Writing Advice
From an English Professor, a Psychology Professor, and a Professional Copy Editor

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Campus Protests Highlight Student Concerns: Can Your Chapter Help?

Treat me with respect. Listen to me. Don’t call me names. Don’t stereotype me. Welcome me. Learn about me as I learn about you. Show me compassion.

Across the United States, November 2015 has seen student protests over large and small ways that students of color are mistreated on campus, conflicts over the meaning and exercise of free speech, and university administrations struggling to address these issues. When the Missouri football team joined student protestors to demand the resignation of the University of Missouri system president and flagship campus chancellor, national news shone a spotlight on issues of racism on campus and university responses to it.

Students are protesting blatant and subtle forms of racism. In interviews and on social media, they have described being called by racial slurs as they move about campus and being expected to speak for everyone with their racial background. They report cases of students, faculty, and administrators treating them with a lack of empathy, stereotyping them, leaving them to their own devices, and ignoring them when they attempt to describe their experiences (see hashtag #BlackOnCampus; Flaherty, 2015; Jaschik, 2015).

What could Psi Chi chapters do to improve campus climate? In 2011, Sleigh and Hall wrote about why our honor society should be inclusive and how collaborations could accomplish that goal. They wrote that “by seeking other groups that share their concerns in order to implement an educational event or service project, Psi Chi chapters effectively model collegiality through collaboration” (p. 28). They also described two primary ways they can become more inclusive—looking for opportunities in which chapters can support the work of others and cultivating nonmember participation. I would like to expand on their ideas about how chapters can become more inclusive by focusing on potential Psi Chi members.

Two questions can be considered: How are eligible students informed about joining Psi Chi, and what do they experience in their first interactions with the chapter? As Sleigh and Hall (2011) stated, “Psi Chi chapters have an obligation to reach out and connect with students across its campus in order to demonstrate seriousness about including all qualified students in the organization” (p. 28).

New members could come from any campus department because psychology minors may join, and some psychology students pursue a second major. Faculty and graduate student members of Psi Chi may be found in a wide variety of departments such as social work, neuroscience, and business. If they are not already members, graduate students and eligible faculty may join.

The first thing a chapter needs to determine is whether all eligible students are being invited to join. Second, what percentage of eligible students chose to act on the invitation? For those who are eligible but don’t join, can your chapter determine why? Students cite lack of time and knowledge about Psi Chi as the two most common reasons for not joining (Spencer, Reyes, Sheel, & McFarland, 2001). Students often don’t understand that Psi Chi can help them better prepare for their chosen profession (Sleigh & Hall, 2011).

What other reasons could there be? Did all potential members receive their invitations, receive them too late or at an e-mail address they never check? Did they understand that Psi Chi is an academic honor society, not a sorority or fraternity? Were they told about what happens at chapter meetings and how they could benefit from and contribute to these meetings? Are underrepresented groups on your campus (based on race, ethnicity, religion, ability, sex, gender, graduate student status, etc.) joining at lower rates than other groups? A survey might help, but asking students why they didn’t join could also yield useful information and present chapter members as caring people who want to get to know them.

Once your chapter discovers these answers, how will you address the barriers you uncover? Chapters may need to send invitations in multiple formats such as e-mail, social media, and in-person (especially for students whose classes are primarily in other departments), develop membership fee assistance, communicate via different means, advertise the benefits of becoming a member, adjust chapter meeting times, or develop relationships with faculty in other departments.

Next, what do potential and new members experience at their first chapter meetings? It can be difficult to join a group if everyone already knows each other well. Is everyone who attends your meetings

• greeted warmly?
• asked about their interests in psychology?
• introduced to everyone else?
• invited to contribute to ongoing committees, activities, and initiatives?
• informed about other opportunities to study, work, or play with chapter members?

No potential member should experience attending a meeting and leaving without being acknowledged in any way.

Harper (Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education at the University of Pennsylvania) and his colleagues have conducted many interviews with minority college students. They found, on campus after campus, “what he calls ‘onlyness,’ the feeling of being one or one of a few members of a group, and of being misunderstood and frequently insulted and/or ignored” (Jaschik, 2015, para. 16). I encourage our chapters to help reduce feelings of “onlyness” on your campus by bringing these questions to your members.

Maybe what it all boils down to is “treat me with respect.”

References


Identifying and Communicating Your Skills
From College to Career: Part II

In the Fall 2015 issue, we discussed methods for identifying your skills and developing plans to close your skills gap. Now, we turn your attention toward marketing yourself to potential employers. Through your coursework, you have gained important knowledge, but employers want to know that you can also apply it in the workplace. Your ability to do so is represented by your proven skills. You must clearly and convincingly communicate your skills to employers by way of presenting solid evidence whether in portfolios, interviews, or résumés. This article focuses on the strategic résumé.

Your résumé should be more than a list of degrees and previous responsibilities. Instead, it should serve as a strategic marketing tool, offering clear evidence of your ability to fill an employer’s needs. In short, it should detail past accomplishments in which you made good use of the skills the employer desires in their candidates. There is no one right formula or structure best suited for every candidate’s résumé. Be strategic in selecting what you include and how you present it in order to highlight your top accomplishments. Tweak your document for each job application to best match yourself to that employer’s needs. The sample résumé in Figure 1 is intended to illustrate possible content and structure—not to be used as a template. As such, rather than rules, what follows is a discussion of points you should reflect on in crafting your unique document.

Your Header
Include your name and professionally minded contact information. Consider your e-mail address and outgoing voicemail message; do they convey professionalism? Street addresses, although traditionally included, are becoming more optional for security reasons, especially when posting your document online.

Objectives and Summaries of Qualifications
The sample résumé does not include an objective or summary of qualifications because these elements are optional. If included, design an objective specific to the position at hand. For example, write “To obtain the position of X, in which I may contribute A, B, and C,” where A, B, and C are the skills that make you most qualified for the position. The rest of the document will serve to prove that you possess these skills. A summary of qualifications can take the format of three to five bulleted statements of your most relevant skills, quantifying your length of experience in each.

Education
For each degree, include the institution, location, and full degree title, as well as your GPA if it is above a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Beyond noting your earned or expected degrees in reverse chronological order, you might also include
• study abroad to demonstrate intercultural competencies,
• course projects where they replicated internship level projects that allowed you to demonstrate pertinent skills, and/or
• relevant coursework in the case of internship applications where it is important to show how far along you are in your studies.

Experience
Avoid rehashing your work experience through a simple list of duties. Instead, communicate the occasions when you successfully employed the skills a particular position requires. Be selective in what positions and demonstrated skills you include, as well how you present them.

Organize your experiences (e.g., paid, volunteer, internships) so that the most relevant positions are grouped in a section closer to the top of your résumé, while retaining reverse chronological order within each section. These sections can be labeled “Relevant Experience” and “Additional Experience” as the sample résumé shows, or can be more specific (e.g., “Research Experience,” “Program Development Experience”) so that they readily appeal to your audience.

For each position, state your title, organization name, location (city and state), and start and end dates (month and year); highlight the most important elements (i.e., bold, italicized, or underlined font). Regardless of how you format this information, remain consistent throughout your document.

View the bulleted statements that follow each position header as accomplishment statements. Crafting them can be the most challenging part of designing your résumé, but this formula can help:
• action verb + accomplishment (how you demonstrated a desired skill) + outcome (where specific emphasis is warranted)

The action verb should preview the skill to be highlighted. When feasible, your statement should tell a complete story by answering the who, what, why, and how of the accomplishment. Quantifying your work offers additional context and makes your statement come alive for your reader.

This structure enables you to move from a relatively weak statement:
• Duties included explaining services to new clients
To a much stronger skills-based accomplishment statement:
• Oriented more than 30 clients each week via face-to-face counseling and the provision of appropriate program brochures
Depending on the relevancy of the particular skill set, you might add an outcome to convey the impact of your work. For example, “ensuring a clear understanding of how services could best meet individual needs” could round out the above statement.

In this example, the skills conveyed include one-on-one communication (face-to-face counseling), needs assessment (selecting the right materials to provide), and time management (given the number of clients seen). When you tailor your resume to a position by cross-checking the skills (and action verbs) included with those noted in the advertisement, you will be more likely to gain the consideration you are after.

**Additional Options**

Although the sections discussed above are the most commonly employed in a strategic resume, remember to tailor your document to communicate your most relevant and pride-worthy skills. Additional skills (namely technology and languages), professional development (e.g., conferences, certifications, and organizations such as Psi Chi), presentations, and publications are all possible inclusions. The only rule here is that each element included should strengthen the argument for your candidacy.

**Final Comments**

A summary of the most important skills employers seek, described in the Fall 2015 *Eye on Psi Chi*, include *oral and written communication, working in teams, ethical judgment and decision making, critical and analytical thinking, applying knowledge and skills, problem solving, organizing and evaluating information, innovation and creativity, changing technologies, working with numbers and statistics, and problem solving with diverse individuals* (Hart Research Associates, 2015). Examine our sample resume and try to locate at least one skill set embedded in each statement; other skills may also become apparent. Your abilities and skills are embedded in your experiences (and vice-versa); you must extract and articulate the skills from your experiences and express them on your resume.

This two part series identified the most important skills employers seek, described procedures for identifying them, and illustrated how to communicate skills on a resume. Because the process of developing a strategic resume is complex (a skill in itself), we encourage you to work closely with your career center and faculty mentor.

**Reference**


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**Figure 1 Sample Resume**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Susan Smith</th>
<th>123 Main Street, Chicago, IL 60645 (123) 555-1212</th>
<th><a href="mailto:susansmith@gmail.com">susansmith@gmail.com</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**EDUCATION**

University College, Chicago, IL
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, June 2015
Minor in Spanish
GPA: 3.7 / 4.0
Study Abroad: “Examining Mental Health Services in Low-Income Communities.” Mexico City, Mexico, Winter 2014

**RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

Miller Community Services, Chicago, IL
Drop-In Center Intern, February 2015 – Present
• Engage with diverse community members, ages 11–17, creating a welcoming environment
• Conduct intake interviews with clients, recording presenting needs and providing an overview of available services
• Schedule clients with appropriate professional staff for follow-up appointments

Laboratory of Dr. Katherine Stone, University College, Chicago, IL
Research Assistant, September 2013 – June 2014
• Performed a literature review on the availability of mental health services in predominately Latino communities
• Recruited and obtained informed consent from 50 Spanish-speaking participants
• Coded recorded interviews, noting specific behaviors and response patterns
• Participated in weekly meeting with principal investigator and graduate assistants to review progress and receive training meetings

**ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE**

PetSmart, Chicago, IL
Sales Associate, June 2011 – September 2013
• Translated for Spanish-speaking customers to ensure product information was clearly communicated
• Trained and mentored five new associates during their first 2 weeks

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

University College Psi Chi Chapter Vice-President, September 2014 – June 2015
• Led efforts to connect membership with alumni for networking via the planning and hosting of an annual Career Night event
• Communicated with faculty to source a list of research opportunities for students interested in graduate studies

Midwest Psychology Consortium, Conference Attendee, March 2014

**ADDITIONAL SKILLS**

Language: Fluent in Spanish
Technology: Advanced user of Excel, Word, and PowerPoint; Proficient in SPSS

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**Additional Options**

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**Reference**

Each fall, I tell the same story to my Research Methods I students. I clearly remember sitting in one of my master’s-level courses and being asked, “Who has presented at a conference?” I raised my hand and looked around the room. I was the only student raising my hand and remember feeling surprised that no other students shared this experience with me.

I always end this story the same way by telling students that their experiences will be different from mine. Most master’s programs expect students to have research experience. When students apply to graduate school, they will not be the only one in the pool of applicants who has research experience or who has attended a conference. That’s why it is so important to get involved. In fact, I encourage students to attend conferences in their first or sophomore year before presenting to gain that experience.

As an undergraduate, I was really not sure which area of psychology was the best fit for me. I had enjoyed my experimental psychology and social psychology courses, and the instructor of those two courses became my mentor. She encouraged me to enroll in research credit with her and assist with analyzing data that she collected. She was enthusiastic about research and social psychology, and she greatly influenced my approach to teaching and mentoring students.

I was fortunate to present my first study in the CEPO section of the SEPA Convention during the senior year of my undergraduate program. I even won a Psi Chi Research Award. The experience of presenting at a research convention was so exciting that I continued presenting throughout my master’s and doctoral programs.

Once I began teaching full-time, I became committed to getting undergraduates involved in attending conferences and presenting research. I should note that I teach at a teaching university with approximately 200 majors on campus. Students enrolling in our program often report that they want to become counselors, and very few have entered our program expressing interest in conducting research. In fact, many students express concern and even distress at the mention of research courses or statistics. I am sure other faculty members have experienced similar responses from their students. However, this should not discourage faculty members from challenging students to get interested and excited about research and attending conferences.

The goal of this article is to provide advisors with some tips to get students involved in research and conference attendance and also to provide students with tips on how to get involved. These tips are based on my own experiences as well as feedback from some of my current students.

**Tips for Advisors**

We have the responsibility to prepare our students for graduate school and future careers in psychology. Conferences provide students with opportunities to meet other psychology majors and learn about interesting new research in psychology. Below are some things that advisors can do.

**Be enthusiastic.** When I recently asked my Research Methods III students about what I had done to get them excited about research and conference attendance, the overwhelming response was “Enthusiasm!” Regardless of whether you teach the research courses at your university, you should be enthusiastic about research in your field and other areas of psychology. Students get excited when we are excited.

