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Paul Hettich, PhD
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Connecting Across Chapters Across the World

The real value of Psi Chi membership goes beyond access to awards, grants, and scholarships; it surpasses the opportunity to publish in an Open Access research journal; and it fully eclipses the effect of adding the recognition of hard work on a résumé. The real value in Psi Chi is captured in the resources that emerge from making connections with new people. Although the monetary and scholarly recognitions of our Professional Organization are important, remember the final words of the induction ceremony, “We welcome you to Psi Chi’s fellowship of common interest, mutual assistance, and high endeavor.”

Your chapter provides opportunities annually to engage with your peers, but Psi Chi International provides richer possibilities. Each year, over 22,000 new members join Psi Chi from all across the United States and increasingly from other countries. These lifetime members share one thing in common—they pursue psychology rigorously at a 4-year institution. When one considers all the various parts of our social and biological selves, sharing good grades in at least three courses on a single topic is a small commonality. Consider instead the variation among our membership. With over 1,100 chapters with at least one in each of the 50 states plus chapters in 12 countries, Psi Chi members reflect a rich geographical and cultural diversity. Psi Chi members attend small colleges and large institutions, both public and private. There are many ways to take advantage of our organizational diversity; consider these four ways.

Partner With Other Chapters
Using the online chapter directory (http://www.psichi.org/?page=chapter_search) and some investigative skills, identify the chapter president or advisor at another Psi Chi chapter and make a connection. If the other chapter is just across town (or maybe there is a Psi Beta chapter across town at a two-year college), pool resources and bring in a speaker neither chapter could afford alone. With two or three chapters, there may be enough interest to do a bigger philanthropy event or just add another layer to the benefits of doing service. Any event would be augmented with a social event that allows members to interact and converse. If the chapter is across the country, an online connection is more likely. Using video conference tools, members could share ideas for making the chapter better or exchange research talks. With chapters around the world, there are so many interesting questions that might emerge because, as cultures diverge, conversations get more interesting. For this reason, I hope to see sustainable international growth in our organization in the coming years.

Connect With Psi Chi Programming
For individuals who prefer more individual connections, take advantage of Psi Chi convention activities. There are sessions and topics directed to benefit members in career, educational, and personal arenas as well as some fascinating research talks. However, there are also opportunities to connect with members directly at Psi Chi poster sessions. Better yet, attend the Psi Chi Chapter Exchange and sit with people from other chapters. When I was Western Vice-President, I gave prizes to people who sat with strangers and learned something about them. Conventions are about sharing ideas and making connections. After 25 years of attending conventions, I have dozens of professional and personal relationships that emerged from these events.

Connect in Cyberspace
Another way to connect is through social media. In addition to the official Psi Chi Central Office social media, many Psi Chi chapters have their own Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. Additionally, there are a large number of members who follow and contribute to Psi Chi LinkedIn discussions. The potential diversity of posts and discussions in social media is limited only by good judgment and relevance to psychology. Questions about careers, graduate school, and research programs are asked and answered by members of various ages and career trajectories. Here, interest might guide connection, but there is still rich diversity beyond that starting interest. My own social media presence is modest, but I see the possibilities for individuals who fully embrace this interaction style early in its development.

Connect Through Research
My personal preference for making connections across chapters is through large scale collaborative research projects. For various reasons, pooling research resources across locations is beneficial: increased statistical power, better generalizability, improved publication opportunities, and the ability for diverse voices to contribute to scientific discourse. To help Psi Chi members benefit from this new form of science project, the Research Advisory Committee reviews and recommends collaborative projects on our Conducting Research Resource on the Psi Chi website. Of course, there are many other free resources on our website covering topics such as Careers in Psychology, Graduate School, Attending and Presenting at Conventions, and Chapter Leadership. Be sure to take advantage of all the free information resources we provide.

Connect This Year
As we start the new academic term, consider these four ways to connect as part of a strategic planning initiative at your local chapter. The Board of Directors developed the Psi Chi 2020 Strategic Plan to identify goals for the organization that will bring greater benefits to our members. Maybe your chapter’s strategic plan can include actions to connect in each of these four ways.
Whether you’re still contemplating if grad school is for you, or if you’ve already been accepted (congrats by the way!), there are a few things you should know to make the transition as smooth as possible. The general advice? Graduate school is a very different environment than what is expected in an undergraduate education. Your job is no longer to consume knowledge—it is to produce it. How you structure your time, set personal goals, and interact with faculty or peers is going to shift from what you’re probably used to.

**Expectations and Structure**

**Change your expectations.** First and foremost, students need to shift their perspectives. Getting straight A’s is no longer your primary goal. Although you may still be taking classes, your research productivity takes top priority. This means that, unlike undergrad where you turn in a paper on a strict due date and await a final grade, the research projects in grad school no longer have a clear finish line. There is always something you can revise or improve on before you feel it is done. Thus, you will be better off if you start being okay with work that is “good enough.” It can be difficult to let go of perfectionist ways (which most high performers in undergrad can relate to) but it will make you more productive over time. Darley, Zanna, and Roediger (2004) discuss in more detail how the game changes from undergraduate to graduate school.

**Follow a schedule.** Besides changing your expectations for the type of work you’ll be doing, you should also think about how you will structure your working time. With fewer classes and deadlines, it’s easy to (a) feel like you have lots of free time or (b) feel like you should be working all the time. Neither one of these is ideal. Instead, many graduate students recommend treating grad school like a job. Graduate training is the first step toward your dream career—remember to treat it as such. Work in the lab from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and preserve any time outside of normal work hours for a personal life, as much as possible.

**Set weekly goals.** One of the best ways to ensure that your work hours will be productive is to hold a weekly meeting with yourself and outline your specific goals for the week. Each of these goals should then be mapped onto your calendar so each task has an explicit timeframe assigned; of course many of us should then double the amount of time we’ve allotted because we tend to drastically overestimate our efficiency. For example, if I want to analyze a large dataset, I might break it down as follows: Monday, 10–11 a.m. = code data, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. = analyze main hypotheses, etc. This gives you a more realistic picture of how long tasks will take you so you don’t get disappointed when “analyze data” isn’t finished in one day. It also helps those of us who are motivated by crossing things off our list.

**Write regularly.** Structuring your time wisely is a continuous theme in the life of an academic. You have likely by now heard the phrase “publish or perish.” This reflects academia’s value in disseminating research. That means writing is going to be the key to your success. You can write to move a manuscript or poster out the door or simply write to think through new ideas or theories. Either way, make sure you are writing regularly. For example, you might structure your time so that the first 30 minutes of each work day are dedicated to writing (before you check e-mail or get distracted by other responsibilities). The bottom line is to create a routine and stick to it. This will ensure that your productivity is consistent and you don’t burn out. Silvia (2007) provides excellent advice on writing if you’re in need of a bit more help.
Relationships Are Different

Choose your advisor carefully. Depending on what type of university you attended during your undergraduate education, you may experience different surprises when you arrive at grad school. For most students, they find that they work much more closely with primary faculty than they did in undergrad, which can be exciting but also overwhelming. Just remember that your relationship to advisors is very important because they hold the keys to your future projects and success. This means you should choose your advisor carefully and have a discussion about what to expect in the student/advisor relationship because each faculty member has a different approach to mentoring.

Ask questions. Regardless of who your advisor is, make sure you communicate regularly and openly. If you don’t understand the theories they are discussing or the tasks they’re asking of you, then ask questions! As a first-year grad student, you aren’t expected to know everything; and if you stay quiet because you’re afraid of how you look, you might find yourself in predicaments later on. After meetings with your advisor, be sure to follow up with a summary e-mail to ensure that you remember (and understood) your advisor’s expectations of you.

Form friendships. Thankfully, your relationships with other students in your program will greatly help in getting you through grad school. It may not be as easy to make friends in grad school as it was in undergrad, but it will surely make your life easier. You can start by talking to older students in your lab to get advice—about everything. Older lab mates are priceless resources when it comes to surviving grad school and often become your closest friends. Lab mates can give you insight into how your advisor works best, the expectations and norms of the program, or simple guidance through new analyses. Other students, especially in your cohort, can also make valuable friends. These friendships will provide needed social support or someone to commiserate with when grad school gets tough. Plus, the friendships may open doors to potential research ideas or new areas of collaboration.

Last Bits of Advice

Enhance your job prospects. Grad school takes a lot of time and resources and should be time spent to get you to your career goal. For example, if you have the chance, teach your own class. This will enhance your job prospects if you’re interested in an academic career and can also surprisingly make you more productive in your research. This is because teaching forces your schedule to be more structured and you to be more careful with your time. You can also get involved with national organizations and serve as a graduate student representative or get connected to faculty who review journal articles for publication. This is great practice for you to see the type of work out there and have a more critical eye on your own work.

Plan for your post doc. Although going straight from graduate school to a job is ideal, post docs are becoming more common. If you think you’ll need a post doc, start networking now! Most grad students secure a post doc position because of their connections and word of mouth. If you’re interested in an academic job, Kelsky (2015) offers great advice on how to make yourself more competitive in this tough job market. Webinars offered by the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (http://www.facultydiversity.org/) are also fantastic resources that provide tips and tricks on how to maintain productivity and health in the academic environment.

Personal health. Above all, make sure you take time for self-care. Find a hobby and make time for it (even if it’s just watching TV). Most of all, when you take some time for yourself, don’t feel guilty for doing so. That’s just counterproductive, and you’ll neither enjoy your down time nor get work done, so it’s a lose-lose situation. Take time off and feel proud for keeping yourself happy and healthy through grad school. This also includes resisting the temptation to make social comparisons. This can be highly detrimental in grad school because everyone is smart and skilled, which may lead you to experience higher self-doubt. Thus, although the “imposter phenomenon” may knock on your door, just remember that everyone is working on different projects, comes from different backgrounds, has different relationships with their advisors, and deserves to be in grad school. Just do the best work that you can do in your situation. Maintain a routine that fosters productivity, values work relationships, and rewards time for self-care.

