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You've probably heard “there’s strength in numbers” and this saying applies to your chapter as easily as anywhere else. Would your chapter’s vitality improve if more members came to meetings, ran for office, served on chapter committees, told potential members about Psi Chi benefits, paid chapter dues, participated in fundraising and service activities, attended chapter social events, and became chapter alumni after graduating?

Although many factors may influence how active your chapter’s members are, whether most eligible members have joined must certainly be one of them. Is your chapter maximizing its potential by including everyone who is eligible?

The first step is making sure that everyone who is eligible knows it. Those eligible to join include not only psychology majors, but also

- students minoring in psychology,
- interdisciplinary majors with at least as many psychology courses as a minor,
- majors in closely related programs such as biopsychology or educational psychology,
- graduate psychology students in the psychology department (and possibly other departments on campus),
- transfer students, and
- full-time faculty with at least a master’s in psychology.

Your Chapter Bylaws should specify which students on your campus are eligible to join. This will help future officers and advisors to know who should be invited.

Chapter Bylaws should also reflect the new transfer student requirements that went into effect March 5, 2019. If transfer students are able to transfer in both credits and GPA to your institution, they may be eligible to join Psi Chi during their first semester. For more details, go to this Digest: https://www.psichi.org/page/digest_338#.

For chapter officers to determine if they are inviting all eligible students, they will need to talk with their Faculty Advisor about how the list of potential members is generated and how they are notified. This process varies from campus to campus, but often involves the Faculty Advisor requesting that the registrar’s office or institutional research office generate a list. Some chapters, however, simply put out blanket invitations asking anyone who is interested in joining to submit an online application. Regardless of how they get to the online application, prospective member applications populate a list so your Faculty Advisor can review each person’s qualifications before approving them as new members.

This variability in how chapters generate their list of eligible students results in variability in the accuracy of the numbers—the number of eligible students compared to the number who actually join. Chapters need to know what groups (e.g., majors, minors, counseling graduate students) are included on the list and the number of eligible students in order to (a) determine if they are inviting everyone who is eligible to join, (b) calculate the percentage of people who actually join, and (c) look for reasons the chapter can address if some eligible students are choosing not to join. It is important to make the opportunity to join Psi Chi available to everyone who has earned it, regardless of whether the chapter’s maximum potential is quite small or very large.

There is further variability across campuses in whether invitations go to all nonmembers or only those who the Advisor has predetermined meet eligibility requirements. Depending on the campus size, number of majors, and campus data sharing rules, predetermining eligibility may not be possible. When it is possible, however, doing so makes it easier for the chapter to make the invitations to join more special and unique. Examples include sending formal invitations through the mail or delivering them in psychology classes (with each faculty member’s permission).

Inviting all eligible students to join also could raise extra funds for the chapter. Because chapters can add up to 50% of society dues as chapter dues, inducting more members is an easy way to fund chapter activities. And after induction, more people are available to participate in fundraising projects—and all other activities.

Maximizing your chapter’s member numbers will naturally result in a larger alumni group as your student members graduate. That means your chapter will have a larger pool of people to call on for mentoring, speaking about the workforce or graduate school, or chapter fundraising.

So what can you do? Officers and Faculty Advisors can work together to identify all groups who should be invited and to codify these in the chapter’s Bylaws. All members can confirm the benefits available to Psi Chi members, clarify misperceptions about who is allowed to join, and most of all encourage those potential members to become an active part of their first professional psychology organization.
The 2019-20 New Psi Chi Board of Directors

President-Elect
Deborah Harris O’Brien, PhD
Trinity Washington University (DC)

Deborah Harris O’Brien, PhD, is a founding advisor of the Psi Chi Chapter at Trinity Washington University (Washington, DC). She completed two terms as Psi Chi Vice-President (Eastern Region), chaired the Awards Committee, served as a member of the Eastern regional steering committee, and was the Psi Chi liaison to APA’s Board of Educational Affairs for four years. Dr. Harris O’Brien received her PhD in developmental/clinical child psychology from the Ohio State University. She has worked in private practice in Maryland with children, teens, and families, in addition to teaching and research.

Dr. Harris O’Brien has a long-term commitment to advancing the mission of Psi Chi. She has served as a faculty advisor at her institution since 1998; the chapter has won the Model Chapter Award a number of times. Trinity Washington University is a primarily minority serving institution and a historical women’s college, with a focus on social justice. Before coming to Trinity Washington, Dr. Harris O’Brien was a faculty member at Gallaudet University, the premier institution for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, where she conducted research on deaf children and taught psychology in sign language. Having spent her entire academic career teaching underserved students, and as a first-generation college student herself, Dr. Harris O’Brien’s passion is increasing access to opportunities in psychology for low income, minority, disabled, and other marginalized students.