**Build their confidence.** Attending and presenting at conferences can be intimidating to students, especially if they have not attended a conference in the past. Offering words of encouragement and being available to answer questions can help students feel more comfortable.
Be flexible. Although my primary interests in psychology are close relationships, bullying, and social media use, I do not limit my students to working on these topics only. My students and I have presented on a wide range of topics. Students get excited about research when it is something they genuinely care about, so why should we make them only study what we are interested in studying? Although I may not be the expert in a given area, I want my students to study what interests them, and they can teach me in the process.

Bring in past students to discuss their experiences. I can talk all day about how wonderful conferences are, but at the end of the day, students need to hear this from their peers. I like to ask students who have attended a conference or presented to come into my research methods classes and talk about their experiences. Students tend to open up to each other and may ask questions that they didn’t want to ask me. When my past students share their experiences, their enthusiasm shows, which generates more interest in conference attendance.

Provide conference-like experiences. In all three of our research methods courses, students present in a poster session. In the first two courses, the poster sessions are not as formal, although students are required to dress professionally. These sessions take place in the classroom. In the third course, we like to invite other faculty members and students to attend, and we hold the sessions in a special location. These experiences are great practice for presenting at a conference and can help alleviate some of the fears of attending. We also have poster sessions and oral presentations in the spring as part of the university’s Academic Excellence Day. Experiences like this one can help students become more familiar with how conferences work, which helps them become more comfortable.

Discuss the importance of networking. I met my graduate school mentor at my first SEPA convention. My undergraduate mentor introduced me to her, I applied to the program, and I ended up going to the school and loving it there. Conferences have an amazing way of bringing people together and allowing us to introduce our current students to past students and even our past professors. Graduate schools send representatives to conferences as well. We need to make sure that our students are informed of the importance of networking at conferences, so share your own examples with them.

Support regional conventions. I strongly believe that we should support our regional psychology organizations. I have taken students to national conventions, but regional conventions offer a more personal experience that students can really benefit from.

Tips for Students

Psychology students have a responsibility to learn more about the discipline of psychology and to stay current in the field. Conferences provide opportunities for personal development that goes beyond what you learn in the classroom. I have included some tips below to get you started thinking about conference attendance.

Attend a conference before you present research. I encourage students to attend a conference early in their undergraduate careers. We always have a nice mixture of student presenters and student attendees. Attending prior to presenting can help you become more comfortable because you can see firsthand how a psychology conference works.

Ask questions. If you have questions, do not be afraid to ask. Your advisor is there to answer the questions you have regarding conference attendance. Also, it is a great idea to talk to students who have attended in the past. They can give you the student perspective of attending a conference. Our chapter always has an informational meeting in the fall to answer questions and determine who is interested in attending the regional convention. I highly recommend that chapter officers plan meetings like this to ensure that questions are answered. It might help to invite the chapter advisor to attend the informational meeting as well.

Get your friends involved. Traveling to conferences and presenting can be even more exciting when you are doing it with your friends. Consider working on team projects or getting a group of students together to attend. The additional support can make attendance less intimidating.

Apply for Psi Chi Travel or Research Grants. It is always a good idea to check with your department and university about resources to assist with conference travel. As Psi Chi members, you are eligible to apply for grants to help with your research study, as well as grants to help you travel to a conference. Be sure to check the Psi Chi website for the application requirements and deadlines.

Get excited! Attending conferences is an excellent way to meet new people and learn about graduate school. Even if you do not present at the conference, you can attend sessions on topics that are interesting to you, and you might even meet people who you have read about in your psychology textbooks! If you are presenting, this is your time to shine and tell others about your research.

Whether you are a faculty advisor or Psi Chi member, I hope you have gained some tips on getting involved in research and psychology conferences. I look forward to seeing you at the next conference!
ideas for making your psi chi chapter effective

Luhrs: Four Great Ideas That Work

Last year, I was asked to contribute to a panel discussion at MPA 2015 entitled, “Great Ideas for Making Your Psi Chi Chapter Effective,” and this article is an extension thereof. In many ways, I find myself in an enviable position because I was a PhD student at the same institution where I now serve as a faculty advisor for Psi Chi. I’ve seen ideas that work well, some that seemed to work well in theory, and ideas that were well-intended yet fizzled in application.

As I reflected on what I thought were the “great ideas for making a chapter effective,” what immediately came to mind were coadvising, expanding officer positions to include president-elect and treasurer-elect positions to build a strong governance team, involving officers and members in departmental research, and engaging with the greater urban community in sustainable service commitments that reflect the values of Psi Chi. To elaborate on these ideas, I asked my own wonderful coadvisor, Dr. Jennifer Zimmerman to join me in authoring this piece.

Zimmerman: Advising Team

Our chapter’s advising team consists of two faculty members and one graduate student. One week prior to our general body meetings, the officers and advisors finalize plans and brainstorm topics for future meetings and service events. Our chapter benefits from having multiple advisors who bring with them a unique set of skills, ideas, experiences, and styles of support.

For example, Dr. Luhrs’s connection to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington DC inspired the chapter to make hand-crafted appreciation pop-up cards for wounded veterans. The chapter made 50 individual cards for hospitalized soldiers. My involvement in the American Heart Association 5K Walk led to one of the chapter’s service events this year. We recruited 12 members, raised $715, and increased awareness of cardiovascular disease and stroke. Having two faculty advisors share responsibilities and divide up tasks enables us to plan more meetings, workshops, and service projects and provide our students with more support.

The graduate student advisor serves as an important link between where the undergraduate students are currently and where most of them want to be in the future. She has served on a panel with other graduate students during our annual graduate school meeting and shared her experience selecting graduate programs, completing applications, writing a personal statement, asking for strong letters of recommendation, and preparing for interviews. Having a strong advising team of faculty and a graduate student has led to greater support for our members and officers, and resulted in an active and successful chapter.

Luhrs: Officer Leadership Transitions

Before I became an official advisor, I had observed that, each spring quarter, our current officers seemed to scurry about in a somewhat frantic recruitment effort to find new officers immediately prior to our yearly induction ceremony. I was both concerned and curious.

Conversations with prior advisors and involved students shed light on the problem. Each year, we were re-creating the wheel. The trend for years had been for all of the primary officers to be graduating seniors who had only served in an officer capacity during their senior year. Despite a well-maintained Best Practices manual, none of these students had engaged on the other side of the recruitment process, nor had they planned and overseen an induction ceremony. We brainstormed about the notion of the need for leadership continuity and decided to explore “officers-in-training,” or officer-elect positions. Our primary concern was the president and vice-president roles, and how we might expand the vice-president position into a president-elect who would spend an entire year training under the current president before taking on the role for their senior year. Let me say unequivocally, this is the single best idea that we have implemented that has made our chapter better, stronger, bigger, and more efficient.

Logistically, this means that we have to keep our collective eyes on talented, interested, and qualified first- and second-year majors. Dr. Zimmerman and I teach core psychology courses and are in a wonderful position to identify possible candidates. Our current officers take note of first- and second-year students who express an interest in the organization, attend meetings, and become involved in research. For the past five years, we have been extremely successful in identifying outstanding candidates for vice-president/president-elect who have gone on to excel as chapter presidents in their own right. These officers spend their junior year shadowing the president and taking on more responsibility as the academic year progresses. By the June induction ceremony, the current president need only pass the torch to the successor. This has worked so well for us that we now have a student serving as treasurer-elect who is shadowing our current treasurer in this extremely crucial position.

This position is quite complex and involves financial training, procurement of funds for meetings and events, and ongoing interactions with university officials and other organizations.

Zimmerman: Matchmaker Program

In accordance with Psi Chi’s purpose and mission, our chapter values and prioritizes advancing the science of psychology and offering educational and research opportunities to our students. To help students find research opportunities within the psychology
department, we developed a Matchmaker Program on our chapter’s website. Faculty and graduate students who are conducting research and looking for research assistants provide us with information about their project, and we post the information online for students to view. Researchers provide us with the project title, project description, principal investigators, student duties, student eligibility requirements, time commitment, number of open positions, and contact information. We also provide our students with a link to the faculty webpage so that they can learn about the faculty members’ major areas of interest and recent publications.

Although any psychology student may apply to work in one or more of these research labs, we recommend that students have completed Statistics I and Research Methods I (nonexperimental) and II (experimental) to prepare them for these experiences. Students can volunteer in these research labs, or they can earn course credit, either as an independent study or to fulfill their junior year experiential learning requirement. To make students more aware of the Matchmaker Program and the available research opportunities in the department, we invite representatives from the different research labs to one of our meetings to announce their projects and recruit students. Students have used the Matchmaker Program and participated in research projects, many of whom have presented their work at DePaul’s Annual Psychology Night and at the MPA annual meeting.

**Luhrs: Sustainable Community Service**

At DePaul University, we view service to the greater Chicago community as central to our Psi Chi mission, and our chapter has always engaged in yearly service projects. But as each team of elected officers changed in entirety each year, the new officers once again found themselves having to explore and yet new opportunities for the chapter. This was not an optimal experience for our students because service often became a one-time venture into an organization or event and little opportunity to truly engage beyond a limited time and scope. Last year, we entered into a long-term sustainable service relationship with a wonderful organization that is allowing our chapter to craft an ongoing tradition of service steeped in the rich history of our city.

Chicago Lights is an afterschool tutoring, mentoring, and enrichment program that recently celebrated 50 years of service to former residents of the Cabrini Green community and to the current communities nearby. Officers, members, and advisors serve a warm meal, teach enrichment classes including a psychology class for 1st to 6th grades entitled, “The Story of Me,” and engage in one-on-one tutoring with 1st to 12th grade students. Chicago Lights also has summer tutoring programs and an Urban Farm that provide our chapter with ample opportunities for service. We hope and plan to sustain this relationship for many years to come, providing a wonderful experience for our students and a history of being a trusted asset for Chicago Lights.

**Theresa Luhrs, PhD** is the director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Psychology at DePaul University. She received her MA and PhD in experimental psychology at DePaul University. Dr. Luhrs is a social psychologist and studies social perceptions of perpetrators and victims of intimate partner violence.

**Jennifer Zimmerman, PhD** is a professional lecturer at DePaul University in Chicago, IL. She has been the chapter’s coadvisor for the past four years. Dr. Zimmerman received her BA in psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago and her MA and PhD in experimental psychology from DePaul University. Dr. Zimmerman is a social psychologist and studies status, ideological beliefs, and system justification and condemnation.
I n September of last year, our Psi Chi Chapter at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) published the first issue of our monthly departmental newsletter, *Central Psychology News*. The newsletter was the brainchild of Dr. Marianne Fallon (advisor) and Judah Butler (then president), who believed it could prove valuable to our recently reestablished chapter in more ways than one. Jaclyn Vancour (officer) volunteered to serve as the original editor, and together we created a publication that instantly became popular with students and faculty alike. Now, with the 11th issue set to be published this month, we can definitively say that *Central Psychology News* has met and surpassed all of our expectations. Not only has it proven effective in circulating psychology- and department-related information to psychology majors and minors, but it has also had a positive effect on departmental cohesion and student-faculty relations. The process definitely takes effort, dedication, and a substantial time investment. But with a dedicated and highly motivated group of individuals, it can easily be a fun and extremely rewarding experience, as well as an ultimate source of pride for the chapter.

**Why Start a Chapter Newsletter?**

The benefits of a chapter newsletter are manifold. For any chapter, and especially those that have been recently (re)established, a newsletter can be a great way to encourage active membership and increase the visibility of the chapter and its activities. A newsletter is an excellent means of advertising relevant events and opportunities to students because it can be delivered directly to students via e-mail. Although students may choose not to read the newsletter, the feedback we have gotten on *Central Psychology News* suggests that a large proportion of students do in fact read it and find the information both interesting and valuable.

In addition to publicizing opportunities, a newsletter is a valuable way for students to develop their professional skills. As we make sure to point out to students, becoming involved with *Central Psychology News* is a great way to bolster one’s résumé or curriculum vitae. Indeed, the skills requisite for such a project are some of those most highly valued by employers and graduate schools such as the ability to work as part of a team on a single collective product, and the ability to interpret and communicate information to a general audience.

The establishment of a newsletter can also increase group cohesion in the chapter, as well as within the department as a whole. Crafting a newsletter requires individuals to communicate and work extensively with each other, and it can serve as an inspiring catalogue of the chapter’s activities and accomplishments. At CCSU, our newsletter’s incorporation of information from multiple constituents (i.e., student groups, faculty) has definitely increased effective communication and a sense of unity in the department.

**Establishing a Chapter Newsletter**

The decision to start a chapter newsletter should be made in consideration of the goals and resources of each individual chapter. Foremost, the chapter must have a group of dedicated individuals willing and able to invest the time necessary to sustain the project. Of course, the amount of time each individual must dedicate depends on how many individuals are interested in sharing the necessary responsibilities. At the very least, there should be four to five officers or members responsible for designing the newsletter, editing, and developing content or finding article writers. It is important to establish the roles prior to jumping into an initiative that may later prove overwhelming for the chapter’s resources.

For chapters interested in starting a newsletter at their institution, here are suggested steps to follow based on our experiences with *Central Psychology News* at CCSU.

