, the scholarship winners are announced along with the winners of the faculty superlatives and the Outstanding Senior in Psychological Science. Although this award is voted on by faculty, a Psi Chi copresident won it this year.

INDUCTION CEREMONY: After receiving the list of students newly eligible for Psi Chi from the registrar, the chapter put together mugs with candy and a Psi Chi pencil to hand out to the Psi Chi acceptees along with their paperwork. Once the new acceptees were informed that they were eligible for induction, the officers began work on planning the chapter’s first event featuring food since COVID-19 hit. Because inductions were in-person this semester, officers and some members volunteered to put on a theatrical performance of
the Platonic Myth. After inductions, the inductees, current members, and faculty mingled while eating hors d’oeuvres.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** To introduce students to potential careers that involve psychology, the chapter hosted a career forum. A copresident reached out to several alumni, inviting them to be panelists in this forum. The panelists used their experiences in their respective fields to answer students’ questions. After the event, emails were shared (with consent from the panelists) in order to encourage networking.

**University of West Florida**

**CONVENTION/CONFERENCE:** The chapter sponsored nine members to attend the 69th annual meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association. Several members were first-generation students, nontraditional students, and first-time research convention attendees. During the convention, the students were assigned challenges meant to encourage them to ask questions, talk to speakers, and explore new research areas in psychology. Chapter meetings were held each morning where students shared what they learned from the previous day’s presentations. Attendees described this experience as a phenomenal learning experience and an invaluable opportunity to grow closer as a chapter.

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter worked collaboratively for months to prepare their second annual formal induction ceremony. It was important to the chapter’s leadership to honor the achievements of students being inducted to Psi Chi and ensure that those entering the chapter understood the values and mission of Psi Chi. In a new addition to the ceremony, graduating Psi Chi seniors were honored and given the opportunity to share their future plans with the chapter. Including both inductees and graduates in the ceremony allowed new members to become inspired by the variety of opportunities they may have postgraduation.

**West Virginia State University**

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter hosted a Valentine’s Day party for underprivileged children enrolled in Kanawha County’s afterschool program in February 2023. The chapter provided refreshments, games, and prizes relevant to Valentine’s Day. They
had a 45% participation rate from members for the activity. Throughout the party, members provided children with coloring sheets, various relay games, and word searches with each activity holding an opportunity to win a prize. Following the games, the chapter members provided pizza, chips, sweets, and juice for the children.

West Virginia University

INDUCTION CEREMONY: After 20 years of service to the chapter, Dr. Dan McNeil retired from the university and handed the mantle of advisor over to Dr. Nicholas Turiano, associate professor of psychology. In April, the chapter successfully inducted 42 undergraduate students into Psi Chi. This was one of the largest single semester inductions in the chapter’s history.

WEST

Oregon State University

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: Dr. Scott Kopoian spoke with the chapter about his career and experience as a forensic psychologist. He addressed topics like the process of conducting forensic evaluations, his experience testifying in court, and the challenges and rewards of his career. An interactive discussion was also facilitated, and members were eager to introduce themselves, ask questions, and learn more about the psychology behind criminal behavior. The discussion enriched and enhanced members’ understanding of the relationship between psychology and the law, and the pivotal role a psychologist plays within the criminal justice system.

SOCIAL EVENT: As May is Mental Health Awareness Month, the chapter held a card-making event for members to express gratitude and appreciation to friends and family members through creating custom-made cards. The chapter provided card stock, pens, stickers, envelopes, and other materials that students could utilize for creative expression. This was an opportunity for members to focus on activities and relationships beyond academia, and engage in an evening of mindfulness.

University of the Pacific (CA)

INDUCTION CEREMONY: The chapter held a spring 2023 induction ceremony, with a surprise appearance from the new dean Lee Skinner!
School’s in Session!

Elevate the professional appearance of your next chapter meeting or tabling event with official Psi Chi merchandise. The Psi Chi Table Runner displays your society’s international brand in a versatile 29” x 71” size. Psi Chi Pencils and Stylus Pens are also useful items for honoring Psi Chi in academic settings; offer these writing tools as gifts to new members or as prizes at local chapter events.