Eastern Regional Vice-President
Marianne Fallon, PhD
Central Connecticut State University

Dr. Marianne Fallon is the interim Vice-President for Academic Affairs—Planning and Resources as well as professor of psychological science at Central Connecticut State University. She received her bachelor’s degree in psychology from Bucknell University and her master’s and doctorate from the University of Toronto. Trained as a developmental cognitive psychologist, Dr. Fallon applies cognitive psychology to the teaching of psychology and factors that promote undergraduate student success. Dr. Fallon was awarded the Connecticut State University Board of Trustees Teaching Award in 2010, and she has been named a finalist twice for Central Connecticut State University’s Excellence in Teaching Award. She has regularly taught Research Methods and recently published a book, Writing Up Quantitative Research in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. Always encouraging her students to present and publish their research, her students have won 13 Psi Chi Eastern Regional Awards or APS Awards since 2011. Dr. Fallon has reviewed submissions for the Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research and has coauthored two articles with students and has written one editorial. She has also written about submitting strong conference abstracts in the Eye on Psi Chi. Since becoming her chapter’s faculty advisor in 2012, the chapter has won Model Chapter Awards for the first time in its history, the Kay Wilson Presidential Leadership Award in 2014, the Eastern Regional Chapter Award in 2016, and the Ruth Hubbard Cousins Award in 2017. Dr. Fallon currently serves as the Eastern Regional VP, chairs the Scholarship Committee, and is on the Grants Committee.

Rocky Mountain Regional Vice-President
Leslie D. Cramblet Alvarez, PhD
Adams State University (CO)

Leslie Cramblet Alvarez is a professor of psychology and Professional Development Activity Director for Title V at Adams State University in Alamosa, Colorado. She received her BA in psychology from Southwestern University and PhD in educational psychology from Northern Arizona University.

During the last 12 years, Dr. Alvarez has been a strong supporter of Psi Chi. She served as faculty advisor at Northern Arizona University and pursued the charter of Adams State’s Psi Chi Chapter where she is currently the coadvisor. She has served on the Psi Chi Steering Committee for the Rocky Mountain Region, was a member of the Psi Chi Leadership Committee, and has acted as a reviewer for the Kay Wilson Officer Team Leadership Award, regional Psi Chi Research Awards, the Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research, and is currently completing her first term as Vice-President for the Rocky Mountain region.

Western Regional Vice-President
Jill Yamashita, PhD
California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB)

Dr. Jill Yamashita graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno with a PhD in 2003 and has been working at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) for almost ten years. She is the Psi Chi advisor for the CSUMB chapter since 2010 and has worked with some great student leaders on various projects, both community (e.g., collecting goods for local charities) and campus related (e.g., participation in Mindful Madness, open houses). She learned a lot by advising Psi Chi, especially the challenges of helping new cabinets organize and motivating them. Dr. Yamashita joined the Psi Chi Western Region Steering Committee in fall 2016 and has been working with a wonderful group of faculty on reviewing and choosing Psi Chi award winners for the Western Psychological Association convention, and presenting information on how to get in to graduate school and how to survive once there. She also has evaluated Psi Chi Travel Grant requests, as well as reviewed Undergraduate Research Grants in 2017. She brings a fresh perspective to Psi Chi because of her work at a Hispanic Serving Institute where many students are first generation college students that come from low income families.
Greetings dear Contemporary Psych readers. We are going to be learning about—drum roll please—the field of clinical psychology. Clinical psychology is no doubt the largest area of professional psychology and perhaps, more broadly, the whole discipline of psychology. In fact, many lay-people erroneously view clinical psychology and psychology (as a whole) to be conceptually identical. To illustrate, when I was a younger man, a lowly grad student, just a child really, I served as a graduate fellow on a National Science Foundation grant aimed at providing science outreach to schoolchildren. Whenever meeting with students for the first time, I would ask them to describe a psychologist and what psychologists do. Invariably, the students would describe a person, usually a male with a beard (Freud, anyone?), who treats people’s mental illnesses by asking them about their relationship with their mother. I would then happily point out that many psychologists don’t do this, and that most psychologists don’t have beards. I would then pause and watch the students’ faces for visible evidence of their minds being blown. Next, I would attempt to correct all other misconceptions about psychology, with (given the number of adults who still don’t seem to understand the field) an apparently variable level of success.

Despite the fact that clinical psychology does not constitute the field of psychology as a whole, it is a big, broad area. And, we can understand and forgive children for their misunderstanding this (if you want to). So, in future issues, I will be focused on more specific areas within clinical psychology. For now, however, this is your general introduction to this fascinating area, and with that, let me introduce—drum roll please—clinical psychology.