**Step 1: Envision the Newsletter and Allocate Responsibilities**

Before leaping into the actual drafting process, it is a good idea to take some time to visualize and plan. Start by discussing goals for the newsletter and receiving suggestions and input from members. Once the essential components of the newsletter have been decided, individual responsibilities can be designated based on the logistics of the chapter. It is recommended that there be at least one lead editor to oversee the process and establish deadlines, but a chapter can individually determine whether to include additional editors and other roles. Depending on the volume of article submissions from the campus community, a chapter may also decide to create a designated group of writers responsible for...
Kimberly Iacino will graduate from Central Connecticut State University with a master’s degree in general psychology in May 2016. She currently serves as head of public relations and lead marketing director for her university’s Psi Chi chapter, which she helped reestablish during her previous two terms as vice-president. Her research interests include the diagnostic classification and theoretical underpinnings of personality disorders, with a primary focus on Borderline personality disorder symptomology. Following graduation, she plans to pursue a doctoral degree and hopes to one day have a career that combines elements of clinical work and research. Her aspirations are oriented toward the belief that a better understanding of the neurobiological processes underlying mental disorders may be the key to decreasing stigma and victim-blaming and increasing treatment adherence and acceptance among those living with mental illness.

Creating article content each month. Chapters with fewer available members may have to combine certain responsibilities such as editor and graphic designer or publish less frequently to make the newsletter a feasible project.

One thing worth noting is that an attractive and eye-catching newsletter design can make a substantial difference in the appeal it has to readers. Thus, it is worth trying to find someone with basic graphic design skills or else a computer publishing application capable of producing similar quality results. If neither of these options are available, I will attest to the fact that it is quite possible to create an attractive newsletter using the basic features of Microsoft Word, and offer my advice and assistance to anyone wishing to take this route (see contact information at the end of this article).

Step 2: Generate Content

Early brainstorming about a chapter newsletter should include a consideration of the type of content the newsletter will include. In each issue of Central Psychology News, we include certain regular features such as a “Psi Chi Update” written by our chapter president, a “Psych Club Update” provided by the president of that organization, and an “Events and Opportunities” page. One of our earliest determinations in the creation of Central Psychology News was that we did not want it to focus narrowly on matters pertaining only to Psi Chi, but to represent the psychological science department as a whole. Thus, in addition to regular updates from organizations such as Psychology Club and Active Minds, our newsletter includes articles on features such as the peer tutoring program, the master’s program at CCSU, faculty-sponsored events on campus, student presentations and research awards, and opportunities for students to assist professors in their research projects. Most issues also include a “Professor Spotlight” in which professors are interviewed about topics such as their path through the field of psychological science, research interests, and tips for students. The Professor Spotlight is an excellent way for students in the department to get to know their professors better and is also a nice way to give recognition to members of the faculty who do so much for students.

In addition to familiarizing students with departmental events and resources, we wanted our newsletter to be a source of interesting and readily consumable information about advancements in the field that students would find relevant. We thus invite all students to submit articles on any psychology-related topic of interest to them, and this has yielded quite a range of interesting subject matter. For example, we have had articles on subfields such as industrial/organizational and quantitative psychology, and articles applying psychological principles to phenomena such as color perception and the preference for print books. We especially strive to deliver content that students can readily apply to their own lives. To this end, we have included articles on topics such as uncommon careers in psychology, job opportunities for those with a bachelor’s degree, tips on fostering a growth mindset, and how to fight daytime sleepiness.

Coming up with article topics is, in my opinion, one of the most enjoyable parts of the newsletter creation process. One tip for developing article content is to make use of seasonal themes. For example, Central Psychology News included an article on how to deal with stress over the holidays in the December issue, an article on Valentine’s Day in the February issue, and an article explaining an uncommon careers in psychology, job opportunities for those with a bachelor’s degree, tips on fostering a growth mindset, and how to fight daytime sleepiness.

Step 3: Publish and Circulate

Once the newsletter has been compiled and edited, the final step in the process is to publish and circulate it to its intended audience. Our chapter is quite lucky to have the enthusiastic assistance of our department chair, who is able to send the newsletter as a PDF to all psychological science majors and minors through the school e-mail system. She also posts JPEG images of the newsletter on the department’s Facebook page, and we upload the document to our own social media pages and website. Other chapters possessing the requisite resources may choose to print copies of their newsletter for distribution, but overall we have found virtual distribution quite sufficient and effective. However, we do post printed color copies of Central Psychology News on our Psi Chi bulletin board, where they easily pique the interest of students and faculty passing by.

Final Thoughts

Starting a chapter newsletter has been an awesomely rewarding journey for our chapter and will continue to be so as we refine the publication. The process undeniably requires a decent commitment of time and effort from at least a few members, and is certainly not guaranteed to be easy. With the right resources, however, it can be an incredibly successful endeavor with far-reaching benefits for both the individual chapter and the campus community as a whole.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have or to share your own chapter newsletter experience at iacino@my.ccsu.edu. Also be sure to check out previous issues of Central Psychology News on our website at http://ccupschi.wix.com/ccupschi
Study Abroad: Cognitive Advantages of Being Bilingual and Bicultural

Study abroad provides many benefits. The experience can increase one’s capacity to see the world as others see it—that is, to take more than one perspective. Study abroad also offers experiences that can increase communication skills, cognitive complexity, creativity, and professional success.

A recent study investigated the ability of 4- to 6-year-old children to recognize that another person may see things differently (Fan, Liberman, Keysar, & Kinzler, 2015). Some of the children were bilingual, some had been exposed to another language regularly, and some were monolingual. Each child sat across from the experimenter with a vertical grid positioned between them. The grid consisted of 16 cubicles (four high and four across). Various objects were placed in some of the cubicles and the child could see all the objects. However, some cubicles were closed on one side so that some objects were not visible to the researcher.

Three of the cubicles held toy cars (a large, a medium, and a small). The child could see all three cars, but the small car was not visible to the researcher. The researcher would say, “I see a small car; please move the small car.”

Seventy-five percent of the bilingual children and children who were exposed to a second language regularly moved the medium-sized car—that is, the smallest car the researcher could see—but only 50 percent of the monolingual children did so. Thus, the study showed that bilingual children and children exposed regularly to a second language took the perspective of the researcher significantly more often than did the monolinguals. These results suggested that bilingualism and even exposure to a second language enhances communication skills that require one to understand the perspectives of others. Study abroad provides exposure to another culture and often to another language.
A recent review article provided further compelling evidence concerning the benefits of bilingualism. Bialystok (2011) reviewed literature that examined the benefits of bilingualism in shaping the mind. The review concluded that bilingual individuals use more areas of the brain while carrying out various verbal and nonverbal tasks than do monolingual individuals. This “mind exercise” gives bilingual individuals advantages in cognitive performance across the lifespan. The review also reported studies indicating that bilingualism may serve as a protection against Alzheimer’s disease. Study abroad can help one become bilingual and give lifelong benefits!

How does one gain the most out of studying and living abroad? Tadmor, Galinsky, and Maddux (2012) conducted three studies to learn what is most important in gaining the benefits of living abroad. In summary, they found that bicultural individuals who most completely identified with both their home country and their host country gained the most benefits. Such individuals showed greater cognitive complexity and greater capacity to integrate multiple perspectives than did individuals who identified only with their home or their host country. Bicultural and bilingual individuals also showed greater creativity and demonstrated more professional success. Study abroad is an excellent way to begin the process of developing a bicultural identity.

There are multiple ways to study abroad and gain maximum benefits. One of the most popular and common approaches involves summer programs led by faculty members from one’s own campus. Most universities and colleges offer such programs. During the summer, one or more faculty members and their students travel to a foreign university campus for 5 to 8 weeks. Students live in and learn about another country but have the benefit of the familiar structure of the U.S. classroom experience with familiar home-campus instructors. My own university, Texas State University, offers such opportunities in more than 20 countries. Financial aid is usually easy to obtain for these popular programs. The courses offered are basically the same as those given on the home campus and fulfill degree program requirements. Studying abroad in this way offers students the opportunity to earn credits toward their degrees, while at the same time enjoying an adventure and gaining international experience and knowledge.

A second and somewhat more ambitious and adventurous approach is to enroll independently at a university in a foreign country for a semester, a full academic year, or more. This requires research and paperwork to select and gain admission to the foreign university. It is more ambitious because it offers a much fuller integration into the foreign culture and many more life-changing experiences. It involves meeting new people, making new friends, and mastering a new culture. The professors and classmates will be from the host university, so it will be possible to learn much more deeply about the new culture and country.

Help with this more ambitious approach can usually be found by talking with faculty members in one’s home campus language department. If there are faculty members in the psychology department who have international experience, they also can help students select, research, and gain admission to a university abroad. These faculty members may also be able to advise regarding what courses to complete abroad that will give credit when transferred to the home university.

A point of particular interest is the fact that, after studying abroad, students sometimes report culture shock when returning to the United States. They now see their own country with new eyes. In addition, they may find that the courses they took abroad are not well understood or valued by their classmates or university administrators. This challenge, however, is a small price to pay for the advantages of becoming bicultural and bilingual.

Psi Chi members have a particular advantage in regard to the opportunities available for study abroad. Psi Chi is now an international honor society and has chapters in nearly a dozen foreign countries. Consider these countries with chapters: Canada (four universities), Ireland (two universities), Puerto Rico (two universities), Barbados (one university), Egypt (one university), Guatemala (one university), Malaysia (one university), New Zealand (one university), Russian Federation (one university), Trinidad and Tobago (one university), U.S. Virgin Island (one university). Each of these chapters has a faculty advisor committed to the mission of Psi Chi who can serve as an excellent contact for purposes of study abroad. Furthermore, student members of the chapter provide an immediate circle of potential friends. They are the most successful and committed students studying psychology on that campus and already have an interest in Psi Chi and international exchange. More information about Psi Chi chapters in other countries is available at https://www.psichi.org/?international_chapt. You can also search for “International” articles in Psi Chi’s Publication Search at https://www.psichi.org/?Publications_Search

In addition to providing the opportunity to gain mastery of another culture and another language, study abroad offers the advantage of seeing the world through the eyes of those in another culture. There is no better time than now to give serious thought to becoming a student in another country. Study abroad offers many advantages and is now more accessible than ever before to student members of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology.

References
Can you describe what you do at your job?
I’m the U.S. Army’s Regional Director of Psychological Health for the Indo-Asia Pacific region as well as the Behavioral Health Consultant for U.S. Pacific Command. The Indo-Asia Pacific region is the largest geographical region within the U.S. Army with the world’s three largest economies, four most populous countries, and seven of the world’s 10 largest Armies, spanning the International Date Line into 36 countries. We have more than 450 staff members serving 495,000 beneficiaries covering more than 52% of the globe.

How do you use your psychology training in that context?
My psychological training prepared me as a clinician, which affords me insights into the hundreds of providers who serve within our region. As a Veteran, I also have shared experiences with our beneficiary population. However, it’s the confluence of being a clinician/Veteran that perhaps serves me and my position best. My training in psychology also taught me to listen and to try to understand those with whom I interact. Lastly, as a result of years of formal training as a student and as a professor, I’ve learned to better code, store, retrieve, and process information. These applications have proven to be invaluable during humanitarian missions and as a loving father.

What did you want to be when you were a child?
As a child, I wanted to be a professional athlete. Consequently, what I learned was that school was always followed by practice, be it practice for soccer, wrestling, basketball, baseball, track, or even band. This sequence was in place through middle school, high school, and college. After graduating college, this routine remained. However, the workday was followed by graduate-level and then doctoral-level courses. Now, my workday is often followed by teaching college classes or taking my daughter to her practice.

Why did you first become interested in psychology?
While on a full basketball scholarship, I was injured and my hope to become a professional athlete ended. My assessment at the time was that I put “all my eggs in one basket” with sports and came up short. However, in the process of working toward my goal to be a professional athlete, I acquired the discipline needed to focus and complete tasks. In an existential dilemma, I “rebelled against
the absurdity,” as described by Camus, and I decided to invest completely in my mind and experiences. So, I transferred to a small school in upstate New York and changed my undergraduate major to philosophy/religion and classical literature. As I recall, many of the undergraduate debates ended with limitations of the mind, so I naturally pursued a masters and eventually a doctorate degree in psychology to learn more about the mind and overall well-being. I’ve now taught enough undergraduate through doctoral-level courses to have multiple psychology degrees, yet I still keep teaching and learning more each year.

**Did you have a mentor who helped you find your career path?**
I’ve been blessed to have many mentors, perhaps without their knowledge. There are the mentors with whom we have a personal relationship who nurture, guide, and have a genuine interest in one’s development. The U.S. Army, Department of Defense, and academia are full of brilliant, caring individuals who offer wise counsel. I believe that I was also “mentored” by the tacit knowledge I’ve acquired by the experiences and actions of others. While deployed in Bosnia in 1990s, the aftermath of ethnic cleansing, mass graves, genocide, and rape camps throughout the former Yugoslavia had a tremendous impact to motivate me to want to better understand the actions of others and to discover what can be done to help the innocent recover from their experiences and subsequent “mind-forged manacles.” An early career introduction to global traumatic events influenced my career commitment toward improving health in the life space of our beneficiaries, at home and abroad.

**What sort of jobs did you have before you started your current employment?**
My first postundergraduate job was to become a soldier. Since then, I’ve been an instructor, a leader, a researcher, a clinician, a professor, an author, a lecturer, a consultant, a mentor, and a father.

**What sort of personalities do you think are conducive with your career?**
Borrowing from Maslow’s comment that “If you only have a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail,” I’ve witnessed diverse personality types that contribute to the betterment of their client or to the betterment of the office environment. So, I try not to be a reductionist searching for one personality type. Instead, I try to find value in a range of types and seek to find how they might best contribute to our mission success through inclusion. That said, being adaptable to change and a team player are key.