Always remember that grad school is tough for almost everyone. But it also offers a great deal of opportunity to advance your skills and refine your focus on the career you want. Keep you dream career in mind from day one and spend every day making yourself more competitive for that job.

References


Culturally diverse experiences and the associated skills gained from these opportunities have become part of many undergraduate psychology programs. Furthermore, these skills are becoming more sought after in the workforce as organizations and institutions become more globally minded. As such, psychology departments are offering more study abroad programs, and psychology students are becoming more interested in the benefits gained from these experiences. This column presents two perspectives on study abroad benefits: one from an undergraduate psychology major who has studied abroad and another from a study abroad program faculty director.

**Study Abroad: A Student’s Perspective**

**Experience.** During my junior year of undergraduate studies, I began to ache for an educational experience that was more interactive than the daily classroom lecture. I have always been interested in traveling and learning about different cultures, so I went to a study abroad fair at Towson and was immediately sold. The opportunity to study what I love, psychology, almost anywhere in the world excited me. I chose to enroll in a faculty-led program, *TU Culture & Psychology: Italy From a Psychological Perspective*.

The moment we touched down in Rome and dropped our bags off at the hotel, we hit the ground running. The breathtaking scenery and architecture churned our curiosity and excitement. The trip consisted of split time in Rome and Florence where we visited The Vatican, museums, businesses, markets, gardens, crypts, palaces, churches, and many other sites. We had class time most mornings that largely incorporated discussions conceptualizing our experiences and developing new perspectives. Guest speakers from various businesses, organizations, and schools who shared their experiences were highlights of the program.

You might be surprised how much you can pack into a two-and-a-half week trip. Now, in my last semester of senior year, my only regret is not choosing a longer trip. I can only imagine how much more could be explored in a full semester- or year-long trip.

**Life lessons.** Aside from the obvious fact that I fell in love with the people and culture, the program taught me plenty of life lessons that simply cannot be learned in a classroom. Traveling with people I did not know before the program and having limited, if any, cell phone service helped us to branch out and see the world in fresh ways.

My study abroad experience also taught me networking skills. I feel more comfortable going to my professors to pick their brains, or even talking to someone in the waiting room of a car repair shop. Being abroad teaches you how to interact and collaborate with people from different backgrounds and walks of life, an incredibly valuable skill to possess.

**Intercultural competence.** Being abroad helps develop a global mindset, allowing you to see things from a new perspective.
Intercultural competence is something not a lot of students learn or truly understand because it is a skill that must be practiced. As the world constantly changes and shrinks in many ways, we must better understand and be able to interact with people from different cultures. Intercultural competence promotes a better understanding of the people and things around us, and fosters more meaningful communication. Prior to traveling to Italy, I thought I was pretty “cultured” or diverse in my thinking. I quickly realized how ethnocentric we Americans can be. Thanks to one of the guest speakers, I began to see deep contrasts between Italian and American culture. Until you cross borders and seas, you never truly grasp this sort of enlightenment that life can supply.

Some might say, “Well, yes, I have traveled abroad. I have been places,” but that is not quite the same. When you are with other students, engaged in another culture, and provided with the proper preparation for how to meaningfully internalize your experience, it becomes an even deeper journey. After studying abroad, you even appreciate your home, family, and friends more. You learn to see your country from a different perspective, and this will foster your thirst for seeing other parts of the world.

**Academics.** Although psychology is not as actively studied in Italy, I still gained much academically, professionally, and personally. Completing assigned journal entries helped me to articulate and process my experiences, making it easier to transfer what I gained abroad to my classroom back home. Being abroad helped me appreciate my strengths and address my weaknesses. It made me look at my education in a new way while helping me to determine my path in life. It sharpened my language skills considering how little I knew of the Italian language beforehand. It opened my eyes to the possibilities that extend further than Towson, Maryland. In this ever-growing global market place of our world, we increasingly come in contact with many cultures and people. To land the job of our dreams and effectively thrive in it, understanding of the people and things around us, and fosters more meaningful communication. Prior to traveling to Italy, I thought I was pretty “cultured” or diverse in my thinking. I quickly realized how ethnocentric we Americans can be. Thanks to one of the guest speakers, I began to see deep contrasts between Italian and American culture. Until you cross borders and seas, you never truly grasp this sort of enlightenment that life can supply.

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**Study Abroad: A Faculty Perspective**

**Academics.** Study abroad programs (short-term or semester-long) provide ideal environments for experiential learning. They allow students to learn about other cultures and people while learning academic content in real-world situations. One can learn about the history and culture of ancient Romans by visiting the Coliseum in Rome while interacting with current Romans and learning how the society of today is similar to the ancient society of long ago. Study abroad programs provide opportunities for students to learn about other cultures and societies by interacting with their people. Real-world examples and scenarios in other countries can help students apply their current knowledge and skills to the problems of tomorrow.

**Intercultural competence.** Intercultural competencies are a skill set wherein individuals are able to interact and work with individuals from diverse contexts. Study abroad programs provide immersive cultural experiences that are very difficult to recreate in a classroom environment. Through interactions with individuals from other parts of the world and from other societies, students develop competence that will aid them in their future endeavors. As the global community becomes more tightly connected, intercultural skills are becoming a highly valued and adaptable skillset. By better understanding the perspectives and ways of thinking of others, students can more readily adapt to diverse situations with individuals from all walks of life, domestically or internationally.

**Independence.** Part of studying abroad is about gaining the confidence to travel to new locations and meet new people without the comforts and support of the familiar. Being an autonomous individual who can adapt to diverse situations and the unknown is an important life skill. During study abroad programs, students are presented with many opportunities to exert their independence through their choices of activities in which to participate, sites to visit, people to meet, and experiences to embrace. Sticking to the familiar and safe is natural, but there are times when welcoming the new and different can help people grow in a variety of ways.

**Shine.** Study abroad programs are an opportunity for students to stand out from the crowd. Only a small percentage of students are able to and want to partake in this type of academic experience. Choosing to study abroad can be a resource in your personal and professional branding and can garner attention from future employers. For those who seek out and embrace all of the opportunities available while abroad, the experiences they gain can become real-world examples of triumph, adventure, and the overcoming of challenges.

What better time is there to study abroad than now? If you do not believe studying abroad is right for you, we urge you to think again. Each and every student can gain something from studying abroad including greater independence, mindfulness, gratefulness, empathy, and confidence. The tools for succeeding in one’s profession and in bettering oneself can be found through life-changing experiences like these. Take the initiative, get out there, and embrace the world.

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**Nia Jones** was born and raised in Baltimore, MD. She is a recent graduate from Towson University with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. Nia has worked for Refugee Youth Project, collaborating and leading projects for this nonprofit organization. Nia plans to pursue graduate studies in the upcoming year, specializing in clinical psychology. In her spare time, she enjoys taking and teaching youth dance classes. She believes dance not only improves children’s physical health but also their self-confidence and self-esteem. Nia enjoys traveling and the broader understanding of diverse culture it can inspire.

**David Earnest, PhD**, is an associate professor of psychology at Towson University (MD) where he teaches courses in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Behavioral Statistics, Introduction to Psychology, and Study Abroad in Psychology. He earned his PhD in psychology from the University of Memphis (TN: 2010). Dr. Earnest’s research interests include recruitment, intercultural competence, and teaching psychology through experiential learning. As an industrial and organizational psychologist, he has experience in recruitment and selection procedures, program evaluation, and experimental methodology across business, health care, education, civil service, and military organizations.
Community connection, student collaboration, and service have always been special areas of focus for Psi Chi. But in April 2016, these areas were of particular focus for Psi Chi chapters attending the RMPA Convention in Denver, CO. Birthed out of a conversation from the previous year’s Rocky Mountain Psi Chi Chapter Exchange, an idea was formed to broaden Psi Chi’s scope of philanthropy and service to make a larger impact in the city where the convention was held each year. The idea came as students reviewed the service projects they had conducted throughout the year. This sparked a conversation about what students could do as a larger group if they had a venue to work together. With the help of facilitators Drs. Elizabeth List and Krista Bridgmon, a plan was soon made to unite the Psi Chi chapters for a service project at the 2016 RMPA convention held in Denver.

Organizing a service event in a host city for an unknown amount of students is not easy, but through the efforts of Drs. Matthew Genuchi (Psi Chi Rocky Mountain Regional Vice-President) and Randyl Smith, a pilot service project was planned for Thursday, April 14, the morning of the first day of the convention. Chapters in the Rocky Mountain region were invited to participate by e-mail to their faculty advisors. Although many venues were considered for the service project including homeless shelters, trash collecting, and working at a food bank, the Denver CHARG Resource Center, a mental health facility collaborating with the students of Metropolitan State University of Denver, was ultimately chosen.

An innovative community established in 1989, CHARG serves adults with major mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar illness, and major depression. It is a joint venture of people who believe that effective & lasting empowerment of persons with mental illness occurs when they can make decisions regarding their needs, and that they thrive with dependable & ongoing services. (Charge website, 2016)

Early on Thursday morning, with nervous smiles, excitement, and bright-green T-shirts in hand, everyone piled into the vans ready for their service. Many of the students became acquainted with each other during the van ride and even shared research tips and resource information while they traveled the short distance to CHARG. The students were then warmly welcomed with Voodoo donuts and breakfast burritos by the staff and partners of the center. While munching on their treats, the students learned about the successful and award-winning program from CHARG administration and members of the CHARG community.

Then, the Psi Chi members split up and began work in the grounds outside of the center. Together they pulled weeds to make room for the center’s vegetable garden, planted flowers, picked up trash, mended fences, and made the yard outside the CHARG facility look great. As they worked, members of the CHARG community came out and helped. Soon, laughter and talk hummed along with the work as students and CHARG members, faculty advisors, and CHARG administrators all worked together as a team.