Origins of Clinical Psychology—Thanks to the Same War That Brought Us Nuclear Weapons

Simply put, clinical psychology involves the understanding, preventing, and treatment of mental health and illness. Notably, people have been engaged in the treatment of mental illness for millennia. However, prior to the late 19th century, this was accomplished primarily using magic, religious rituals, and other dubious methods (e.g., mesmerism, phrenology, etc.). This changed around the turn of the 20th century thanks to the efforts of individuals working in medicine, neurology, and in particular, a gentleman named Lightner Witmer, faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, who documented his success treating learning disabilities, opened the first psychology clinic, founded the first clinical psychology journal, and coined the term “clinical psychology.”

From there, clinical psychology experienced relatively slow, but steady growth. This growth was driven in part by psychologists’ work with the U.S. Army, where they were tasked with the development and validation of assessment instruments used with new recruits. Then, World War II broke out, and everything changed. Many soldiers returning from the war displayed symptoms of what was at the time termed “shell shock” and is now known as posttraumatic stress disorder. Since medical doctors were overextended treating physical injuries related to the war, psychologists were called in to treat this condition. As a result of their good work, the U.S. government made an enormous investment in the training of doctoral-level clinical psychologists. Consequently, although there were no formal training programs in clinical psychology at the end of the war, by 1950, over half of all PhDs in psychology were awarded in clinical psychology. Since then, clinical psychology has grown into the large, varied, and vibrant profession and academic field of study that it is today (see Benjamin, 2005).

Contemporary Clinical Psychology—Treating More Than Learning Disabilities and PTSD

Today, clinical psychology is a multifaceted area within psychology broadly concerned with the application of psychological knowledge toward the assessment, diagnosis, prevention, and...
treatment of psychological distress and pathology, as well as the promotion of personal well-being and positive human functioning (Plante, 2010). Most clinical psychologists engage in some type of clinical practice and may offer many different services. Commonly, these services include the administration of clinical programs, providing psychotherapy, and performing psychological assessment. Clinical psychologists also often work with different types of clients including individuals, families, couples, and/or groups and in many different settings such as mental health organizations, hospitals, universities, private practice, business, schools, and the legal system (Pomerantz, 2016). Moreover, some clinical psychologists may specialize in the assessment and/or treatment of specific conditions such as mood disorders, substance abuse disorders, learning disorders, and everyday adjustment issues, while others may be generalists, engaging in the treatment of a variety of conditions.

At this point, you should have a good sense of what a clinical psychologist is. Let’s touch briefly on what a clinical psychologist is not. A clinical psychologist is not a psychiatrist. Although these two professions may serve the same purpose, namely making troubled people less troubled, the training and techniques for doing so are different. Psychiatrists are licensed physicians, medical doctors, who utilize the medical model to understand psychological problems and often use biological interventions to treat mental illness (e.g., pharmacotherapy). Clinical psychologists are also not counseling psychologists, but there is often significant overlap here and the distinction between the two professions is fading. Broadly, counseling psychologists are more likely to assist with nonclinical issues (e.g., coping with divorce), while clinical psychologists specialize in the treatment of full-blown clinical conditions (e.g., major depressive disorders). While we are at it, clinical psychology is not counseling, a very broad field that differs with respect to areas of emphases, required education and training, and work settings.

**Speaking of Required Education and Training—Yes, You Still Have to Understand Research**

Required education and training to become a clinical psychologist varies throughout the world, but we are going to focus on the requirements in the United States, where generally speaking, individuals need to complete a relevant doctorate, participate in internships and supervised practice, and be licensed to practice in the state in which they work. Most clinical psychologists receive general training in psychology at the undergraduate level and then specialize in clinical psychology at the graduate level. Following this will be the completion of supervised practice, and once receiving a sufficient number of hours of supervised experience, individuals can then take the exam to become licensed. Additionally, following licensure, most states require continuing education to maintain licensure, ensuring a well-educated field of practicing clinical psychologists in their jurisdiction.

But, let’s take a step back and talk about graduate school. Graduate programs in clinical psychology differ, with the broadest distinction concerning whether one obtains a PhD or a PsyD. Programs that award PhDs frequently adopt a “scientist-practitioner” model, whereby students are expected to both conduct research and practice in their area of emphasis. Programs that award PsyDs tend to focus more on practice (but, it is still expected that students are well-read in the current scientific literature). Also, programs may differ in their theoretical orientation, which then determines what types of therapy are taught. For example, programs that take a psychodynamic perspective are rooted in Freudian theory, and therapeutic techniques tend to emphasize developing insight into the unconscious motives for our behavior. Programs that take a behavioral or cognitive behavioral perspective focus on how maladaptive thinking and behavior lead to psychopathology, and therapeutic techniques typically involve encouraging more adaptive patterns of action. It should be noted however that increasingly, training in clinical psychology is becoming more integrative, involving exposure to many different theoretical perspectives and therapeutic techniques, such that the clinician can eventually take a more eclectic approach with clients and use whatever approach is best suited to the particular individual and their particular condition (see Hunsley & Lee, 2017; Norcross, Sayette, & Pomerantz, 2018).