**How does your career benefit or improve society?**
I like to think that, through my interactions, I contribute to spreading well-being and aloha. My career affords me the opportunity to try to ensure that access to care and the needs of our beneficiaries are met. Consequently, I believe that our mission contributes to fostering a healthy community and that healthy communities help to produce healthy productive members of society. Through our partner nation relationships, my career also affords an opportunity to interact with, share, and perhaps mentor those attracted to our nation’s rich culture, political ideas, and policies to collaborate and cooperate toward fostering thriving global communities of health.

**What is your favorite memory of being a part of your Psi Chi chapter?**
My favorite memory is the look on students’ faces when informed that they’ve been accepted into Psi Chi and the knowledge that the chapter earned another mentor for the cause.

**Who is your favorite psychologist? Least favorite?**
My favorite psychologists are Charles Darwin, Jean Piaget, and Carl Rogers. For those unaware how a quiet, respectable gentleman and a pillar of his parish came to embrace one of the most radical ideas in the history of human thought, Darwin had a passionate hatred of slavery and did not believe that Blacks and Whites were separate species, as was a common belief and justification for slavery. Thus, with a common ancestor, evolution meant emancipation in support of the American Christian abolitionist movement. I believe that it’s important for psychology students to understand the history that influenced the systems that we study and practice. My least favorite psychologists are those chronicled in *The Mismeasure of Man* by Stephan Jay Gould, which I believe is also a must read for all psychologists.

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**Personality Profile**

**Favorite psychology-related book:**
*The Mismeasure of Man* by Stephan Jay Gould

**Favorite quote:** “the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars.” — Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

**Hobbies:** Spending time with my family and, if time permits, collecting rare and out of print books

**Early bird or night owl:** Early bird

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Dr. David G. Brown serves as the Regional Director of Psychological Health for the Regional Health Command–Pacific (Provisional) as well as the PACOM Behavioral Health Consultant. Dr. Brown came to the Pacific from the Office of the Secretary of Defense where he was the lead clinical psychologist and subject matter expert for suicide prevention. He supported the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Veterans Affairs to develop and implement processes, procedures, and standards for the transition of recovering service members. He has consulted with all 16 elements of the Intelligence Community on their respective redeployment and reintegration needs in addition to supplementing the speeches of the President of the United States, the First Lady, secretaries, senators, congressmen, flag and general officers when speaking on psychological health. He has appeared on C-SPAN (Defense Forum Washington and Warrior Family Symposium) and ABC News for his work with wounded veterans, and was a frequent guest on Armed Forces Networks television and radio programs in Germany, India, Japan, Nepal, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam. Dr. Brown is a recipient of the Office of Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Civilian Service, the highest level career medaled award, and is a member of the Order of Military Medical Merit.
Writing Advice
From an English Professor, a Psychology Professor, and a Professional Copy Editor

Amanda L. Hiner, PhD, Winthrop University (SC)
Merry Sleigh, PhD, Winthrop University (SC)
Bradley Cannon, Psi Chi Central Office Writer
As psychology majors progress through their coursework, they come to understand both the depth and breadth of the field’s content and the exacting nature of the discipline’s scientific research; however, one thing they might not realize is the degree to which their ability to communicate clearly and effectively can influence their success in the field. As the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association states, “research is complete only when the results are shared with the scientific community,” and “the traditional medium for communicating research results is the scientific journal” (APA, 2010, p. 9).

Whether preparing papers for academic conferences, writing articles for scholarly journals, or simply communicating through a classroom assignment, your ability to write coherent, clear, accurate, and concise prose will determine how effective and successful you are in your field. It makes sense, then, for you to invest time and effort both in improving your writing skills and in thinking about how you can construct papers so that your ideas and research results are communicated clearly and effectively. To this end, we have assembled 14 suggestions to help you get started.

1. Be Inspired by Your Interests and Passions

You probably already realize that it is much easier to write about a topic you genuinely care about. Always try to select or modify topics to match your own interests. Engage and cultivate your intellectual curiosity. The field of psychology offers students innumerable areas of inquiry that are significant, profoundly relevant, and deeply interesting. Begin your research process by choosing specific topics and research questions that ignite your curiosity and enthusiasm.

2. Practice Critical Thinking

Good writing has less to do with an explicit knowledge of grammar and syntax, as important as those subjects are, than it does with an ability to organize and communicate ideas in coherent, logical ways. As you progress in your discipline, the content and concepts you address become more sophisticated and the questions become more complex. One of the most important aspects of clear and effective writing is having a good conceptual grasp of how ideas fit together. As you gather and summarize data, place that information into conceptual groups and organize your notes and your final draft into clear conceptual categories. Make sure you make the relationship between ideas explicit and clear in your paper by frequently using signaling or interpretive words or phrases such as “these data suggest . . .”, “this is important because . . .”, or “these findings account for the fact that . . .”. You may want to employ some of the many helpful templates for explaining data provided by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein (2009) in their useful book They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing.

3. Prepare and Research Strategically

Near the beginning of your writing process, develop and articulate a clear sense of purpose. Begin with a hypothetical working thesis, but let your evidence lead you to a final conclusion and thesis. Identify your intended audience, articulate to yourself what you hope to accomplish in your research or in your paper, and assess the extent to which your research methods will meet your intended goals. Aim for both breadth and depth in the research process. Search on multiple online databases for more scholarly articles and books than you think you actually need, and try to use library databases, which contain a wide variety of vetted and scholarly sources, rather than Google®.

4. Read Critically

Critical reading, a form of critical thinking, is foundational to the writing process. Critical reading involves annotating your sources by underlining important information, summarizing key ideas in the margins, writing down questions and comments, and noting how data will contribute to your research goals. Undergraduate students often don’t realize the extent to which critical reading contributes to the writing process; carefully annotated sources almost write your paper for you because all of your important conclusions and key pieces of evidence are already included in the margins of your sources and in your notes. Read all of your sources critically, taking notes in the margins and in your own research notebook, and remember to include your date of access on your notes or on a hard copy of each article.

5. Avoid Plagiarism

Learn to treat every project you start as one that might eventually be published. Plagiarism not only involves malicious acts to steal content and ideas from others but also poor note-taking skills and accidental lapses in judgement. It is your responsibility as an author to always provide proper citations and references to give credit to others where credit is due. Keep in mind that this is true for every part of your project, not just the writing portion. For example, if you cannot locate the source for an image that your study revolves around, you may have more trouble publishing your paper in the future because you cannot cite the source of this significant aspect of your study and you do not have permission to reprint it either. When in doubt, refer to the Publication Manual, and always review the Ethical Compliance Checklist in section 1.16 before submitting an article for publication (APA, 2010, p. 9).

6. Be Aware of Confirmation Bias

Consciously analyze and assess your own thoughts and conclusions during the writing process. Think about how and why you might draw certain conclusions, make certain assumptions, or privilege certain types of data. If you know you are biased in favor of specific conclusions, force yourself to examine your assumptions critically and search for information that challenges or disconfirms your assumptions. Be mindful of the innate tendency to engage in confirmation bias, the prioritizing of information or evidence that confirms previously held hypotheses or beliefs. Embrace and examine evidence and data that contradict your beliefs and assumptions. View yourself as a truth-seeker during the research and writing process and follow the evidence wherever it leads you.

7. Consider Your Audience

Good writing does not always look the same. Although there are elements that will characterize strong writing across domains, different subjects also will require unique approaches. For example, scientific writing has different parameters than what might be appropriate for an English class or a brief report. It is critical to write to the specific style of the assignment. Similarly, you should be cognizant of the background of your readers. If you are writing to an audience highly educated in your subject matter, develop sophisticated arguments and use
relevant vocabulary. If you are writing to a naive audience, avoid jargon and provide a context for the information. Work to translate complex ideas into understandable ones. A bored or confused reader may not make it to the end of your paper.

8. Sharpen Your Sentences and Paragraphs

Write strong, clear sentences using the active, rather than passive, voice, which relies heavily on the use of the verb “be” and tends to make sentences awkward and vague. For instance, rather than writing “It was later observed that the subjects were . . .,” place the subject first in the sentence and write “Researchers later observed . . ..” Your sentences can be complex, but they should always be clear, powerful, and as concise as possible. Check each sentence and aim to cut any words that do not precisely and directly contribute to the sentence’s meaning. Likewise, cut any sentences or paragraphs that are not directly relevant to the paper’s thesis or central argument. Because school assignments often have minimum length requirements, students tend to naturally stretch out their writing with passive statements. However, in both the “real world” and in academia, the more concise your writing is, the more likely it will be that people will read and understand it.

9. Share Your Interests and Passions

You will often have to write for teachers and other audiences outside of the discipline of psychology. Do not make the mistake of compartmentalizing your knowledge and missing the chance to integrate ideas from different domains. Instead, incorporate psychological information into diverse topics. Allow new ideas to emerge by connecting different streams of thought and theory. Most people find psychology interesting, and you serve your discipline well when you can educate others about psychological constructs in an accurate and accessible manner.

10. Read Your Writing Out Loud

Always practice reading your writing out loud to yourself or a peer because the way you speak and the way you write should work hand in hand. For example, if you frequently stumble or struggle with awkward pauses while reading out loud, stop to consider how you might communicate the idea verbally and try writing the idea down that way instead. Also, remember to seek constructive criticism and ask your listeners if they have any questions when you finish reading to make sure all of your ideas were clearly communicated. Filling in a few simple details suggested by your listeners can often go a long way toward improving reader comprehension in the future.

11. Take Revision Seriously, and Remember to Proofread

Many times, students are so relieved to finish a rough draft of a paper that they just hit “print” and turn it in for assessment. It’s only after a few days of reflection (and a few nights of good sleep) that they realize that the paper could be significantly better with some minor, or even major, revision. Generally, the more experienced writers are, the more they take revision seriously as an essential part of the writing process. Revision is necessary, in part, because the human mind can only engage in so many organizational tasks at one time. Getting the ideas and evidence on paper in a somewhat logical order is all one can manage in a first or second draft. Revision allows writers to improve organization, content, and language style, resulting in a polished and persuasive final product. Take some time away from your draft and then examine it with fresh eyes.

• What might be confusing in the paper?
• What claims need further evidence and explanation?
• What paragraphs need better transitions?
• Is the content organized logically?

Read your draft from the end to the beginning, sentence by sentence. You’ll catch all kinds of errors you missed because this forces your mind to focus solely on sentence structure and grammar. Be kind to yourself by being your harshest critic and by improving the content and structure of your paper before you submit it to outside review.

12. Ask for Help

During the research, brainstorming, and writing phases of your project, don’t be afraid to ask for help. Professors appreciate it when
students come to them with research questions, and they will generally gladly help students with rough drafts, brainstorming, and paper organization. In addition, university writing centers are remarkable and often underutilized resources for students. Writing centers are not designed only for students who struggle with writing—even graduate students and professors take advantage of peer review and critique. Ask for help, submit your rough draft for outside review, and try to get as much feedback as you can on your paper before submitting it for evaluation or publication.

13. Improve Your Writing

One Step at a Time

At times, when you get feedback on your writing, it can feel overwhelming. Sometimes readers mark the same problem each time it occurs or suggest multiple improvements that could be made to your writing. Either way, a paper full of critiques can fail to feel constructive. One strategy is to get a strong writer to help you identify the most common, or most problematic, writing mistake you are making. Focus on fixing that one problem. Then, move to the next issue that is compromising your writing and focus on it. Trying to fix everything at once may be discouraging and distracting.

Instead, focus on making one permanent improvement to your writing style that can have long-lasting impact.

14. Recognize the Value of APA Style

Following APA style guidelines with consistent and concise writing helps to unite the scientific community and better facilitates understanding as a whole. According to APA (2015), uniform style allows readers to scan articles quickly by decreasing minor distractions, promoting full disclosure of essential information, and eliminating inconsistencies of spelling to enhance search engine optimization. Before finalizing your article for publication, always review the Publication Manual one last time for correct writing style and overall formatting. In particular, glance over Figure 2.1 to make sure your cover page, running head, and headers match the provided sample as appropriate (APA, 2010, p. 41). You should also double check for any additional submission guidelines provided by the specific publication where you intend to submit your paper.

In conclusion, consistent and concise prose prevents future readers from spotting discrepancies in your article that could distract them from the true purpose of the article. By association, the quality of your writing style may also cause readers to more readily perceive that you have made a satisfactory effort on the content of your article and that you are sufficiently familiar with relevant research. In particular, publishers often have hundreds or thousands of submissions to choose from. They will notice, before anything else, which submissions have implemented the correct formatting procedures in order to save everyone time during the editing process. By following the above advice to improve your writing style, you will be more likely to make an overall good impression on others. This is sure to increase your chances of being published and strengthen your ability to effectively communicate your ideas to make a difference in the topics that matter most to you.

References


What Is Old Comes New Again:
B.F. Skinner and His Novel, Walden Two

Heather A. Haas, PhD, and Vance Kleeman
The University of Montana Western

The summer of 2015 marked two important anniversaries in the history of psychology. Twenty-five years ago in August of 1990, B. F. Skinner, best known for his application of behavioral science to the study of pigeons and rats, died. And 45 years before that, 70 years ago in the summer of 1945—after Hitler but before Hiroshima—Skinner wrote a novel titled Walden Two (Skinner, 1976).

What many psychology students may not know is that Skinner had originally hoped to be a writer, was an English major in college, received praise from the poet Robert Frost for his writing, and even took a year off after college to try (ultimately unsuccessfully) to write a novel (Skinner, 1967). Skinner failed as a writer at that point, he later wrote, because he “had nothing important to say” (Skinner, 1967, p. 395). And only when literature failed to satisfy his quest to understand human behavior did he turn seriously to science instead (Skinner, 1967). However, Skinner never gave up those early literary interests and later even taught a course in the psychology of literature (Skinner, 1979).
Then, nearly 20 years after deciding he had nothing to say, there was *Walden Two*.