The project only lasted a few hours, but in that time, the contribution made by Psi Chi members to the facility seemed to brighten the day of the CHARG community. It also enriched the lives and learning of the students as they experienced a successful treatment community. In the process of laughter, conversation, and hard work, students had fun getting to know one another in a less formal environment, while working side by side to serve in a community that was in need. Best of all, Psi Chi was able to make a difference for the center, whose members were very happy for the extra help to get their garden ready for the year.

A debriefing with the participating students after the service activity indicated that the endeavor was hugely successful. It was strongly suggested that the preconvention service project become a permanent part of the Psi Chi RMPA convention activities. The students felt good about their contribution and enjoyed getting to know about the center and each other. They expressed their firm desire that Psi Chi be known for its service at a larger level, and they liked the idea of working together. As Psi Chi members assembled to focus on sharing their work and learning from each other, it seemed fitting that they also pause to first focus on one of the communities that they serve.

As with any new venture, there were some aspects that need to be fine-tuned should this preconvention service project be duplicated.
in the future. Due to the pilot nature of this endeavor, e-mail invitations were sent rather late in the planning process, so many of the schools planning to participate in the convention could not amend their schedules to attend the preconvention project. In the future, invitations to participate should be sent to faculty advisors before the convention submissions deadline so that appropriate travel plans can be made. Transportation could also be an issue if many more students had participated. Therefore, this should be considered when determining future locations for service. Finally, it was learned that colleges and universities in the host cites have relationships with potential venues that make for valuable resources when planning for a service project of this magnitude. It is important to work with Psi Chi faculty advisors in the host city to help direct and plan for the project.

As a faculty advisor and a participant in this project, I want to thank all the students involved, as well as the faculty, advisors, and administration. I was very proud to observe everyone’s collegiality and hard work. I think we all learned something through this project, and it is my sincere hope that we will be able to continue this endeavor for years to come.

Elizabeth List, PsyD is a licensed clinical psychologist, an associate professor, and the chair of the Psychology, Sociology, and Criminal Justice Department at Northwest Nazarene University (NNU) in Idaho. She enjoys teaching clinical classes and has recently taken 15 students on a trip to Europe to study the roots of the history of psychology in Europe. Her recent research interests have been in the area of the effects of ministry life on ministry families, particularly with the children of ministry workers. Dr. List is the faculty advisor for NNU’s Chapter of Psi Chi. One of the highlights of her year is going to RMPA convention with the Psi Chi students and watching them present.
Why Psi Chi Membership Is a Good Investment for Your Future
As higher education continues to increase in cost, the additional cost of membership in honors’ organizations such as Psi Chi may be more and more difficult for many students to afford. Although you might have worked hard to attain membership qualifications, you may even question how belonging to Psi Chi will provide you additional benefits than your already earned academic achievements. This article will highlight some of the reasons why becoming a Psi Chi member is a good investment for your future when you take advantage of the many opportunities Psi Chi has to offer you.

**Relationships With Like-Minded Achievers**

To meet Psi Chi’s membership qualifications, you need to earn a high GPA in your psychology courses, as well as your overall GPA, and have a high class ranking—accomplishments that will be represented on your transcript. Being a Psi Chi member is an additional way to indicate your commitment to the field of psychology to prospective employers or graduate schools. Psi Chi members represent the best and brightest of psychology majors, minors, and graduate students. Members are typically involved in research and service projects that supplement their education. Additionally, members develop professional relationships (and possible friendships) with other psychology students—the basis for professional networking. Finally, members develop relationships with departmental faculty, especially their chapter’s faculty advisor. These relationships provide additional knowledge and resources as you continue your journey in the field of psychology.

**Service Projects**

The field of psychology is concerned with improving the human condition. Through service projects in your own community, you will be directly involved with improving the life of others. Each local chapter is encouraged to undertake at least one service project each year, though there is no limit as to the number of projects in which a chapter may participate. Service projects include food, clothing, school supply drives, toy drives, holding a craft making session at a local nursing home, visiting local high schools to talk about psychology with teens, or help at a food pantry or soup kitchen. Through these projects, you will develop planning skills, connect with community leaders, and most importantly, help those in need.

**Leadership Opportunities**

Having your Psi Chi membership as a line on your resume’ or graduate school application is a good start. However, to benefit the most from your membership, you need to be an involved member. Consider seeking one of the many leadership positions available in your school’s chapter. By serving as a leader, not only will you be influential in what direction your chapter takes during the academic year, but you will also be developing leadership skills. Employers stated, employers and graduate school admission committees are seeking students who have demonstrated initiative, good communication skills, and the ability to work well with others. A leadership position in Psi Chi fosters these attributes.

**Scholarship- and Grant-Writing Skills**

Numerous scholarships and grants are available only to Psi Chi members. By applying for a grant, you will receive experience with grant writing, a skill that is an important part of our profession. Even if you do not receive the scholarship or grant, the preparation of the application requires you to present your academic and personal strengths (in the case of a scholarship) and prepare a well-designed research proposal (in the case of a grant). These writing exercises further develop your written communication skills and may point out to you areas in which you need to continue to grow.

**Research Guidance**

As previously mentioned, Psi Chi members are committed to adding to the body of psychological knowledge through research. Even if the words *research* and *statistics* make you perspire, psychology is a scientific field, so competence in research and statistics is expected of psychology graduates. The more experience you have reading and discussing research articles and conducting your own research studies, the more these skills will develop. An important attribute of psychology majors is their ability to critically evaluate information. This ability is developed through discussion and conducting research projects. Most Psi Chi chapters have research as one of their major foci during the year.

**Support at Regional Conventions**

The regional American Psychological Association (APA) conventions provide many events open only to Psi Chi members. One such event is a separate student research presentation session. You may still be accepted in the regular sessions, but your research will be more likely to be accepted when you compete against other students. Presenting your research is a major accomplishment and one for which you should strive. Regional APA conventions also provide a plethora of workshops just for you. Example topics include how to ask for letters of recommendation, how to write a personal statement, how to prepare a professional résumé, and more. Representatives from numerous organizations and graduate schools attend the conventions for you to meet and discuss your interests in detail.

So, even in the time of high cost for higher education, the investment in Psi Chi membership is well worth it. Be sure, however, to make an investment of time in your local chapter, as well.
While growing up in Italy, my favorite activities included watching animal documentaries on TV and visiting zoos and aquariums whenever I could. Marine mammals, in particular, have always been my favorite animals that I would spend hours watching while they engaged in various interactions with one another. Learning about these animals and their behavior has always been one of my greatest passions. I have always wanted to know what these animals thought, how they communicated, and what their interactions meant.

Until four years ago, I was still unsure about how to fulfill this passion. I was at the beginning of my undergraduate experience at St Mary’s University in San Antonio, TX, when I began to be involved in marine mammal research as one of the research assistants of Dr. Heather Hill, a faculty member of the psychology department who maintains active research on cetacean behavior and cognition in collaboration with SeaWorld San Antonio (SWSA). Since then, I have been dedicating time to the study of these animals daily.

**Observations in Captivity**

My very first experience with marine mammal research involved coding video recordings of captive killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) behaviors. It took several days of practice to recognize the animals, their individual characteristics (e.g., shape and size of dorsal fins, distinct coloration), and...
become familiar with the behaviors and categorize them. The more time I dedicated to this task, the more my interest in studying these animals grew.

The most intriguing aspect of this experience was the variety of behaviors the animals displayed. Through the observation of the behavioral patterns of the animals, I understood how many questions I had about them. What type of interactions do they engage in? Do social interactions differ according to the social group? What is the role of the mother in the development of her offspring? How does the behavior of calves change as they develop?

These were only some of the questions that I became interested in exploring, and that I had not thought about before this experience. My involvement with killer whale research through the access to video-recordings of the SWSA killer whale population led to the completion of several projects including several conference presentations, my honors thesis, and a manuscript that will be published this summer on the journal *Animal Behavior and Cognition*.

Through these projects, we have found evidence suggesting that killer whale mothers play an important role in the activities of their calves. Particularly, killer whale mothers seem to dictate the amount of time the calves interact with other killer whales, or engage in independent swim and play (e.g., motor, water, EED; Guarino, Olague, Solis, & Hill, 2014). Additional findings of killer whale sociality indicated that a killer whale calf maintained a higher level of mother-calf interaction, while it increased the time spent interacting and playing with killer whales other than the mother (Guarino, Hill, & Sigman, 2015). The investigation of the activity levels of a killer whale mother-calf pair over a 3-year period was also important to confirm the strong mother-calf bond that has been indicated in previous studies of different dolphin species (e.g., *Tursiops sp.*). The result of this study showed that the killer whale mothers adopted resting strategies that fit the calves’ physiological and developmental limitations. For example, during the first few months of the calves’ lives, the mother-calf pairs are more likely to engage in slow pattern swims, rather than surface floats, to give the calves opportunities to rest when they are not yet capable of floating (Guarino & Hill, 2015; Guarino, Hill, & Sigman, 2014). Finally, a review of the peer-reviewed literature of killer whale studies has helped to identify aspects of this cetacean that have received limited attention by marine mammal
researchers (Hill, Guarino, Dietrich, & St. Leger, 2016).

My dedication to marine mammal research extended to the study of other cetacean species. I was enthusiastic for the opportunity to expand my research to belugas (Delphinapterus leucas). Like killer whales, the literature on beluga sociality has also received little attention by cetacean researchers. This marine mammal’s sociality was clear from the observations that I have conducted at SeaWorld. Social and socio-sexual interactions, and play activities are among the most common behaviors that the SWSA belugas display, and the composition of the social group seem to play a role in the frequency and diversity of the activities. A study about the role of calves on the behavioral repertoire of older belugas indicated that the presence of calves creates a more enriched and stimulating environment for the social groups (Hill, Guarino, Crandall, Lenhart, & Dietrich, 2015).