*Walden Two* follows a group of six people who visit an experimental community founded on the principle that the application of the experimental analysis of behavior could lead to a better society. The founder of the community, a man named Frazier, acts throughout the book as an advocate for the power and potential of the experimental analysis of behavior. Throughout the book, Frazier’s foil is Castle, a philosophy professor who joins the group visiting the community and who constantly questions not only the feasibility but also the desirability of the scientific control of behavior. The narrator of the story, Burris, is a psychology professor, and it is he, along with the reader, who must find a way to synthesize these two different views of the role of science in maximizing human potential. Skinner himself claimed that the book was “a venture in self-therapy,” written as he was “struggling to reconcile two aspects of my own behavior represented by Burris and Frazier” (Skinner, 1967, p. 403). Within a few years of writing the book, however, Skinner was ready to declare himself “a thorough-going Frazierian” (Skinner 1983, p. 180).

**The Writing of *Walden Two***

Perhaps it was that very personal involvement that explains the experience of the “white heat” (Skinner, 1967, p. 403) in which parts of *Walden Two* were written. Certainly, the speed with which *Walden Two* was completed—in only 7 weeks—came as a surprise to Skinner (Skinner, 1967), whose accomplishments were usually attributable to dutiful day-in and day-out effort. Although he noted that he had “done what was expected” of him earlier in his school career, Skinner also noted that he had “seldom worked hard” until he began his graduate studies at Harvard (Skinner, 1967, pp. 397–398). In those years, Skinner began to develop the self-management techniques that allowed him to work steadily throughout his life. In describing the daily schedule he maintained for several years at Harvard, for example, he wrote:

> I would rise at six, study until breakfast, go to classes, laboratories, and libraries with no more than fifteen minutes unscheduled during the day, study until exactly nine o’clock at night and go to bed. I saw no movies or plays, seldom went to concerts, had scarcely any dates, and read nothing but psychology and physiology. (Skinner, 1967, p. 398)

In reflecting on his life later, Skinner wrote, “I have studied when I did not feel like studying…. I have met deadlines for papers and reports…. I write and rewrite a paper until, so far as possible, it says exactly what I have to say” (Skinner, 1967, p. 407). He regularly charted his own progress in a cumulative record and estimated that “it took me two minutes to write each word of my thesis,” noting that that rate had been generally constant for decades as he managed to “salvage about one hundred publishable words” from the 3 or 4 hours of writing he did each day (Skinner, 1967, p. 403). Among his many accomplishments, Skinner was named as perhaps the single most eminent psychologist of the 20th century (Haggbloom et al., 2002) and a Distinguished Member of Psi Chi (Psi Chi Distinguished Members, 2013), so his means of controlling his own behavior were clearly effective even if the process seems a bit plodding. In contrast, the speed with which *Walden Two* was written is notable, and Skinner himself attributed the rush of verbal behavior that resulted in *Walden Two* at least in part to that fact that it was “generously reinforced” (Skinner, 1979, p. 298) by the responses of his wife and friends as he read the work to them, episode by episode.

Skinner indicated at various points in his later writing that *Walden Two* was influenced not only by the recent events in the world at large, but also by several personal experiences. Skinner explicitly stated that his work on Project Pigeon, a project designed to demonstrate that operant conditioning could be used to train pigeons to guide missiles, had begun to raise important issues about the implications and ethics of a science of behavioral control, and this topic was something he addressed directly in *Walden Two* (Skinner, 1983, p. 98). As the war wound down, his personal experiences further coalesced into concerns about a number of social issues. His oldest daughter’s first year in school had him thinking about education (Skinner, 1976), he saw women like his wife trapped in limited and limiting domestic roles (Skinner, 1976), and he had been meeting regularly with a group of philosophers (including one

Alburey Castell, who would later become “a not very accurate portrait” of the character of Castle in *Walden Two*; Skinner, 1979, p. 297) to discuss the control of human behavior (Skinner, 1976). Like many people, Skinner wanted to make a better world. Like few other people, he believed that an experimental analysis of behavior was the best way to do it. *Walden Two* can be seen as Skinner’s blueprint for how to improve society as a whole, not necessarily by implementing the specific practices he described in his book but by viewing all social practices through a scientific lens.

**Critical and Public Reaction to *Walden Two***

Although the book had been finished quickly, it was difficult to get it published. The book was rejected several times before it was finally accepted, and it was printed in 1948 by a publisher who agreed to publish it only after Skinner agreed to write an introductory textbook for them (Skinner, 1976, 1983). Furthermore, when the book was first published, it was frequently criticized. The *New York Times* noted that the book “is intellectually provocative, as many utopias have been, although wooden and tedious as a work of fiction, as most utopias have been also” (Prescott, 1948, p. 21), and Skinner referred defensively several times to the book review and a related editorial that appeared in *Life* in his autobiography (Skinner, 1979, 1983). But the significance of *Walden Two* is not as a work of literature but as a repository of important ideas (Prescott, 1948).

The specific practices of the Walden Two community—the 4-hour workday, the use of lollipops and forbidden soup to teach self-control, and the specially designed air cribs much like one Skinner actually built for his daughter (Vargas, 1996)—are likely to make the biggest initial impression on the reader. However, these specific practices are actually beside the point, which is that careful analysis of the contingencies of behavior could allow us to create a better
changing personality by changing people’s "endocrines"; Skinner, 1967). Walden Two clearly reflects these varied interests with far less focus on psychology than on art, music, theater, government, and philosophy.

Although Walden Two was not widely read at first (selling only a little over 1,000 copies in the year it was released; Vargas, 1996), interest increased significantly with the advent of the counterculture revolution of the 1960s, and by 1972, the book had sold over a million copies (Vargas, 1996). After the book’s publication, Skinner received many letters asking if he ever planned on creating a community such as Walden Two (Skinner, 1983). Although Skinner himself never tried to make Walden Two a reality, others did. Many of these attempts failed, although some found at least a measure of success. Most notable among these are the Twin Oaks Community in Virginia and Los Horcones in Mexico. Although Twin Oaks no longer identifies itself as a behaviorist community, it was started in 1967 with the idea of creating a Walden Two-like society (Walden Two & Twin Oaks). A number of variables probably contributed to the demise of behaviorism at Twin Oaks including a lack of any real understanding of behaviorism on the part of most of the members and founders (Walden’s Two’s Bastard Child, n.d.).

The arrival of the hippies who shared some (e.g., low consumerism) but not all of the values on which Skinner’s community was based might also have played a significant role. As one ex-member wrote, “In Walden Two, Frasier said, ‘Give me the specifications, and I’ll give you the man!’ while hippies would counter, ‘Just be yourself and don’t put your trips on other people, man.’” (Walden Two’s Bastard Child, n.d.). Los Horcones in Mexico was created in 1971. The biggest difference between Twin Oaks and Los Horcones is also the biggest difference between Twin Oaks and Walden Two because both the fictional Walden Two and the real Los Horcones are dedicated to the intention of using behavioral sciences to find solutions to the many problems that human beings face (Los Horcones, n.d.). Not only does Los Horcones community use behavior analysis to support a community life based on respect, cooperation, equality, and tolerance for others (Los Horcones, n.d.), but the community also uses behavior analysis in its work teaching children with autism, work they have been doing for more than 30 years (Los Horcones, n.d.).

The Relevance of Walden Two to Psychology Students Today

Given that 70 years have passed since Walden Two was published, it is perhaps not surprising that students today might believe it is outdated. In some ways, it is. Perhaps most notable is the way that Skinner appears to champion the equality of sexes, which at the time that Walden Two was published was probably a rather radical idea but is now considerably less so and manifest in ways Skinner was not able to capture. Beyond that, telegrams are sent, watches are wound, radio schedules are listed in the newspaper, phonograph records are played, and experiments are under way to determine whether fluorine would be useful in preventative dentistry. In much more important ways, however, Skinner was half a century ahead of his time.

Reading Walden Two at the beginning of the 21st century, it is easy to argue that Skinner was a positive psychologist 50 years before the positive psychology movement began (Adams, 2012). Positive psychology emphasizes the importance of the scientific study of positive emotions, positive personal traits, and positive institutions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), and each of these emphases is evident in Walden Two. In the Walden Two community, the goal is to maximize not just happiness but a number of other positive states including satisfaction, fulfillment, and engagement as well. Furthermore, the goal is not just to feel good but to be good (i.e., to be productive and to fulfill one’s potential in work and in leisure), and a means to that end is to create a citizenry characterized by self-control, flexibility, and creativity rather than one motivated by jealousy and competition. Moreover, the whole structure of the community is aligned with the achievement of these ends. For example, positive psychologists today often emphasize the recurrent theme from research that indicates that neither more money nor greater materialism is highly predictive of more happiness, at least once basic needs are met, and this theme pervades the structure of Walden Two as a community where time to pursue one’s interests was seen to be far more valuable than an abundance of personal possessions could ever be.

Skinner, of course, did not write explicitly...
about positive psychology. Instead, he wrote about the pursuit of the Good Life. Continuing the theme B. F. Skinner initiated seven decades ago, over the last 15 years positive psychologists have been attempting not only to discover what the Good Life entails but also how to use psychology to make the Good Life possible for all people. The Good Life is the end goal of all positive psychologists; to discover how to live the Good Life would be for the positive psychologists to have done everything they wanted to do. Likewise, Frazier states that the purpose of the Walden Two community is to discover what the Good Life is and how to make it a reality. According to Frazier (and therefore Skinner) the Good Life is a combination of health, as little unpleasant labor as is possible, the opportunity to utilize talents and develop intimate and satisfying relationships, and time to relax (Skinner, 1976, p. 147–148). Walden Two is essentially Skinner’s blue print for achieving the Good Life and a number of his proposals find at least some support in the positive psychology literature. A positive psychologist might well read this story and say this is exactly what the positive psych movement is all about.

Of course, not everyone will come away a convert. There is a reason why the writing was criticized, and there are a number of reasons why Walden Two might well be considered a dystopia rather than a utopia. The Walden Two community might well remind some readers more of Jim Jones and the People’s Temple than of paradise. One of the biggest issues is that controlling human behavior by controlling contingencies seems to take away free will. One must ask whether it is ever acceptable, no matter how benign the intentions, for psychologists to engage in behaviors that, at least on the surface, look a lot like manipulation of individual desires, suppression of dissenting opinions, and absolving individuals of responsibility for their undesirable behaviors. Despite all its good intentions, one might reasonably ask, if the creation of Walden Two were a research proposal, would it pass an IRB and should it? Skinner has answers to these questions and presents many of them in Walden Two, but they are certainly questions worth asking. If Walden Two doesn’t appeal to you, you are not alone. Skinner’s own wife, Yvonne, once said, “We had tremendous arguments about Walden Two. I wouldn’t like it; I just like change and privacy” (Skinner’s Utopia, 1971) and Skinner’s father, to whom the book is dedicated (along with his mother), told Skinner that he thought “the only sensible things in the book were said by Castle” (Skinner, 1979, p. 347). That said, however, one author argued, at the 50th anniversary of the book’s publication, that reception to the book today would probably be more positive than it was at the time it was released. She wrote, It could be that we have simply lived longer with Darwin, Freud, Marx, and Madison Avenue and are less shocked by the idea that we are not free. It could be that “science and technology” in 1948 called forth the A-bomb, while “science and technology” in 1998 call forth the Internet and a cure for cancer. It could be that the image of our nation’s inner cities puts us more in touch with the real horrors of scarcity and misery, against which happiness, self-control, and productivity look just fine as goals for humanity. And against displays of rapacious arrogance, wealth and power, more equal division of fewer goods looks sensible as an economic goal. (Day, 1999)

One way or the other, with the 70th anniversary at hand, Walden Two remains a classic in psychology. After all, the fictional Walden Two community and the field of psychology share a common goal and a goal that most of us have for our own lives: to make our own lives and life for all people the best we can possibly make it. If you are interested in behaviorism, the history of psychology, or how to use psychology to live a better life and create a better world, you might want to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the publication of Walden Two by reading or re-reading the book this year. Behaviorism: It’s not just for Skinner boxes anymore. And it hasn’t been since 1945 when Skinner made his first real foray into the discussion of what behaviorism means for the control of human behavior and betterment of the human condition in his writing of Walden Two.

References


Heather A. Haas, PhD, received her BS in psychology from Rocky Mountain College in Montana, an MPH in psychology from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, and a PhD in personality research from the University of Minnesota (where her behavior genetics seminar was held in the “Skinner room”). Dr. Haas is currently a professor of psychology at The University of Montana Western where she teaches the introductory course, developmental, abnormal, personality, social, behavior analysis and capstone seminars in areas including positive psychology, the psychology of happiness, and survey research. Dr. Haas’s research endeavors are split between personality psychology and paramiology (i.e., the study of proverbs). When Dr. Haas was an undergraduate, she had very little respect for behaviorism. But her opinion changed when she read Walden Two the summer after she graduated and in later coursework with Dr. Chris Cullen at St. Andrews and Dr. Gail Peterson at the University of Minnesota.

Vance Keelman is a 2015 graduate of The University of Montana Western (UMW), where he earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology with a minor in legal studies. He first read Walden Two while taking a class on behavior analysis, and it was in this class where he took a liking to behaviorism. Vance was really drawn to Walden Two due to the possibilities of a real-life Walden Two-like community being created, a community in which behaviorism was used to shape the entire culture. It was also during this class that he decided that he would eventually like to become a research psychologist and a college professor. He is currently coordinating the UMW SafeRide program and is applying to graduate programs in psychology.