**Behaviors in the Wild**

Since I began to study cetacean behaviors, I have wondered about the differences and similarities in the behavioral trends between the animals in human care and in their natural habitat. My work as an intern of the Alaska SeaLife Center marine mammal research team, and the collaborative efforts that Dr. Hill and I have established with the Marine Mammal Laboratory, gave me the opportunity to extend my knowledge of beluga behaviors to their wild counterparts by analyzing video footage of the Cook Inlet, AK, belugas and comparing their behavioral repertoire to that of SWSA belugas.

Due to the distance at which the behaviors were recorded, through remotely monitored video cameras, the analysis of the wild beluga footage was more challenging than expected. The knowledge of beluga behaviors I have acquired during my on-site observations at SeaWorld allowed me to recognize some of the visible, surface behaviors that resembled those of the captive population and distinguish them from the behaviors that are specific to the natural habitat (Guarino, Hill, & Polasek, 2015).

My curiosity to learn more about the behavior of this marine mammal led me to connect with other beluga researchers, who have conducted their research on different beluga populations. Anecdotal evidence from the experiences of these researchers suggested that some of the observed behaviors such as maternal care behaviors (e.g., calf’s position in relation to and distance from the mother during mother-calf swims), socio-sexual behaviors (e.g., body s-posture with pectoral fin raised out of the water surface), water manipulation with different parts of the body (e.g., bubble blowing, fluke slaps, breaches), and orienting behaviors (e.g., spy hops) are shared across wild and captive belugas. Other behaviors such as feeding, milling, and travelling behaviors are specific to wild populations.

**A Cognitive Approach**

Another enriching experience for my knowledge of marine mammals was presented by the opportunity to manage sessions of an ongoing cognitive study that Dr. Hill was conducting on bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus), Pacific white-sided dolphin (Lagenorhynchus obliquidenis), and beluga (Delphinapterus leucas) populations for a cross-species comparison. This study exposed me to a different research experience than that I was accustomed to by adding a manipulation of the external environment, and exploring another research area that fascinated me. Novel or familiar stimuli (objects or humans) were presented to the animals during free-swim scenario to examine the behavioral responses, and to determine whether species and/or individual differences were present.

The results of this research has suggested species and individual variability in the behaviors and the degree of attention the animals displayed to the different stimuli (Guarino & Hill, 2016). The access to three captive cetacean populations represented the opportunity to overcome the challenges of conducting studies on wild cetacean cognition. As confirmed by the killer whale and bottlenose dolphin article inventory, the category cognition was identified as one of the least explored research areas (Hill et al., 2016), confirming the importance of conducting studies on cetacean cognitive abilities when the access to the animals is provided.

**Waves of Opportunities**

My most recent experience with marine mammal research allowed me to join the Associação para a Investigação do Meio Marinho team to explore the behaviors of wild common dolphin (Delphinus delphis) and bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus) populations off the coast of Algarve, Portugal. During our boat surveys, I was able to apply research skills that I have learned through captive work to recognize the behaviors, and collect distribution and composition data of the wild dolphin populations.

Throughout the summer, I took advantage of every opportunity I had to observe the animals in their natural habitat, and detect the behaviors with which I was familiar through the research work I have conducted in captivity. In addition to the behaviors that were specific to the natural habitat such as feeding and travelling, I was excited to see that mother-calf behaviors, social and socio-sexual interactions, and orienting behaviors resembled those that I have observed through my work with captive animals. This field research experience also made me more aware of the importance of adopting behaviors that aim toward the conservation and the well-being of the animals.

**Assessing Animal Welfare**

In addition to providing amazing opportunities to learn about animal species that I am most passionate about, each and every marine mammal experience I had throughout my undergraduate career has given me the skills that mostly contributed to my growth as student, researcher, and person. The research work I have completed in the past four years resulted in a number of projects that I have presented at professional conferences. The results of these studies have
contributed to the cetacean literature, exploring a variety of topics within areas that have sparsely been investigated in the past such as activity levels, maternal care, sociality, development, and cognitive abilities.

My personal experience with marine mammal research with both captive and wild animals has taught me that captive research provides the opportunity to answer questions regarding the animal welfare, while also assessing aspects that are difficult to explore in natural settings. Wild research allows one to assess the variation in the animal behavior in response to human presence through fishing boats, trawlers, dolphin watching boats, or research vessels, and to develop actions that will minimize the disturbance of the animals. These observations indicate that it is important to simultaneously maintain in-situ and ex-situ conservation efforts because these combined efforts will allow for the assessment of different aspects of animal welfare.

References

Sara Guarino has received her bachelor of arts in psychology in the spring of 2016 from St. Mary’s University, San Antonio, TX. At St. Mary’s University, she has conducted the majority of her research work under the mentorship of Dr. Heather Hill. Sara has received several grants, scholarships, and fellowships from Psi Chi and St. Mary’s University to complete research projects and present at regional, national, and international conferences including the SWPA, the Animal Behavior Society, the Society for Comparative Cognition, the Society for Marine Mammalogy, and the APA. She has been accepted to the graduate school of Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX, where she will pursue her PhD in experimental psychology under the mentorship of Dr. Mauricio Papini, while carrying on her marine mammal research through collaborative work with other marine mammal researchers.

Heather Hill, PhD, completed her bachelor’s degree in psychology at Texas A&M University, College Station with a minor in oceanography in 1996. She earned her master’s (2000) and doctoral (2003) degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi under the mentorship of Dr. Stan Kuczaj. After 3 years working as a research assistant at the Navy Marine Mammal Program in San Diego, CA, with Dr. Sam Ridgway, she returned to her hometown of San Antonio, TX. Dr. Hill has been teaching psychology at St. Mary’s University, San Antonio, TX, since 2007 and is an associate professor. Dr. Hill spent the first 10 years of her marine mammal career conducting research on the mother-calf relationship and social development of bottlenose dolphins in human care. She also studied mirror self-recognition and mirror use in dolphins and sea lions. In 2007, she started studying the social behavior and cognitive abilities of belugas at SeaWorld San Antonio. She has also studied mother-calf interactions and calf development with killer whales. Currently, Dr. Hill has active collaborations with Dr. Deirdre Yeater and Mystic Aquarium, Dr. Kathleen Dudzinski at Dolphin Communication Project, Dr. Mike Noonan, SeaWorld, Georgia Aquarium, Shedd Aquarium, and the Houston Zoo.
A Year in the Life:
Our Formula for Sustaining an Active Chapter

Jeff Kukucka, PhD, Antonia Santoro, Savanah Clark, Julie Blandford, Kimberly Cates, Perri Hooper, Lillian Skeiky, and Joshua L. Milstein
Towson University (MD)

Cultivating and maintaining an active Psi Chi chapter is no easy task. Many chapters face the perennial challenges of increasing student involvement, organizing and funding chapter events, and transitioning leadership—all of which can limit a chapter’s productivity and its benefit to members.

At Towson University, our chapter has gradually developed a model that we feel has helped us overcome these challenges. Our model combines forethought, scaffolding, and an annual blueprint that balances consistency with flexibility. We describe a typical academic year for our chapter including many examples of events that have helped us revitalize our chapter.

Organize and Mobilize

Ben Franklin once said that “by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” Prior to each semester, our officers create a detailed schedule of our weekly events. Many are variations on successful past events, and others are brand new. The agenda notes what each event will require and which officer(s) will handle these duties. To stay ahead, we also arrange a weekly meeting time for officers and advisors, during which we plan events two weeks in advance.

The next challenge is to recruit and mobilize members. At Towson, we have both a Psi Chi chapter and a Psychology Club, which is open to anyone who is interested in psychology. By effectively combining these two organizations, younger students who are not yet Psi Chi members can get a jump start on participating in Psi Chi-sponsored events.

We advertise our weekly events in as many ways as possible including fliers, in-class announcements, and social media. It is important to be clear and consistent in how this information is shared so that members know exactly where to find it. We also try to schedule each event at the same time and (when possible) the same location. By doing this, our events become part of our members’ weekly routine, which results in greater attendance.
So You Want to Be a Psychologist?

Fostering professional development is a key goal for our chapter. As such, many of our early-semester events expose students to the many diverse subfields and career options in psychology. For example, at our “Get Psyched!” event, we invite 8 to 10 faculty from different areas of psychology to share information about their field and their own experiences. This event gets students thinking about their futures by illustrating the breadth of our discipline and providing concrete information about a variety of psychology-based careers.

We also sponsor a semesterly lab fair, where we invite current faculty and students to present posters of their own research, while newer students circulate and learn about the research being done at their own institution. This event connects students who want to get involved in research with researchers who can provide those opportunities. It also allows student researchers to share and discuss their research with others, which is valuable practice for those who will later present at professional conferences.

It “Pays” to Fund-Raise Early

Successful fund-raising efforts enable your chapter to support more ambitious and expensive activities later in the semester. For that reason, we try to build an early surplus of funds to have available for future events such as guest speakers, field trips, and induction ceremonies. Last year, for example, we were able to cover the travel costs of our officers who were invited to present at the EPA convention in New York.

Our simplest fund-raising methods are bake sales. They tend not to be overly time-consuming or expensive, and because members often bake and staff the table together, they also foster a sense of community. We try to host two bake sales per semester. Usually, one of these raises money for the chapter, and profits from the other are donated to charitable organizations such as the ASPCA or Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation.

In recent years, we have also designed and sold “Towson Psychology” T-shirts on two separate occasions. Once we design the shirt online, we advertise it not only to Psi Chi members, but also to all psychology majors and faculty. This allows us to gauge interest before placing our order. For larger chapters and departments that can buy shirts in bulk, this can be very profitable. Wearing the shirts around campus also provides advertising for your chapter.

Making Service Serve You

Community service is a crucial aspect of many Psi Chi chapters. To get our members involved in these activities both early and easily, we have found ways to incorporate community service into our weekly meetings. For example, as the weather turns colder, homeless shelters see an influx of new individuals, and food banks are often in greater need of food donations. To help alleviate this issue, we occasionally host a meeting where our members collectively make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, which we then donate to a local food bank.