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A lot of college professors have fairly linear careers where they excel in college, get into graduate school, and become professors at age 27 or 28—that was not Dr. Christopher Kilmartin’s path. Instead, he has been a college professor as well as an author, stand-up comedian, actor, playwright, consultant, and professional psychologist. Planning to retire at the end of the year, he uses the present interview to tell his story and provide many insights that he hopes will help readers along the way to anticipate their early careers and discover who they are.

In his own words, Dr. Kilmartin says that he was very much a late bloomer, finishing in the bottom half of his high school class. As he explains, “I did better in college, but I graduated during the worst economic recession in the United States in the last 50 years. I couldn’t find a job, so I decided to go to graduate school. I had never really thought about that as an undergraduate, so I became sort of an accidental graduate student. Then, I got a very lucky break when a local community college instructor abruptly resigned with two weeks to go before the beginning of the spring semester. Because of the short timeline, only a master’s degree was required for the position, and I had earned mine about three weeks earlier. Much to my surprise, I got the job and began my first day as a full-time instructor on my 24th birthday. I thought I had really arrived. But it turned out that I was wrong.”

He laughs before continuing. “Forty-five PhDs applied for my job at the end of the semester, so after that, I worked with inpatients in a mental health facility. I later applied to a PhD program and was very fortunate to get in at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). I was 27 when I started back at graduate school, and that was where I really hit my stride. A student further along in the graduate program teaching a psychology of women class said to me, ‘It seems like something ought to be said about the men. Chris, would you do some research and give a guest lecture in my class?’ ”

He agreed and went to the library to check out all of the gender-aware textbooks available on men at the time. He says, “The first amazing thing that really grabbed me was the fact that men were dying 7 years earlier than women on average. Now, that figure is 5 1/2 years, but it is actually 13 years in Russia. There are some physiological factors involved, but I was...
astounded to learn that a toxic part of the masculine behavioral role was quite literally killing us.

Gender Education—Know Your Default Options

Are you aware of the influence of sex stereotypes in your life and how these stereotypes may affect your behaviors, health, relationships, and even your career opportunities? According to Dr. Kilmartin, “I have never been as enthralled with a subject as the psychology of men, and I decided in short order that this was going to be my specialty. It was also a good thing to specialize in because it was so new that I knew more about it than any of the faculty. That was quite an advantage.”

Since then, Dr. Kilmartin has gone on to encourage gender education and violence prevention in a number of ways. For example, he has recently been consulting and training with the military to make it a more egalitarian place for men and women. One of his primary messages is this: “Men are often raised where the worst insult you can give a boy is to suggest that he dances like, acts like, looks like, or throws like a girl. Thus, we get told from an early age to watch what girls and women do, and for God’s sake, don’t do it. This is a toxic message, which encourages us to disrespect girls and women and also to distance ourselves from some very adaptive behaviors like crying, speaking honestly to a friend, telling somebody you care about them, taking care of your health, or having vulnerable emotions.”

“What happens next,” Dr. Kilmartin explains, “is what Dr. Ronald Levant calls the masculine emotional funnel system where sad, unconfident, worried, or jealous emotions are all unacceptable to us, so we convert them into anger. That is part of what is behind the violence problem that we have, along with a lot of other things like child maltreatment and the influences of the media that provide a lot of violent role models for boys and men.”

In Dr. Kilmartin’s opinion, one of many solutions to much of this is simply to embrace additional gender education, especially for boys and men. He says, “We need to help boys and men understand that they are being manipulated by other men, boys, the culture, and girls and women too. We need to start talking to boys about what it means to be a man, and boys are really interested in this too. For example, The Men of Strength Clubs in Washington DC is an after-school program for boys to talk about what it means to be a man in the modern world. Boys are actually very hungry to talk about this stuff; every high school that the club has gone into has a waiting list.”

An analogy that Dr. Kilmartin likes to use is this: “If you want to change a default option on your computer, you need to know that it is a default, and then you need to be motivated to change it. For example, maybe you don’t like a feature, or maybe you do, so you just leave it alone. Then, you have to figure out how to do it, so gender education fulfills that first part by telling us what the default options are so that we can decide if we are motivated to resist them and undertake the process of learning how to do that.”

The Value of Humor

Possibly one of the most interesting aspects of Dr. Kilmartin’s personality and teaching technique is his unique use of humor, which he began to polish during the summer before he went to earn his PhD. He says, “I was in my hometown of Baltimore, and I had a friend who was a guitar player and had this big outdoor party every year where his band plays. He said to me, ‘Hey, you are pretty funny. Why don’t you get up between sets and tell some jokes?’ I said, ‘Well, sure,’ being a big show-off and of course forgetting at the moment that I didn’t have an act. I did what a lot of desperate comedians do: I stole some jokes from other comedians. I think I went over okay, but what I really remember is how much I liked the idea of standing up on a stage and trying to make people laugh.”

When Dr. Kilmartin went to VCU for his PhD, he also started writing his own material and visiting the Richmond Comedy Club every week to do his “10 minutes” at their open mic nights. “I eventually won a couple amateur contests and started getting paid, so it became one of the many part-time jobs I held through graduate school.”

However, Dr. Kilmartin never made the connection at the time that this would actually turn out to be an important part of his professional training, which he believes has been invaluable in his career. Looking back, he says, “It is always helpful to make people laugh in the classroom. If nothing else, it keeps them paying attention. If it is really done well, it can provoke an insight or kind of hit you in a different part of the brain.” More specifically, his performance background helped him compose a stage show called Crimes Against Natures about masculinity, which he has performed more than 200 times at over 100 campuses. For him, this highly biographical piece was very satisfying because it represented “a real integration of a lot of different roles: the performer and the researcher, as well as the person and the scholar.”

He has also written and is currently touring with a lecture/storytelling/multimedia hybrid called Guy Fi: The Fictions that Shape Men’s Lives. He says, “The idea of Guy Fi is to name the social pressure that we call masculinity so that, once people are aware of it, they can be in a position to resist conforming to it when a person hurts
them or it conflicts with another life goal or value. I think that part of masculinity exists in the culture and also in the marketplace. People are selling masculinity to men and manipulating us. If we become aware of these manipulations, we are in a better position to choose things from an informed point of view rather than just going along with ‘the program.’

What Men Don’t Know About Other Men

In Dr. Kilmartin’s empirical research, he has found this: “When you see a gender-based violent crime, women hating is usually not far behind. However, most men like women and are friends with women.” In addition, he says, “Most college men don’t like it when other men tell sexist jokes or refer to women by the names of their genitals or by animals names and so forth. The problem is that they overestimate other men’s acceptance of those kinds of attitudes. This is comparable to laughing at a joke that you don’t think is funny. If I watched you laugh, I would think that you thought it was funny. So what we are trying to do is to help men understand that they are not alone if they like and want to be allied with women.”

“A lot of men feel the same way,” he says, “so we are trying to amplify the healthy voices, which are in the majority even though they are very closeted. One of the things we did to test this was to bring men into a lab and ask them to fill out surveys that measure sexism and rape-supportive attitudes. Then, we gave them the same survey and asked them how they thought the average guy in the room filled it out to compare the real norm versus the perceived norm. As it turns out, the men all thought that their peers were more sexist than they actually were. If you are an egalitarian-minded man, you are in the majority. Hopefully, that knowledge will help free you to speak up when you hear sexist attitudes.”

Another study involved getting men to behave in the direction of the attitude by telling them, “Here’s a sexist statement that offends you. Challenge it.” Dr. Kilmartin says, “We didn’t ask them if they were offended by it; we just said that they are offended by it. In this brief intervention, we actually got a measurable change in the participants’ own sexism. This is because, once you behave in the direction of an attitude, it can change you internally. After all, everybody knows that people look to their own attitudes to shape their behaviors, but what is less obvious is that people observe their own behavior, which can affect their attitudes too.”

Mentorship Comes In Different Packages

Dr. Kilmartin also credits multiple mentorship experiences for shaping him into the man and the researcher he is today. “First, I had a great undergraduate mentor, Dr. Kenneth Stewart, who actually told me about that first really lucky break where I became a professor. Ken is probably close to 80 now, and we just published a paper together. I have known him forever, and I remember that he gave me some ‘tough love’ that really woke me up when I was kind of underperforming in graduate school the first time. Actually, that story is in his memoir.”

Dr. Kilmartin’s graduate school mentor at VCU was Dr. Stanley Strong, the most cited living author in counseling.
Dr. Christopher Kilmartin, PhD, (University of Mary Washington, VA) is a college professor, author, stand-up comedian, actor, playwright, consultant, and professional psychologist. He holds a PhD in counseling psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University and is a licensed clinical psychologist with a great deal of experience consulting with businesses, college students, human services workers, athletic departments, the military, and counselors. Having coauthored multiple books, Dr. Kilmartin’s major scholarly work is The Masculine Self (5th edition Sloan, 2015, now coauthored by Andrew Smiler), which has also been translated into Korean. Dr. Kilmartin delivered the keynote address at the NCAA Violence Prevention Summit in 2011 and has also consulted with the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Army and Air Force, and the international group, Democratic Control of the Armed Forces. He served as a consultant for 3 years with the U.S. Naval Academy on a revision of sexual assault and harassment prevention curriculum. He was a scriptwriter for an Army training film on the same topic. Dr. Kilmartin was the Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the U.S. Air Force Academy for the 2013–14 academic year. In 2007, he was the Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Gender Studies at the University of Klagenfurt, Austria. He was elected to fellow status in APA in 2008 and is a past-president of APA’s Division 51. In 2015, the University of Mary Washington granted him its Professional Achievement Award.

Understanding Who You Are
Just as you have to live the lesson that mentorship will teach you about your true potential, Dr. Kilmartin says you also have to take a kind of inward journey to understand whether you are following certain sex stereotypes because of societal pressure. To anyone hearing these ideas for the first time or wondering to what degree society has influenced them, he suggests that “talking to other men about it can be a really important step.”

He also provides the following advice, “People are adapted to criticizing messages that come to us in plain language. For example, if antipornography activist Dr. Gail Dines (Wheelock College, MA) showed you a sign that says, ‘Women are worthless. Throw them away. They are disposable,’ you would think, ‘Oh, that is a horrible thing.’ In text, you can understand this right away. However, that is exactly what porn culture teaches boys and men, that women have no past, future, personality, or desires. Thus, we have to help people learn how to be critical of images that they are receiving as well. That doesn’t come as naturally as criticizing something that you hear in plain language. After all, consider those Axe Body Spray commercials—they are way over the top, and even 14-year-old boys know intellectually that a million women aren’t going to come running if they use this product. However, the message still bleeds into their psyches, so we need help people become more media literate too.”

What You Can Do
Whether referring to gender education or his winding career journey, Dr. Kilmartin’s message to encourage others to look inside themselves and see their full potential is clear. As far as violence prevention, he says, “We need lots of young people—and lots of young men—to do this work on the gender-based side. I hope that some of my work will help inspire younger men and women to try to take on some of this work because it is obviously a really serious social problem that we are facing.”

To advise students interested in this area of psychology, he says, “I think you need to have a good grounding in basic psychology. I also think that the psychological paradigms are inadequate for handling complex phenomena such as gender and violence prevention. For instance, my students also read some biology, history, economics, and journalism because I think you have to be a broad scholar. The solutions to violence are multifaceted. Some are psychological, behavioral, educational, legislative, and involve law enforcement; you have to come at multifaceted problems from a lot of directions.”

Dr. Kilmartin believes that perceptions about sex stereotypes and violence prevention are “heading in the right direction.” He doesn’t expect sexism to be over in this lifetime, but he does believe that the social structural conductions that shaped gender stereotypes in the first place are slowly eroding. “There is very little work that men do that women can’t do now. Families are shrinking. Most families need two incomes, so we are seeing men and women doing a lot of the same things as opposed to the 1950s stereotypes where men and women didn’t have a lot of common ground. I think that is unmistakable, and what that means is this: Young men who think they can use their father’s and grandfather’s formulas to get along in the world are going to find this increasingly difficult. It is not their fathers’ and grandparents’ worlds anymore.”

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During an undergraduate semester abroad in London, Dr. Matthew K. Nock worked in a psychiatric hospital where he was exposed to patients who had been hospitalized due to severe self-injury. He says, “Some of the patients had cut their arms, one had pulled out an eyeball, and another who I became quite close to ended up dying by suicide. I saw people’s lives affected by self-injurious thoughts and behaviors in terms of impairing their ability to function, causing distress and concern to those around them, and in the most extreme case, ending their own lives.”

Since then, Dr. Nock went on to obtain more than 20 years of experience in self-injury and suicide research to help improve the way that clinicians identify those at risk, monitor that risk, and better prevent these thoughts and behaviors before they occur. He received his PhD from Yale University in 2003 and now teaches at Harvard University (MA).

Dr. Nock has received multiple awards from the American Psychological Association, the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, and the American Association of Suicidology. Funding for his research has been made available through the National Institutes of Health and several private foundations. Perhaps most notably, he received a MacArthur Fellowship in 2011, which is a $500,000, no-strings attached grant for individuals.
who have shown extraordinary ingenuity in their work and promise to do more.

According to Dr. Nock, “I was going to work one day when I got a phone call, and the person on the other end of the line asked me, ‘Do you know anyone who has ever won a MacArthur Fellowship?’ I said no, so he said, ‘Well, you do now. You are one of this year’s awardees.’ It was an amazing experience. More than anything else, I was excited at the exposure and recognition that this brought to suicide research, which has been wonderful. I think it has allowed us to do more experimental work and take risks that we wouldn’t have been able to take otherwise. Not a lot of clinical psychologists have received a MacArthur Fellowship, so it was also nice to have clinical psychology recognized in that way.”

Are Suicide Rates on the Rise?

Despite what you might have been led to believe by the media, according to Dr. Nock, suicide rates in the United States haven’t really gotten worse when you look at the big picture (e.g., from 1900 and 2000). However, rates for suicide haven’t gotten better either.

As Dr. Nock explains, “The rates of suicide overall have increased in the last 10 years. However, they decreased in the 10 years before that, so it seems that there is always a bit of an ebb and flow. Although suicide is a leading cause of death, it is a fairly low base-rate behavior. There are 40,000 suicide deaths each year in the United States, and when you break that number down into groups such as middle-age men and older women, you will see more variability from year to year because these are smaller groups. Each year, some groups go down and some go up, but if you take a longer view, the rates have been pretty stable.”

In regard to rates of self-injury, he and other researchers are less certain, partially because of a lack of longitudinal data on the issue. “Only in the last 10 or 20 years did researchers and others start to look at nonsuicidal self-injury in a systematic way. Anecdotally, self-harm seems to be certainly on the rise. For example, many teachers and clinicians say that they didn’t see anybody engaging in self-injury 20 years ago; now, we see estimates suggesting that 10 to 20% of high school students engage in these acts. Thus, we think it is rising, but there aren’t good data to document that yet.”

Advancements in Research

One of the challenges of conducting self-harm and suicide research and preventions is that people often intentionally hide their thoughts of suicide or their intent to hurt themselves for a number of reasons. As Dr. Nock explains, “I think there is still unfortunately a lot of stigma around the experience of self-injurious thoughts and behaviors, so people sometimes fear how others are going to respond. I have often heard of a concern that, if you are a student, it could negatively affect your academic standing. It could harm relationships. It could lead to loss of standing at work or on an athletic team and so on. I think there is always a concern that you might be locked in a hospital against your will and have your rights and privileges taken away from you. Thus, many people don’t tell anyone about these thoughts because they think there is going to be a negative reaction from others and that they can handle it on their own.”

In response, Dr. Nock and other researchers have tried to develop better ways to detect suicidal thinking and predict suicide behavior. Their research has included using behavioral tests such as the Implicit Association Test (IAT), the emotional Stroop test, and others to ask people to respond to self-injury and suicide-related stimuli to try to measure how they are thinking about suicide.

For example, the IAT is a well-known test developed by Dr. Anthony Greenwald and colleagues in the area of social psychology to measure how people think about other groups, their own groups, how people think about men versus women, old versus young, and people of different races. Dr. Nock says, “We modified this test to measure how people think about self-injury or suicide by having participants classify, for instance, suicide-related words or life-related words, as well as self-related words and other-related words. What we hypothesized and found is that those who are quicker to sort words when suicide- and me-related words are paired to the same side of the computer screen are at significantly increased risk for future suicidal behavior. Performance on this test actually helps to predict suicide attempts over the next few months above and beyond patients’ own predictions, above and beyond clinician predictions, and above and beyond other risk factors.”

There is a lot that we don’t know about suicide and self-injury. This is such an important problem, and there aren’t enough people studying it.”

“We have also been doing studies increasingly out in ‘the wild’ or the real world,” Dr. Nock adds before explaining some of the reasons why this has proven to be essential to his research. “One reason is that self-injurious thoughts typically happen out in the world. Not in the lab. We can’t ethically try to make people self-injurious or suicidal in the lab to study the phenomena of interest. Instead, we have to go out into the world to emergency departments and psychiatric inpatient units to study people who are currently suicidal using real-time monitoring such as smart phones and biosensors.”

Dr. Nock believes that this has provided better information about what these thoughts look like in the real world and has also highlighted just how difficult this problem is to study. “These are fairly low base-rate behaviors, so we don’t know when in time and place that they are going to occur, and it is going to be transient in nature. When people have suicidal thoughts, this will typically last a few days or weeks, and so it is difficult to identify people at risk, capture their thoughts and behaviors, and study their influences in the real world.”

Looking to the Future

According to Dr. Nock, a big push of his research moving forward will be going out into real clinical and school settings to see how he can apply what he has learned in the lab to improve clinical care on the frontline. “We will continue to try to advance our understanding of suicide and self-harm, and attempt to push the field in directions it hasn’t gone in before. We are doing everything from working with large samples of people to trying to understand some of the subtleties of suicide behaviors in terms of risk and protective factors.

We are continuing to do lab-based work to understand what kind of psychological processes drive these behaviors. And as I said earlier, we are increasingly going out into the field to use new technology to
understand how these behaviors unfold in real-time to get better at prediction and prevention in ways that can be used by clinicians to have a real impact on people’s lives.”

“I am also hopeful that some of the students reading this will be motivated to study this area because they are needed. There is a lot that we don’t know about suicide and self-injury. This is such an important problem, and there aren’t enough people studying it.” In terms of room for advancement and improvement, Dr. Nock believes that one of the most exciting areas where younger researchers will have a special advantage is through the explosion of new technologies that are often best understood by the younger people who are using them. “For example, the use of smartphones, iPads, and social media platforms can really help us understand people and what influences them in a way that we have never been able to do before. Its opens up opportunities for new interventions in terms of pushing out interventions to people’s electronic devices. There is a new world of possibilities that could improve our ability to understand, predict, and prevent.”

Advice for Students
For students interested in pursuing a career in self-injury and suicide research, consider whether you have the particular characteristics that Dr. Nock seeks for passionate researchers in his own lab. He says, “We want people who care deeply about what they are studying and who are passionate about improving our understanding and ability to predict and prevent these outcomes. We also want people who are nice, very hardworking, and interested in making sure that research is conducted in the right way. Research is often extremely tedious and time-consuming work; we want people who are really passionate and dedicated so that it gets done in the best way possible.”

To practice these skills, Dr. Nock encourages anyone interested in research to take content courses like Intro to Psychology and also to build a strong understanding in Research Methods and Statistics, which he says were some of the most important courses that he took for his own research as an undergraduate and graduate student. He also believes that “there is no substitute for experience, so I would encourage students to get as much research experience and clinical research experience as they can.”

“What should you avoid?”

“Don’t ignore someone talking about suicide, don’t dismiss it, and don’t joke about it. I think the simplest and probably the best advice I can give is this: If you think someone might be at risk of suicidal behavior or making a suicide attempt, simply ask them. We know that about two thirds of people who die by suicide told someone ahead of time that they were thinking about death, wanting to be dead, or about suicide. Of course, most people who are thinking about suicide will never go on to make a suicide attempt, but if someone is thinking about it, or if you think they are thinking about it, always ask them.”

What should you say to this person?

“Whether the person says that they have been feeling depressed or thinking about death, I would recommend saying, ‘Hey, I am concerned for your safety, are you thinking about suicide?’ Just ask them, straightforwardly. If they are not, they won’t typically be offended by this. If they are, sometimes they will share that information with you. Then, I would just suggest responding in a calm, but concerned, way. Do your best to get them to talk to a professional about what they are experiencing, whether that be talking to their clinician if they have one, going to their university’s health center, talking to a resident assistant, or calling a hotline. Do whatever you can to get that person to talk to a professional so that they can get a formal evaluation and get into treatment if needed.”

What should you avoid?

“Don’t ignore someone talking about suicide, don’t dismiss it, and don’t joke about it. I think this is a way to miss an opportunity to give someone help who needs it and who might be expressing, even subtly, a desire to let others know what they are thinking and to get help. If you sense or hear that someone is thinking about suicide, again I would just ask them straightforwardly and then do whatever you can to get them help.”

Ask an Expert

How can you recognize someone who is considering or has attempted self-injury or suicide?

“I think that the simplest and probably the best advice I can give is this: If you think someone might be at risk of suicidal behavior or making a suicide attempt, simply ask them. We know that about two thirds of people who die by suicide told someone ahead of time that they were thinking about death, wanting to be dead, or about suicide. Of course, most people who are thinking about suicide will never go on to make a suicide attempt, but if someone is thinking about it, or if you think they are thinking about it, always ask them.”

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Brain and Behavior and Abnormal Psychology. As tutors, they meet with students throughout the semester to facilitate successful learning and studying strategies, while also reinforcing and expanding their own knowledge.

CONVENTION/CONFERENCE: The chapter sponsored a trip to Syracuse University’s (NY) Career and Graduate School Fair, where students met with representatives from a vast number of colleges and universities. Students explained their goals and interests, and school representatives showed what their particular programs had to offer. Thinking about the future in this format—informal as well as focused—is often an important first step for students aspiring to be the professionals of tomorrow. After the event, students attended a dinner with Dr. Theresa White (advisor) who provided guidance as they reflected on their experiences.

St. Francis College (NY)

SOCIAL EVENT: In an effort to revamp the chapter, the officer team published the first issue of their monthly e-newsletter called the St. Francis College Chapter E-Newsletter. This e-newsletter features Central Office news, event details, and Psi Chi history. Additionally, the e-newsletter includes an #TheStudentVoice segment dedicated to the thoughts, opinions, and works of Psi Chi students. The Psi Chi Spotlight Nominees section provides a monthly recognition of members who have actively participated in chapter activities, have been model members, achieved an honor related to psychology, and/or conducted research in the field.

RECRUITMENT: The e-newsletter was conducted research in the field.

Chapter Activities

With over 1,000 chapters, Psi Chi members can make a significant impact on their communities. Let us know what your chapter has been doing and share your fund-raiser ideas with others. See submission information listed below.

Submission deadlines*

• Fall: June 15
• Winter: October 15
• Spring: December 15
• Summer: February 15

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

Submission specifications

• Only activities that have already occurred and are submitted in paragraph form will be published.
• Do not send future plans, calendars, or summarized lists.
• Limit reports to 250 words. If you wish to report more extensively on a special activity, series of programs, etc., contact the Central Office at psichieye@psichi.org.
• Write your report in the third person rather than the first person (e.g., “the chapter sponsored” vs. “we sponsored”).
• Include full names, degrees, and titles of speakers/leaders, their institutions, and their topics.
• Report specific chapter events such as: discussions, lectures, meetings, socials, fund-raising events, conventions, field trips, and honors received by students, faculty members, and/or the chapter.
• Report attempted solutions to chapter problems—those that were effective and those not so effective.
• Color photos are welcomed; the number of photos per chapter is limited to two per issue. Include accurate, typed captions. Photos may be mailed (include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for returned photos) or emailed to psichieye@psichi.org. For digital photos, email only high-quality resolution images (600KB) using a 5-or-higher megapixel camera. Do not send digital printouts from a photo quality printer.
• Photographs and chapter reports submitted to Eye on Psi Chi may be featured on our website (www.psichi.org).

ABBREVIATIONS:

• ACHS: Association of College Honor Societies
• APA: American Psychological Association
• APS: Association for Psychological Science
• EPA: Eastern Psychological Association
• NEPA: New England Psychological Association
• MPA: Midwestern Psychological Association
• NEPA: New England Psychological Association
• SWPA: Southwestern Psychological Association
• WPA: Western Psychological Association
• SCPSA: Southeastern Psychological Association
• WPA: Western Psychological Association

EYE ON PSI CHI
Chapter Activities

Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

FUND-RAISER: In the fall 2015 semester, the chapter encouraged members to save up their pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters throughout the semester as a quick and easy fund-raising activity for the organization. Another big fund-raiser that the chapter does every semester is selling Daffin’s Candy Bars®. This has proven to be successful semester after semester in helping raise money for the organization and the induction ceremony.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: In the beginning of October, three university professors provided support on a graduate panel that the chapter helped organize. They gave information to students about different programs offered for graduate school and also about what it takes to get into graduate school and how to be a stand-out candidate. Also in October, the chapter cosponsored the event with Psychology Club. Members got the opportunity to meet the officers and faculty members, interact with each other, play “Jeopardy: The Psychology Edition,” eat Chipotle®, and celebrate the birthdays of three special faculty members. The event was well-attended and created a buzz for the chapter.

Temple University (PA)

FUND-RAISER: The chapter formed a partnership with Kaplan Incorporated® to help members access study materials, funding, and boost their confidence in a postundergraduate future. In exchange for promotion on social media outlets such as Twitter® and Instagram® and hosting a Kaplan information session once per academic year, the chapter is able to provide its members with discounts on Kaplan courses and materials. Kaplan Incorporated also supplied the chapter with scholarships for Kaplan graduate school preparation courses, and a financial need-based essay contest is underway to decide on a recipient. Through this partnership, the chapter has boosted the value and utility of its membership, while also empowering members to achieve and improve themselves for the future.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter’s first event of the semester was a crash course on the multitude of research labs recruiting on campus. With more labs and research projects beginning each semester, students need all the help they can get to find the correct fit for them and the proper way to go about seeking research positions. Officers presented information about each major research lab, shared their individual research experiences, and then answered questions posed by the students in attendance. Common topics included how to courteously contact psychology faculty, how to behave and stand out during a research assistant interview, and the general experience of working in professional research environments.