Also, although many of us spend Thanksgiving surrounded by friends and family, those deployed in the military do not have this luxury. Around this time of year, we typically host a meeting in which our members write thank you cards to those who are serving our country overseas. These activities are easy to accomplish and make a meaningful contribution to both the local and national community, all while helping us reach our community service goals.
The Future Is Now

Many Psi Chi officers are seniors who will soon graduate and leave their chapter to a brand new group of officers the following year. To make this transition as smooth as possible, we recently adopted a system in which our members elect the following year’s officers just before Winter break. This gives the rising officers ample time to learn about the duties of their positions before they officially assume those roles later in the spring.

Once the new officers are elected, each current officer is responsible for teaching their successor about their future position. A critical part of this process is the creation of “transition binders,” which include documents that outline the key responsibilities of each position. Each officer updates their binder yearly, adding information that will benefit the next person in their position. Then, during the spring semester, the rising officers shadow the current officers and occasionally attend the weekly officer meeting. By doing this, they gain experience that allows them to “hit the ground running” when they take over leadership of the chapter next fall.

Lastly, December is a good time to share information with students who plan to apply for Psi Chi membership in the spring. To make this as easy as possible, we provide potential applicants with a clear timeline of when applications are due, when decisions will be made, when dues must be paid, and when the induction ceremony will be held.
Growing Our Service Efforts

As our efforts to fund-raise become more ambitious, so too do our community service efforts, as we begin to partake in more off-campus service activities. These events are important not only as a means of giving back to our community, but also as a way of representing our chapter outside of the university in a positive way.

The changing weather provides more opportunities for outdoor service activities in the spring. In the past, our chapter has sought out nature preservation and neighborhood enhancement events such as planting trees and cleaning up waste in local parks. We also try to identify community service events that appeal to the personal and/or professional interests of our members including volunteer opportunities at the Baltimore Zoo and Project Homeless Connect. In many cases, working with these organizations provides students with valuable networking and leadership opportunities as well.

One Door Closes, Another One Opens

With the year coming to a close, it will soon be time to admit new members and bid farewell to our graduating seniors. Our chapter hosts induction ceremonies in both the fall and spring, but the spring ceremony is typically much larger. Using the funds that we have accumulated during the past year, we are able to provide brunch for inductees and their guests, as well as invite a guest speaker to address our new inductees.

Our chapter also distributes graduation cords to seniors during the spring induction ceremony. Rather than giving cords to all seniors, we require our students to complete a set number of community service hours to earn their cords. Although we do our best to estimate the number of seniors who will receive cords at the ceremony, it is helpful to keep an extra supply of cords on hand, and to order these well ahead of when they are needed.

Finally, during this ceremony, our elected officers officially assume their new roles, and they each receive the transition binder for their position. This allows the new officers to review their binders during the summer and begin thinking ahead to August, at which point they will restart the process by putting their own spin on this same annual blueprint.

Conclusion

At Towson, this formula has given us the stability to remain productive, but also the flexibility to try new and ambitious activities. Rather than “reinventing the wheel” each year, our model gives us a stable foundation from which we can build on our previous successes. Insofar as many chapters face similar obstacles, we hope that sharing our experiences will help others find similar success in invigorating their own chapters.

Towson University is a campus of over 22,000 students in Towson, Maryland. In addition to 1,200 undergraduate psychology majors, Towson’s psychology department offers masters degrees in experimental psychology, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, school psychology, and human resource development. This article was coauthored by Towson’s 2015-16 Psi Chi officers, which include Antonia Santoro (president), Savanah Clark (treasurer), Julie Blandford (public relations), Kimberly Cates (vice president), Perri Hooper (historian), Lillian Skeiky (secretary), and Joshua Milstein (psychology club representative). Towson Psi Chi’s faculty coadvisors are Dr. Jeff Kukucka (jkukucka@towson.edu) and Dr. David Earnest (dearnest@towson.edu).
Program Your GPS:
Guidelines to Proficiency in Skills for Work and Career

Paul Hettich, PhD
DePaul University (IL)
To what extent are you prepared for the workplace with a baccalaureate degree in psychology, and what can you do to strengthen your readiness? This article explores the roles that skill development occupies in your journey to your first post college job.

Skills Triumph Over Content in the Workplace

The great majority of knowledge you gain in the classroom consists of the content of psychology—its diverse concepts, theories, and research. Because mastery of psychology’s content is emphasized in graduate psychology programs and is a measure of professional competence, naturally your instructors transmit this body of knowledge to you. The content of your coursework forms a critical component that you carry to the workplace and life. In addition, while you gain knowledge of psychology, you also develop several skills at various levels of competence through the assignments you complete, along with your internships and nonacademic experiences.

Yet, many teachers (perhaps a majority) do not articulate the particular skills embedded in their assignments. For example, when your instructor assigns your class a group research project that must be written APA style and presented orally in class, how often does the teacher articulate (or ask you to identify) the specific skills you can acquire from that assignment? (There are several involved such as collaboration, decision-making, critical thinking, problem-solving, and oral and written communication.) It is essential that you master not only the content of your courses but also

- know the particular abilities and skills you acquire from them,
- estimate your level of mastery of these skills, and
- search for careers in which they can be applied.

When you interview for a job, chances are the recruiters will not ask about the theories you studied or the textbooks you used; they have a general understanding about the nature of a psychology major. Instead, they are likely to ask about the skills and abilities you acquired, the evidence you can present to support them (have your skills e-portfolio available), and how you might apply those skills to the job you are seeking (research the position in advance). Recognize, however, that knowledge you gain in certain courses also facilitates skill development such as in statistics, research methods, and behavior modification courses. In general, whereas most teachers emphasize course content over skills, recruiters tend to emphasize skills over content. As a job applicant, you should extrapolate the skills embedded in your college coursework and related experiences, and attempt to apply these skills to the needs of the job you seek. If the company has previously hired graduates from your program, recruiters may assume that you have acquired the appropriate knowledge and skills, provided your GPA is sufficiently high.

Following the Guidelines [APA]

What Skills Can You Acquire From Your Psychology Major?

Aware of the growing public and student concern regarding the value of a college education, a task force of the American Psychological Association published the Curriculum Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major: Version 2.0 (APA, 2013). The Guidelines identified five learning goals for the undergraduate psychology curriculum. These goals should be reflected in your department’s offerings.

Goal 1: Knowledge base in psychology. “Students should demonstrate fundamental knowledge and comprehension of the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, historical trends, and empirical findings to discuss how psychological principles apply to behavioral phenomena” (p. 17).

Goal 2: Scientific inquiry and critical thinking. “The skills in this domain involve the development of scientific reasoning and problem solving, including effective research methods” (p. 20).

Goal 3: Ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world. “The skills in this domain involve the development of ethically and socially responsible behaviors for professional and personal settings in a landscape that involves increasing diversity” (p. 26).

Goal 4: Communication. “Students should demonstrate competence in writing and in oral and interpersonal communication skills” (p. 30).

Goal 5: Professional development. “The emphasis in this goal is on application of psychology-specific content and skills, effective self-reflection, project management skills, teamwork skills, and career preparation” (p. 33).

The five goals collectively generated 19 outcomes; that is, statements beginning with “Students will...”. In addition, the goals yielded 95 sets of developmental indices including foundation indicators (i.e., the skill level and content equivalent to a psychology minor or community college associate degree) and baccalaureate indicators (i.e., skill level and content expected at the completion of a major). To the extent that students complete these indicators successfully, up to 62 personal attributes (stated as skills or characteristics) can be inferred. (APA, 2013). In short, the revised APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major: Version 2.0 consist of one content goal and four skills-based goals. The goals reflect objectives or expectations for a psychology department to meet in its instruction and for students to achieve in their studies.

Skills Employers Seek [Hart/AACU]

To What Extent Do the Skills-Based Goals of the Guidelines Match the Skills Employers Seek?

In a study conducted for the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Hart Research Associates, 2015), a sample of 400 executives and 613 students were asked to rate the importance of a series of college learning outcomes for success in the workplace. Table 1 shows the proportion of employers and students who rated each learning outcome as very important (i.e., a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on a 0 to 10 scale).

Did you note the points of agreement between the college learning outcomes and APA’s four skill-based curriculum goals? The skills employers seek include those you can acquire from your psychology major, although—and this is very important—the contexts for learning and applying these abilities may differ widely (i.e., college versus workplace). Liberal arts majors such as psychology are traditionally...
designed to teach broad, cross-cutting skills such as those in Table 1, rather than prepare students for specific careers at the baccalaureate level such as business, nursing, or engineering.

Employer Versus Student Perceptions of Workplace Preparedness

In spite of a general level of agreement between employers and students on the importance of these learning outcomes, employers gave college graduates surprisingly low scores for their actual workplace preparedness on all 12 outcomes listed in Table 1. For example, whereas 66% of the students felt well-prepared in critical/analytical thinking (Guidelines, Goal 2), only 26% of the employers agreed. Regarding the application of knowledge and skills (Guidelines, Goal 5), 59% of the students felt well-prepared, but only 23% of employers concurred. For communications skills (Guidelines, Goal 4), 62% and 65% of the students believed they were well-prepared in oral and written communications skills, respectively, but only 28% and 27%, respectively, of the employers agreed (Hart Research Associates, 2015). The discrepancies between student and employer perceptions of proficiency are disturbing because, as an individual advances, the importance of those skills increases.

These discrepancies should give students and teachers serious cause for concern: Students, generally, are not nearly as prepared for the workplace as they think. Perhaps their perceptions are powered by their optimism, pride in their accomplishments, inexperience in the workplace, and other factors such as unrealistic expectations or the differing organizational cultures (issues beyond the scope of this article to explore). Research is needed to understand the perceptual gaps so that universities can explore possible remedies.

What Can Students Do to Strengthen Workplace Preparedness?

Employers in this sample emphasize the importance of acquiring applied learning experiences. Between 61% and 94% of the employers indicated that a company would be more likely to consider hiring a recent graduate if they possess the following experiences, in the order from most to less frequently mentioned (Hart Research Associates, 2015).

- Internship/apprenticeship with a company or organization
- Senior thesis/project demonstrating knowledge, research, problem-solving, and communications skills
- Multiple courses involving significant writing
- Research project done collaboratively with peers
- Service-learning project with community organizations
- Field project in diverse community with people from different backgrounds/cultures
- Study abroad program

These recommended applied experiences are readily available on most campuses and should be an essential component of your educational planning. Note that some experiences such as thesis, research, and writing courses are weighted toward development of “hard skills,” while service learning and field projects focus on interpersonal and collaborative skills, often referred to as soft skills or people skills. Coursework is essential to workplace success but so are experiences outside the classroom. You should try to complete as many of these experiences as your schedule permits, but recognize that they are not a “silver bullet” for being hired or for a successful first year in the workplace. A single internship, senior thesis, or field project does not usually establish skills firmly. Also, colleges and corporations differ significantly in their organizational cultures; your ability to adapt to those differences (not just your skills and prior experiences) will play a critical role in your success. Finally, your liberal arts and psychology coursework, especially the skills/outcomes acquired from them, are valued in most workplaces as Table 1 indicates, but they may not be enough. Most employers also seek knowledge and skills, and preferably work experience, in a particular occupational or career field.

The majority of employers think that having both field-specific knowledge and skills and a broad range of skills and knowledge that apply to a variety of fields is important for recent college graduates to achieve long-term career success at their company (Hart Research Associates, 2015, p. 2).

Consequently, you should also gain field-specific knowledge and skills through internships, jobs, and a career-related

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome (ability/skill)</th>
<th>% Employers</th>
<th>% Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ability to effectively communicate orally</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to work effectively with others in teams</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to effectively communicate in writing</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical judgment and decision-making</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to analyze and solve complex problems</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to innovate and be creative</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying current on changing technologies and their applications to the workplace</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to analyze and solve problems with people from different backgrounds and cultures</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted with permission from Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success. Copyright 2015 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities.
minor or double major. To learn more about various perspectives, advantages, and disadvantages regarding double majors consult Hettich (2014). I will address specific options for acquiring career-related, field-specific knowledge and skills with a psychology major in a subsequent article.

**Psychology Alumni Perceptions of Workforce Readiness**

*Landrum, Hettich, & Wilner*

The Hart Research Associates survey reveals a clear link between college learning outcomes and employer needs. For students whose job experiences and extracurricular involvement have been limited, focusing on the learning outcomes/skills acquired should help them articulate their skills in a job interview. However, there are additional perspectives on transferable skills. For example, in a survey conducted of psychology major graduates, Landrum, Hettich, & Wilner (2010) asked 78 alumni respondents to rate 54 workforce readiness items on a 3-point scale (1 = low, 2 = medium, and 3 = high) according to the level of preparedness that was expected when they were hired. The ratings varied from a mean of 2.75 to 2.93 for the following items (from higher to lower levels expected), indicating a high level of readiness expected of graduates upon entry.

- Possess self-discipline, including punctual attendance and dependability
- Act responsibly and conscientiously
- Work well with others
- Meet the needs of others, such as clients or customers
- Set priorities and allocate time efficiently to meet deadlines
- Identify, prioritize, and solve problems
- Make defensible and appropriate decisions
- Possess the ability to work without supervision
- Work independently
- Manage several tasks at once

An additional 27 items were rated at a mean of 2.5 to 2.73, indicating a medium to high level of preparedness expected in those areas. Compared to the learning outcomes identified in Table 1, the workforce readiness items focus on personal attributes and behaviors that may be characterized as skills or skills-related. To the extent a student exhibits and internalizes these behaviors during college, they are likely to practice these marketable attributes in the workplace.

**What Attributes Do Employers Seek on a Résumé? [NACE]**

In their annual survey of employers, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2015) asked respondents to identify attributes employers seek on a job applicant’s résumé. Typically, the résumé is used to determine whether an applicant should proceed to the interview stage. Between 53% and 80% of the 201 respondents identified the following attributes (in order of frequency).

- Leadership
- Ability to work in a team
- Communication skills (written)
- Problem-solving skills
- Communication skills (verbal)
- Strong work ethic
- Initiative
- Analytical/quantitative skills
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Technical skills
- Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
- Computer skills
- Detail oriented

As you study this list, identify the attributes that are similar to: (a) the four skill-based goals contained in the APA Guidelines (2013); (b) the college learning outcomes contained in the Hart Research Associates study (2015); and (c) ratings from the Landrum et al. (2010) alumni survey of workplace readiness. In short, the NACE (2015) list reflects employers’ priority for hiring applicants who exhibit both hard skills (e.g., problem solving, written communication, analytical/quantitative, technical and computer), soft skills (e.g., leadership, team work, verbal communication skills, and interpersonal skills), and internally driven attributes such as initiative, strong work ethic, flexibility, and adaptability.

**Other Elements in the Hiring Process**

**Work experience.** Although job experience was not explored in the Hart Research Associates (2015) and Landrum et al. (2010) surveys, 91% of employers in the NACE (2015) sample preferred to hire candidates with work experience. For the part- or full-time jobs you hold, be sure to inventory the skills you practice. In addition, seek to understand the individual and organizational dynamics that operate in your work environment so that you can transfer your experiences to future settings. If you have little or no job experience, be sure to obtain it because most employers will expect your résumé to reflect previous employment.

**GPA.** Some students believe that graduating with a summa or magna cum laude GPA is an automatic ticket to a good job. Other students may believe their sub-3.0 GPA is an automatic sentence to a low paying job. Neither belief is necessarily true. Most employers seek evidence of hard and soft skills, not just a GPA. However, according to NACE (2015), 69.3% of employers screen for GPA, and of those employers, 70% use a GPA of 3.0 as a cutoff score. Although GPA is important (and more significant in some jobs than others), it is not usually the most important criterion for hiring.

**Identify Your Skills**

But how do you know what specific skills you are acquiring and the competency level of each? Because your judgment will likely be subjective, I strongly recommend that you work with a career counselor. One tool that many counselors use is a card sort technique called SkillScan. SkillScan consists of 60 cards—each describes a specific skill. Cards are grouped in six categories: relationship, communication, management/leadership, physical/technical, creative, and analytical. The process typically includes the following steps.

1. You sort the shuffled cards according to your perceived proficiency in each skill: high, moderate, and no/low proficiency.
2. Then you sort the 60 cards according to the role you want to assign each skill in a job you seek: major role, secondary role, minor role, or unwilling to use the skill at work.
3. You sort the no/low proficiency cards by those skills you need to develop.
for a particular job or career (a “gap assessment”).
4. You create a personal skills summary of the skills in each category that you want to occupy major, secondary, or minor roles in your future work.
5. From this summary, you construct a skill wheel that organizes the 60 skills into 18 skill sets that can be used to identify careers that optimize your strengths.

During the card sortings, a career counselor is likely to ask questions and help you clarify and interpret your choices. Other counselors may use different techniques for exploring your skills. Regardless of the process used, your goal should be to have a clear understanding of your skills, your proficiency in each, and an idea of how to use them in a job or career. Without this information, you are likely to flounder in an interview and make inappropriate decisions regarding your work. When you work with a career counselor, also seek assistance in creating an e-portfolio of your accomplishments and skills—information which most employers will want to examine.

In conclusion, most employers are more interested in knowing the skills you bring to a job than in the concepts and research you mastered in your psychology major. Consequently, it is essential to know in advance the skills you developed during college, your competency level in each (recognizing that academic and workplace contexts often differ widely), the skills you prefer to use most, and careers that enable you to apply and expand them. In short, create a skills pathway to guide the knowledge you have acquired (and need to acquire) during college for job and career. Do this now, not after you graduate!

References


Paul Hettich, PhD, Professor Emeritus at DePaul University (IL), was an Army personnel psychologist, program evaluator in an education R&D lab, and a corporate applied scientist—positions that created a “real world” foundation for his career in college teaching and administration. He was inspired to write about college-to-workplace readiness issues by graduates and employers who revealed a major disconnect between university and workplace expectations, cultures, and practices. You can contact Paul at phettich@depaul.edu

Note: I am grateful for the comments provided on this article by staffing professionals John Jemison (Creative Financial Staffing) and Jon Keil (The Salem Group).

Psi Chi is interested in news about its alumni members. Please report significant personal events such as:
- civic activities,
- services,
- honors won,
- promotions,
- graduate degrees awarded,
- publications,
- weddings, and
- births.

You may also submit a photo (at least 300 KB) of yourself. Log in and tell us your news at http://www.psichi.org/?page=alumni_news

Material for publication will be printed at the discretion of the editor.

EAST

Larry Nelson, MS (09)
Pennsylvania State University
Larry was published in the Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences for his article titled “Accent, Gender, and Perceived Competence.” http://hjb.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/03/11/073986316632319.abstract

Rachel Gearhart, L.CSW (04)
Coe College (IA)
Rachel has lived in Alaska since 2006. She’s the assistant clinical director for the area community behavioral health center for adults and is the Southeast Region Representative of NASW Alaska Chapter.

Cassandra Davis, MS (11)
Indiana University South Bend
Cassandra completed her master’s certificate in ABA from Penn State, is working on her LMHC licensure, TF-CBT and BCBA certification, and currently is a therapist at Oaklawn’s residential campus.

Desiree Q. Luong, MS, TMHP, CBIA (07)
San Jose State University (CA)
Desiree was promoted to executive director at an agency with a regional initiative to connect children, adolescents, and adults to mental and behavioral health services.
EAST

Assumption College (MA)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: In the fall semester, the chapter created an annual antistigma tree that was hung up in the campus center. Members of the community pledged to end the stigma of mental illness.

SOCIAL EVENT: In the spring, the chapter hosted a movie showing of the film *Bridget Jones Diary*. Throughout the movie, members were asked to help create posters and handwritten notes promoting a positive body image. The notes were then spread across campus in popular or high-traffic areas such as the library, campus center, gym, and public restrooms.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter offered a graduate program information session with guest speakers from different programs to come share their experiences. The chapter also hosted an information session regarding research.