Towson University (MD)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter conducted its semesterly Peanut Butter and Jelly (PB&J) Sandwich Drive for
Our Daily Bread on September 23, 2015. After gathering an abundance of supplies, 20 students (Psi Chi officers, general members, and Psychology Club members alike) met on campus to set up two PBJ sandwich assembly lines. Each student took on a duty, and the two lines raced one another to see who could make the most sandwiches in the least amount of time. This was a great way to have fun, bond, and contribute to a charitable cause. The students made a grand total of 150 PBJ sandwiches to be donated. The sandwiches were then delivered by the officers to a very grateful Our Daily Bread, a nonprofit in Baltimore that provides individuals with meals, job-related training, and counseling. The chapter plans to host another PBJ Sandwich Drive this semester because of the impact they saw their effort make to the people who utilize Our Daily Bread’s resources.

**York College of Pennsylvania**

**FUND-RAISER:** At the college’s Fall Fest, the chapter had a table to raise funds for the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) walk. Individuals were invited to buy a chance to guess the number of candy corn in a jar, with the top three winners receiving gift cards for various local vendors. The event raised more than $30 for the walk to support NAMI. At the walk, several students also served as volunteers, and some chose to participate in the walk, helping raise awareness about mental health concerns.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** As a service to campus psychology and general education programs, the chapter began to host weekly tutoring sessions for Psy100 general psychology students to drop in and get help with understanding course material. This program serves approximately 300 general psychology students.

**MIDWEST**

**St. Ambrose University (IA)**

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** On September 26, 2015, the chapter participated on the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walk of the Greater Mississippi Valley. NAMI is a fund-raising event that helps raise mental health awareness. The chapter was part of the largest team of walkers, comprised of more than 120 people. In addition, the chapter raised $3,500 for the local NAMI chapter.

**University of Missouri**

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter invited students from the university’s school psychology program to present to the organization about their experiences, goals, and recommendations regarding
the University of Missouri’s school psychology programs. The event included presentations of what career options individuals have with a degree in school psychology. All three representatives had a unique experience with their advising faculty and their hands-on experience involving their education and previous experience that landed them in a school psychology program. Members enthusiastically asked questions about the different career paths a school psychology degree can pertain to in addition to gaining great knowledge on the application process to graduate school in general.

RECRUITMENT: Every semester, e-mails are sent to all psychology students about the chapter. More than 60 students attended the first meeting of the fall 2015 semester. Generally, the first meeting is a short introduction to the organization where officers explain the goals of the organization and answer questions. This semester, the officers implemented a new tradition in hopes of creating a stronger, more interactive organization. At the end of the meeting, the attendees were split into groups. Each officer headed a group in two ice breakers and facilitated a discussion about the university, psychology, and Psi Chi. This allowed members to create new connections with one another and with the organization.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
University of Colorado Denver

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: Members participated in the Psychology Department Annual Research Showcase where graduate and undergraduate researchers shared posters of their research activity.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Members volunteered, as they do every month, at the Tennyson Center in Denver (CO). Students interacted with 8- to 10-year-old, at-risk children by playing games and cooking the kids a healthy dinner. The Tennyson Center is Colorado’s leader in the treatment and education of abused, neglected, and at-risk children. Basically, students provided these children with positive role models and helped them forget their situations and have some fun.

SOUTHEAST
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (FL)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: For the past year, the chapter has worked with AMIkids Volusia. AMIkids is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that helps transform and guide troubled kids onto a path with a bright future. This is done by helping many youth individuals develop confidence and life skills to enable them to accept more personal responsibility. Since 1969, AMIkids has been providing an environment to help guide more than 115,000 youth individuals. With the help from the chapter, they will be able to continue to do so even more effectively.

This fall, AMIkids Volusia held a week-long event called Superhero Week, which acted as their open house. This event was hosted in order to enter into a contest to win a computer lab for their program. Because the program has been under construction throughout the summer, the chapter wanted to help make the place more presentable by painting the recreation room, conference room, and community areas. This was an excellent opportunity for the chapter to help make a difference in the lives of these troubled kids.
COMMUNITY SERVICE: This fall, the chapter organized an event with the ERAU Counseling Center that promotes awareness of stress relief. The event was titled Pumpkin Smash and revolved around festival events (e.g., pumpkin smashing, carving, tossing, painting, and bowling). The chapter wanted to host an event that allowed everyone to relax and have fun by putting on a free event for all students, faculty, and staff. This event took place during midterms when everyone had been stressed and needed a moment to let loose. The Counseling Center donated materials (e.g., brochures, hotline magnets, and give-away bracelets) to spread awareness on mental health issues (e.g., stress, anxiety, depression, and suicide). Having this support allowed the chapter to show that it is okay and normal to experience these situations, and allowed participants to be aware that Counseling Center is always there for the Embry-Riddle community.

The chapter worked with five local companies to receive more than 125 donated pumpkins for the event. With approximately 130 participants, the event was a success. Everyone enjoyed their time and had a lot of fun. The chapter looks forward to gaining more partnerships to expand the event next year.

Florida International University
MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: When discussing psychology, many picture a therapist sitting in an office listening to a patient talk. However, the field of psychology offers a wide range of opportunities other than the traditional clinical setting. The chapter’s goal was to raise awareness of the different paths of psychology by inviting Rick Cristancho (CEO of IBEXONE) to present an innovative approach to treating children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Rick showcased a robot named NAO that works with behavior analysts to help develop social skills for children with ASD. The biggest surprise for members was when Cristancho told them that a psychologist helped design the software and applications for the robot. Some of the members volunteered to interact with the robot.

RECRUITMENT: “Standout!” The chapter offers this new incentive for new and existing members. With around 109,000 bachelor degrees in psychology awarded each year, how can a student stand out? At the university’s career fair, the chapter talked to students about Psi Chi and the opportunities the society offers including the chapters new program. The chapter secured collaborations with 20 psychology research labs to get students involved in research.

SOCIAL EVENT: Members sat face to face at the chapter’s first Psi Chi Social, which was set up similar to a “speed-dating” session. After getting acquainted, members were clustered into groups to play the Marshmallow Challenge. This fun exercise made the teams work together to build the tallest structure out of tape, yarn, dried spaghetti, and a marshmallow.

Liberty University (VA)
SOCIAL EVENT: This year, the chapter hosted an event called GRE Prep Psychology Bingo. This event was
Chapter Activities

great way to expose students to the material and test their knowledge in a fun environment. Topics focused mainly on concepts, terms, theorists and their theories, social concepts, and physiology of psychology covered throughout collective psychology classes. Students were given a definition, and they had to know the answer in order to place it on the board. After each individual placed a guess, someone would give the correct answer. By giving them the opportunity to guess, they were able to remember the answer to the question. Without this opportunity, they would only know if their answer was right or wrong if they got BINGO. Overall, this was a fun, yet challenging, activity that allowed psychology students to test their knowledge of psychology terms and theories.

Roanoke College (VA)

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: Two faculty members within the department worked this year to promote mindfulness and stress reduction among students by pairing with an organization that publicizes that their technique enhances mindfulness and reduces stress. The organization did not have data to support their claims—only personal testimonials. Thus, they offered to provide their class materials for free if data were collected from the participants. The chapter advertised the event as a stress reduction and refocusing event for students the week before midterm exams were schedule to begin. Because there was a research component (i.e., pre- and postsurveys), students in psychology courses could earn research credit for attending and participating. Also, as an interactive lecture that provided information about the technique, the event allowed for student questions, and also provided time for the attendees to complete a Zentangle. Students in the honors program were granted honors credit for attending. Offering both research credit and honors credit increased the publicity of the event, the diversity of students who attended, and the total number of students who attended. Opening the event to non-Psi Chi members also increased the chapter’s recognition on campus, which has been a recent goal. It is the chapter’s belief that having some larger events will increase the likelihood that students who are eligible for Psi Chi will join the chapter, while students who are not currently eligible will join the club group. Efforts to publicize and incentivize the event were effective because the chapter saw more than a three-fold increase in participation.

FUND-RAISER: The chapter’s Dogs and Donuts event served two purposes: the first was to enhance the chapter’s presence and recognition on campus, and the second was to serve as a fund-raiser for the chapter. The event took place before finals week at a public area on campus that many students pass through (i.e., the back quad). Students were able to participate by buying donuts for themselves and/or treats for the dogs. The donuts and dog treats were 50 cents each. Those who purchased a donut or a dog treat were then able to interact with the dogs on campus. In recent years, many colleges have begun bringing dogs and other animals to their campuses during stressful points in the semester or have animals always available to students when they need some “creature comfort.” The event was well-received by students because the institution does not have a program that brings animals on
Unfortunately, the officers had so much fun during the event that they forgot to take photos!

University of Louisville (KY)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer’s in September, which is the largest event that promotes awareness, care, support, and research. A total of 600 communities across the United States participate. The Walk for Alzheimer’s uses four flowers to represent the different perspectives of those affected by the disease. The blue flowers represent someone with Alzheimer’s or dementia, the purple flowers are for those who have lost a loved one to the illness, the yellow flowers symbolize those who care for someone with Alzheimer’s, and the orange flowers are for those conducting or contributing to medical research to alleviate or cure the disorder. Tia Wells (president) believed the most powerful part of the event was the ceremony when the different colored flower holders were called on to raise their flowers in the air. After all the groups were called, every flower was in the air. The flowers were made like a windmill, so all the flowers started spinning when a breeze came in, and it looked like an Alzheimer’s Promise Garden.

University of Mary Washington (VA)

INDUCTION CEREMONY: As a chapter tradition, inductions were kicked off with the dramatic reenactment of the Platonic Myth. Every year, the chapter encourages current members to participate in this reenactment to welcome the new members. From the dramatic acting that the chapter incites in the participating members to the various Disney® characters that make up the figures in the shadows, the myth always produces laughs and a sense of community in those who remember their induction. Each year, a new professor is chosen, and her or his face is put on one of the characters. This year, Dr. Christopher Kilmartin was chosen. Symbolic of the character of the chapter, inductions are both fun and build community, which is why the myth has become tradition.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: Each year, the chapter sponsors a series of events intended to help majors prepare for graduate school applications. So far, Dr. Mindy Erchull (advisor) has hosted a psychology GRE preparation session to help students determine the steps to prepare for the exam. The chapter also sponsored its yearly Graduate School Forum during which a panel of professors and graduate students answered questions for eager students planning to pursue graduate study after graduation. This year, Drs. William David Stahlman, Laura Wilson, and Erchull served on the panel. Last, a workshop to teach seniors the dos and don’ts of writing personal statements was held by Dr. Erchull. Dr. Erchull is not only the faculty advisor, but also an integral part of the chapter’s graduate school preparation series. For this reason, she has earned the title of “Professor of Life” among some of her students.

West Virginia University

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: Dr. Elizabeth Levelle, the psychology department’s major advisor, spoke at the chapter’s September meeting about preparing for graduate school and what steps
Chapter Activities

undergraduates should take at this point in their careers. The education chair hosted an Analyze This! dinner in which students had the opportunity to have dinner with a graduate student in the department’s Behavior Analysis Program. At this event, students can ask questions they have about grad school or program requirements.

FUND-RAISER: Every Wednesday, club members sell pizza to raise funds for the club and for service projects.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter’s Holding Every Life Precious suicide prevention and mental health awareness program chair hosted a movie relaxation night and a glass painting event to help students balance work and relaxation time. The service chair provided multiple occasions for members to cook dinner for children and adults being served by the Morgantown Family Grief Center.

SOCIAL EVENT: Social events gave chapter members the opportunity to meet incoming first-year students and reconnect with last year’s members. So far, the chapter has hosted an officer and chair picnic at the home of Dr. Dan McNeil (advisor) and a member cookout. Meeting attendance has been on an upward climb, so much so that they had to find a larger room in which to meet!

WEST

California State University, Sacramento

RECRUITMENT: Two to four days out of the month, officers organize a tabling event in front of the psychology department building. Tabling events are hosted for the recruitment of new and interested members each semester. Tabling also helps spread the word about the great opportunities that Psi Chi has, both at the local and international level, and the resources that members and interested members gain access to as Psi Chi members.

RECRUITMENT: The chapter offered a 2-hour information session at the beginning of the semester for interested students to learn more about Psi Chi. Here, all officers were able to speak one on one with fellow students to discuss what Psi Chi means to them. The information session also gave students a chance to connect with Dr. Knifsend (advisor) to inquire about the chapter and the application process.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: One of the chapter’s main goals was to assist both members and other students in connecting with the Sacramento community by raising awareness of volunteer, internship, and work opportunities. The chapter hosted an annual Opportunity Fair geared toward connecting students with volunteer, internship, or employment opportunities related to the field of psychology. Although this event was directed toward opportunities in psychology, it was promoted and open to all interested students. Students were able to engage one on one with representatives from community organizations about their work and ways to contribute to the local community.
Chapter Activities

A University of Louisville (KY) Chapter participates in the Walk to End Alzheimers.

B The second annual Opportunity Fair at California State University, Sacramento.

C West Virginia University Chapter and Psychology Club officers and committee chairs attend a social event at the home of the Dr. Dan McNeil (advisor) to talk about plans and events for the upcoming year.

D Tara Weese (president) and Ben Rein (Psychology Club president) present Dr. Dan McNeil (advisor) with the Florence L. Denmark Faculty Advisor Award at the first West Virginia University all-member meeting of the semester.

E University of Mary Washington (VA) officers at inductions.

F West Virginia University’s Dr. Dan McNeil (advisor), Psi Chi and Psychology Club officers and chairs, and incoming members at the first meeting of the semester.

G University of Mary Washington’s (VA) Grad School Prep Series.
Show Off Your Psi Chi Pride!

Supplies are limited. Check back often for new items and promo codes on our Store’s main page. T-shirts and additional products available online.