Western University (PA)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Finally, the chapter joined the citywide event, Working for Worcester. This was an exceptional opportunity for members to give back to the community in a day of service.

Eastern University (PA)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter volunteered with the Special Olympics for the fifth year in a row. This annual event hosted at Villanova University each fall is a highlight of the year for the chapter!

INDUCTION CEREMONY: The chapter hosted an annual induction ceremony in April, complete with a candlelight ceremony and an annual dinner. This year, the chapter inducted 10 members. The event was well-attended by Psi Chi members, department students, faculty, parents, and friends who wanted to celebrate with the inductees.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter sponsored an internship panel this spring. Psychology department students who were currently in internships shared helpful advice, wisdom, and insights with prospective interns.

McDaniel College (MD)

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: Dr. Steve Nida visited from the Citadel and gave an invited talk on February 25 entitled, “Making a Difference—Combating Ostracism, Bullying, and Other Negative Social Behaviors.” He had dinner with two chapter officers, and his talk was very well-attended.

National University of Ireland, Galway

CONVENTION/CONFERENCE: The Chapter hosted its Fifth Annual Research Presentation Night this year. Nine students presented their undergraduate research to their peers and a panel of judges from the school of psychology.

With more than 1,100 chapters, Psi Chi members can make a significant impact in their communities. Reviewing Chapter Activities in Eye on Psi Chi is a great way to find inspirational ideas for your chapter and keep in touch with your chapter after you graduate.

Activities are listed in the following categories:

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

Share your chapter’s accomplishments with others in the next issue of Eye on Psi Chi! Chapter officers and advisors are encouraged to visit http://www.psichi.org/default.asp?page=chapter_activities

Submission deadlines*

Fall: June 30
Winter: September 30
Spring: November 30
Summer: January 30

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

ABBREVIATIONS:

ACHS Association of College Honor Societies
APA American Psychological Association
APS Association for Psychological Science
EPA Eastern Psychological Association
MPA Midwestern Psychological Association
NEPA New England Psychological Association
RMPA Rocky Mountain Psychological Association
SEPA Southeastern Psychological Association
SWPA Southwestern Psychological Association
WPA Western Psychological Association
For many psychology students, the Annual Psi Chi Research Presentation Night was their first opportunity to present research and get valuable feedback from experts in their fields. Many students went on to present their undergraduate projects at national conferences in Ireland. The Best Presentation Award went to Eimear Bane, a third-year undergraduate student. Eimear’s research, entitled “An Investigation Into the Effects of Negative Mood Congruency on Eyewitness Testimony,” was supervised by Dr. John Bogue.

Saint Vincent College (PA)

INDUCTION CEREMONY: On April 24, the chapter inducted 25 members, the most since 2006. The ceremony capped off a wonderful year for the chapter. Ten student members presented their research at EPA 2016 and three had an article published in the North American Journal of Psychology.

Temple University (PA)

INDUCTION CEREMONY: In April, the chapter had its induction ceremony, honoring its newest members and welcoming them into the community. The new members were received with a ceremony highlighting Psi Chi’s benefits and international scope while praising their achievements before their guests. This induction was also important to the chapter because senior Gerald Van Buskirk passed his duties as president to sophomore Ross Divers. A new vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and undergraduate liaison were also welcomed into the board. The event concluded with the presentation of certificates and pins to new members, and an inspiring speech on the tenacity of psychologists from Dr. Deborah Drabick.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter was elated and honored to be the recipient of the Ruth Hubbard Cousins Chapter Award for 2016, and passed on the goodwill by dedicating part of the award funds to helping local causes. The chapter supplemented a donation of dozens of children’s books to Philadelphia READS with $100 from the award.

Towson University (MD)

CONVENTION/CONFERENCE: The chapter attended EPA in March 2016 in New York, NY. The chapter was invited by Dr. Deborah Harris-O’Brien (Psi Chi Eastern Regional Vice-President) to give a presentation, entitled “Getting Psyched About Psi Chi: Ideas for Invigorating Your Chapter,” at the convention on the topic of running a successful Psi Chi chapter. The presenters consisted of the chapter’s officers including Toni Santoro (president), Kimberly Cates (vice-president), Lillian Skeiky (secretary), Savanah Clark (treasurer), and Perri Hooper (historian). The main areas covered in the presentation included professional development, fund-raising, community service, and chapter trouble shooting and frequently asked questions. The presentation benefited the attendees at the session by providing them tips for smoothly running their own chapters and was also beneficial to the presenting chapter through providing networking opportunities with members of other chapters who provided insight about how their chapters are run. Chapter members were proud to represent A New Saint Vincent College (PA) members at their spring induction ceremony B National University of Ireland, Galway Chapter’s Eimear Bane (winner of the Best Presentation Award) with Chris Dwyer (president) C Thiel College (PA) Chapter inducts 15 members on March 29, 2016.
their university psychology department and are grateful for the opportunity to be invited to such an event.

**Wilkes University (PA)**

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter inducted new members this spring in conjunction with other relevant university academic honors societies in the humanities at Wilkes. Of all organizations, the chapter inducted the most members and has since elected new officers for the upcoming 2016–17 school year.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Every semester, the chapter organizes alcohol risk screening and anxiety/depression online self-report inventories for the general university population. This past spring semester, members again set up an alcohol risk screening table in the Student Union Building. The chapter recruited the advising of a university counselor who also helped members code the responses of the students who chose to participate. Members were able to assess their peers and constituents, distribute relevant literature, and inform the university population.

**RECRUITMENT:** From February 4 through 24, members recruited psychology students who held high GPAs and high moral character. The chapter was able to induct several new members. These efforts for recruitment ranged from distributing literature to members taking other students under their proverbial wings. The chapter was able to have a successful recruitment drive while maintaining and supporting the tight-knit nature of the university’s community.

**MIDWEST**

**Eastern Michigan University**

**RECRUITMENT:** The chapter has worked hard this year to offer a lot to the community and psychology majors. At the beginning of the school year, membership recruitment kicked off at the university “fajita fest” and through participation in “move-in-magic,” which helps new first-year students moving onto campus. Chapter meetings offered a number of interesting discussions from experts in the field. Topics ranged from a new neuroscience program, clinical work, industrial psychology, a Safe House discussion, graduate school, the GRE, and also using mural art to stop graffiti taggers. The chapter had a very active year and welcomed 13 new members.

**FUND-RAISER:** The chapter conducted a fund-raising event for Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. As part of the event, officers played the newly released Stanford Prison Experiment movie, and served pizza, pop, and cookies. Students and members who attended the event were also able to receive Learning Beyond the Classroom credit, which is mandatory for Eastern Michigan University graduation. A staff member from Big Brother Big Sisters discussed the organization’s mission and offered informational pamphlets to recruit “Bigs.” Funds raised for the event were donated that evening after the screening.
Kaplan University (IO)
COMMUNITY SERVICE: In spring 2016, the chapter formed a relationship with Healing Household 6 (HH6), donating $4,000.00. HH6 is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to helping caregivers of wounded soldiers who have posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The mission of HH6 is to strengthen the families of wounded warriors and includes providing human support and monetary help to military caregivers, some of whom may need to separate from the veteran due to the symptoms of PTSD. Thus far, HH6 has reported that the funds Psi Chi contributed have been used to help four families with living and relocation expenses.

Lindenwood University (MO)
COMMUNITY SERVICE: One of the chapter’s favorite service events is Habitat for Humanity. Five students and three faculty members participated in a groundbreaking ceremony near campus.

INDUCTION CEREMONY: The chapter inducted 14 members this spring. After agreeing to the mission of Psi Chi and lighting their Psi Chi candles, students were welcomed into the chapter with their family, faculty, and friends present.

CONVENTION/CONFERENCE: Chapter members were also very involved in presenting research. Members attended and presented at MPA this spring in Chicago, IL. Erin Kaser and her faculty mentor Dr. Dustin Nadler presented on “The Role of Motivation in Understanding Student Major Satisfaction and GPA” and Madison Vander Wielen presented on “Punctuality, Optimism, and Time Perception,” with her faculty mentor, Dr. Michiko Nohara-LeClair, during the Psi Chi sponsored poster sessions.

Purdue University North Central (IN)
COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter volunteered to clean the Family House, a nonprofit organization that provides space and time for court ordered families to spend time with their children under supervision. Members cleaned, sanitized, and organized the space (e.g., toys, chairs, tables). This project was crucial in providing a clean and safe space to the child-centered, family-focused, culturally diverse families in Porter County.

FUND-RAISER: The chapter had a fund-raiser during dead week to not only raise money for charity (the students voted on the Family House) but also to support student retention right before finals week. Members did this by providing food and games (ping pong, corn hole, etc.). Students were asked to donate money via an entry fee.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter had four faculty members lead a round table career and graduate workshop for all psychology majors and minors.

SOUTHEAST
Carson–Newman University (TN)
INDUCTION CEREMONY: On April 25, 2016, the chapter celebrated its members with an induction ceremony, as well as an awards banquet. The chapter honored graduating seniors, inducted new members, and transitioned to a new slate of officers.

Drury University (MO)
Chapter inducts 14 new members on April 6, 2016.

Towson University Chapter’s officers and advisor presenting at EPA 2016 on the topic of running a successful Psi Chi Chapter.
Chapter Activities

Ashley West (outgoing president) also surprised the advisors with a gift of a photo album of various events during her time as a Psi Chi student member.

**RECRUITMENT:** The chapter participated in a campus-wide student activities fair in the fall and spring to help get the word out about Psi Chi. At each event, members handed out brochures and hosted a raffle for free Psi Chi T-shirts.

**Davidson College (NC)**

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** This semester, nine new members were inducted into the chapter. All nine individuals were honored to join this prestigious organization, and its current members were excited to welcome them! At this event, the chapter also announced its new officers for the 2016–17 academic year. The evening was topped off by a fun, food-filled celebration.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** This spring, members helped the college’s Buddy Club with their annual benefit dinner. The Buddy Club, partnered with Angels in Need, provides an opportunity for local children with special needs to build much-needed friendships as well as a safe haven where they are welcomed and appreciated. Every year, the organization puts on a benefit dinner as a celebration for the families and students involved in Buddy Club. The chapter reached out to Buddy Club to assist with setup and cleanup and to serve food during the event. This service opportunity allowed the chapter to help others in the community and share in the ideals and goals of such a wonderful organization.

**Milligan College (TN)**

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter participated in a community health fair. Members created a poster about the role of video games and mental health.

**CONVENTION/CONFERENCE:** The chapter sent three members to the National Conference of Undergraduate Research to present their research.

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter inducted 14 new members in April. At this induction ceremony, members also created an edible book entry for the library’s annual contest. This is the second year in a row that the chapter has participated. Their book design this year was themed around the Rorschach ink blot. The chapter also had fun tasting “miracle berry” tablets and different sour foods.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** To celebrate “Brain Awareness Week” the chapter hosted a book club discussion event and invited a speaker. Members read the book *Born on a Blue Day* by Daniel Tammet. The speaker was a local man recommended by the Crumley House, a residential facility for individuals with brain injuries. He shared his personal story of recovery from a traumatic brain injury.

**Roanoke College (VA)**

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** On Tuesday, March 15, the chapter formally inducted 22 members. In addition to the typical induction ceremony, congratulatory statements were made by the advisors, recognition was given to the outgoing officer team, and the incoming officer team was introduced. The chapter also began two new activities at induction. First, new members “signed into” Lindenwood University (MO) Chapter participating in Habitat for Humanity work day

Lindenwood University (MO) Chapter’s induction ceremony on March 12, 2016

Lindenwood University (MO) Chapter’s Madison Vander Wielen presenting at MPA
the chapter to give them a sense of commitment to the organization. Second, new members voted to choose the movie that would be shown at the following week’s movie night.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** In late March, students gathered in one of the college’s social lounges and watched the movie, *Inside Out*, for the chapter’s end-of-semester movie night. Afterward, the president led a discussion about the psychology of emotions, using the interview, “Inside Out: Behind-the-Scenes Science With Dacher Keltner, PhD,” from the Spring issue of *Eye on Psi Chi* magazine.

**FUND-RAISER:** In early April, officers paired with a local frozen yogurt shop close to campus and hosted a fund-raising event. The college community was encouraged to stop by, purchase FroYo, and support the chapter. The business generously agreed to give back 5% of the day’s proceeds. In total, the chapter earned approximately $50! This was the chapter’s most successful fund-raiser in the past few years.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** All inductees, their families, and faculty members were invited via e-mail and invitation cards to attend the 2016 induction ceremony on April 20. Camas Gazzola (president) introduced Psi Chi traditions first. Officers followed the Informal Induction Ceremony Ritual and inducted six new members who attended the ceremony. New officers were later introduced. Justin Connally (incoming president) spoke to new members about his future plan for Psi Chi and invited the attendees to enjoy the refreshments prepared for the event.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter has been active in local communities in the past year. Members have volunteered at North Alabama NAMI Walk and Tri-County Walk for Autism in 2015–16. The chapter also partnered with LifeSouth and hosted two blood drives on campus in the past year.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** All Psi Chi members, psychology students, and faculty members were invited to a bowling night, which takes place every semester. The bowling alley generously donated half of the payment for the bowling night back to the chapter. Psi Chi members utilized the money to purchase Christmas gifts for children and older adults in need.

Winthrop University (SC)

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter and Psychology Club met on April 7, 2016, for Stress Management: Make A

Carson–Newman University (TN)

**Chapter members** helps set up a table at an activities fair.

**Carson–Newman University (TN)** members volunteer at Habitat for Humanity in October 2015.

**Nine new members join the Davidson College (NC)** Chapter!

**Milligan College (TN)** Chapter’s induction ceremony

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** The chapter welcomed 16 new members during the 2015–16 academic year and celebrated their new membership at an induction ceremony hosted on April 17, 2016. At the ceremony, Justine Rossi (former chapter president and practicing school psychologist) gave an address encouraging active members to take advantage of the ample opportunities that come with membership in this international organization. In addition, there was a drawing for free Psi Chi merchandise for new members, and members gathered over refreshments with their families and psychology faculty to celebrate their accomplishments.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter and Psychology Club met on April 7, 2016, for Stress Management: Make A

Carson–Newman University (TN)

**Chapter’s Mason Blazer (vice-president) helps set up a table at an activities fair.**

**Carson–Newman University (TN)** members volunteer at Habitat for Humanity in October 2015.

**Nine new members join the Davidson College (NC)** Chapter!

**Milligan College (TN)** Chapter’s induction ceremony
Your Own Stress Blobs, an event to discuss college stress, how many college students deal with stress, and healthy approaches to stress management. After the discussion, those in attendance made "stress blobs" out of balloons, flour, and scented Epsom salt as a fun stress-relieving activity.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: On March 10, 2016, chapter and Psychology Club members met to vote on "superlatives" for the full-time faculty members of the psychology department in order to recognize their contributions to students’ education and development. After each faculty member was assigned a superlative, members made goodie bags filled with prizes and candy. Later on in the semester, these goodie bags were distributed to the faculty members, along with framed certificates awarding them their respective superlatives.

SOUTHWEST

Loyola University New Orleans (LA)
CONVENTION/CONFERENCE: Members Amanda Liechty and Sofia Ricardo presented their senior research and thesis projects at the 90th annual meeting of the Louisiana Academy of Sciences, hosted at the Louisiana State University at Alexandria on April 23, 2016. Several alumni of the university and chapter also presented their research at recent SEPA and SWPA conventions.

Texas Wesleyan University
CONVENTION/CONFERENCE: The chapter got incredibly lucky in spring 2016 because the SWPA convention was located in Dallas, almost in the chapter’s backyard. The chapter was able to give $100 grants to 10 members to help them pay for attendance. Eight members were able to present research at the convention.

University of Central Arkansas
MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: The chapter officer team implemented a Virtual Colloquium Series in which national speakers connected with the chapter through video conferencing. This allowed students to interact with established professionals while keeping cost at a minimum. The first colloquium was hosted in February with Dr. Cade Charlton, and the second featured Dr. Stephen Gillaspy. Both events received positive feedback from students and requests for more virtual events in the future.

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: Dr. Dan Corts (Psi Chi President) was the keynote speaker at the Arkansas Symposium for Psychology Students at the University of Central Arkansas in April. His talk took a unique approach to professional development with encouragement for students to relate psychological research to their own stories to better identify their personal strengths. Dr. Corts’ talk was especially beneficial to undergraduates attending the symposium. He also networked with the chapter’s incoming officers at a dinner the night before to give them tips and advice for building their chapter.

SOCIAL EVENT: At the end of every academic year, the chapter hosts a departmental banquet to celebrate the year’s accomplishments. The event is
a great networking opportunity for students and faculty. The banquet was hosted at a local Mexican restaurant at the end of April. At the event, several awards were handed out to students. Other accomplishments such as publications and presentations were recognized and published in the banquet program. Faculty and family members were in attendance to show their support for the department’s accomplishments.

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Chapter and Psychology Club members participated in the inaugural International Museum of Art and Science (IMAS) Brain Day event on March 12. The event was a collaboration between the Department of Psychological Science, the Physician Assistant program, and IMAS. Brain Day was a wonderful opportunity for students to engage with the local community, presenting informational posters about psychology and brain science and hands-on activities for all age ranges. A video of the event can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uurhItdLe0

WEST

Pacific University (OR)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter focused on community outreach and service during the 2015–16 academic year. Members worked together to sponsor and renovate a large family room at Monika’s House, the only domestic violence shelter located in Washington County where the university is located.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Members collaborated with other organizations on campus (e.g., Center for Civic Engagement) and involved more than 15 students and two or three faculty and staff who worked together to create a restorative space at the Inukai Boys & Girls Club. The project was supported by Youth Director Rachel Parker, facilitated by Tyler Gilmore (secretary) and Dr. Dawn Salgado (advisor), and included input from the youth as well. The Peace Place (named by youth on site) included various evidence-informed activities and practices to promote youth well-being. The room featured MP3 players...

Texas Wesleyan University members are all smiles at SWPA 2016!

Winthrop University (SC) Chapter inducts several members.

Winthrop University (SC) Chapter Psychology Club members show off their “stress blobs” at the Stress Management event.
with headphones featuring several age-appropriate mindfulness recordings on visual imagery and mindfulness, as well as a yoga space with instructions, reading nook with body pillows, and craft space for coloring and creating.

CONVENTION/CONFERENCE: The chapter’s undergraduate members and their faculty supervisors in psychology presented their research projects at the Oregon Academy of Science Conference, WPA Convention, Zoo and Aquarium Association Conference, and American Evaluation Association Conference. Research presentations focused on topics of concussions in the performing arts, behaviors of captive sea otters, the role of temperature on autobiographical memory, associations between features of personality, mental health literacy and psychological help-seeking among college students. Two programs evaluations were on an animal-assisted program on an animal-assisted therapy program with child residents of domestic violence shelters and a game education program for at-risk youth.

University of Oregon

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: In collaboration with Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the chapter hosted Jennifer M. Gomez, a Ford Fellow and doctoral candidate, who spoke to nearly 50 people about sexual violence and inequality on college campuses. Gomez’s talk highlighted the intersection of race and sexual violence through an emphasis on how interpersonal, cultural, and institutional betrayal contribute to negative mental health outcomes. Gomez utilized theoretical and empirical research to promote awareness, healing, advocacy, and action in the battle against sexual assault on college campuses. The event provided knowledge that was later utilized when Psi Chi, the psychology department, and the community opposed the required reporting policy proposed by the institution’s administration.
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.