**Summary … For Now**

Importantly, and as stated above, clinical psychology is a very broad area, and the types of occupations that one can pursue as a clinical psychologist are varied. In fact, many of these occupations have dedicated areas of psychology all to themselves (e.g., forensic psychology, see last issue’s column). So, rather than extend our discussion any further and upset my editors by obviously ignoring their required word limits, we will end our discussion here and focus on more specific areas within clinical psychology in future editions of your favorite column in the Eye (… ahem… this column… the one you are reading right now). Until then, I encourage you to take a look at some of the resources provided below.

**Additional Resources**


Division 12 of the American Psychological Association. The Society of Clinical Psychology: www.div12.org

**References**


Ethan A. McMahan, PhD, is an associate professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Western Oregon University where he teaches courses in research methods, advanced research methods, and positive psychology. He is passionate about undergraduate education in psychology and has served Psi Chi members in several ways over the last few years, including as a faculty advisor, Psi Chi Western Region Steering Committee Member, Grants Chair, and most recently, as the Western Regional Vice-President of Psi Chi. His research interests focus on hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to well-being, folk conceptions of happiness, and the relationship between nature and human well-being. His recent work examines how exposure to immersive simulations of natural environments impact concurrent emotional state and, more broadly, how regular contact with natural environments may be one route by which individuals achieve optimal well-being. He has published in the Journal of Positive Psychology, the Journal of Happiness Studies, Personality and Individual Differences, and Ecopsychology, among other publications. He completed his undergraduate training at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and holds a PhD in experimental psychology from the University of Wyoming.
Have you ever wondered how professors select applicants who apply to work with them in psychology graduate school? Because of large numbers of applicants, many admission committees evaluate grade-point average (GPA) and the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores first in order to narrow the pool of applicants (American Psychological Association, 2007; Walfish & Hess, 2001). High GPAs and GRE scores are expected from most PhD and master’s programs (Cynkar, 2018; Dunn & Halonen, 2016), with PhD programs and higher ranked PhD programs expecting to see the highest GPAs and GRE scores (American Psychological Association, 2007).

If applicants meet the GPA and GRE cutoff scores, then the admission committees typically evaluate the following criteria:

- course work in psychology,
- letters of recommendation,
- personal statements,
- psychology-related work experience, and
- research experience.

Some programs interview applicants as well (American Psychological Association, 2007). However, the American Psychological Association (2007) noted that the criteria used and the emphasis placed on each one varies by the type of degree, area in psychology, and the prestige of the program. Several authors have suggested that PhD review committees, and especially the higher ranked programs, evaluate research experience after GPA and GRE in order to further cut applicants (American Psychological Association, 2007; Buskist & Sherburne, 2007; Schultheiss, 2008).

We wanted to know more about how graduate faculty evaluate the research experience of applicants, so we decided to specifically investigate this. We wrote an invited editorial in the *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research* called, “Professors’ Research Expectations for Admission to Psychology Graduate Programs,” which was published this spring (Hughes, Li, McDonnell, Engsberg, & Goss, 2019). The editorial covers our findings from 765 graduate school professors who participated in our research study. In this *Eye* article, information will be presented about the topic, and then the findings from the editorial will be summarized. Importantly, graduate faculty’s key advice from an open-ended response section of the survey will be given as well, most of which was not published in the original editorial.

### Weighing Your Research Experience

Unfortunately, most undergraduate students do not know that it is much more difficult to get into graduate psychology programs than it is to be accepted into an undergraduate college or university (Dunn & Halonen, 2016). In addition, students often do not know what is involved in becoming a strong applicant for psychology graduate programs, and they often do not realize how important research experience is for acceptance into these programs—especially PhD programs (Sanders & Landrum, 2012). Privitera (2014) wrote that research skills are considered to be a strong predictor of success in graduate school and particularly for PhD programs; professors expect applicants to have research skills and experience when applying.

You may be wondering how research experience is evaluated. Walfish and Hess (2001) give some examples for those applying to psychology graduate programs such as:

- statistics and research design and methods courses taken,
- working as a research assistant or conducting independent research,
- research skills, and
- research presentations and publications.

Wegenek and Buskist (2010) include research match with graduate professors as another important way applicants are evaluated for PhD programs in psychology.

Now that you know this, what should you do? Dunn and Halonen (2016) give useful advice for applicants. They suggest that students consult with a professor or advisor in psychology in order to develop a feasible plan for applying to graduate school including getting involved with research. They also suggest that applicants should read the book *Graduate Study in Psychology*, which is useful because it lists
the admission criteria for each individual graduate program. They note that most applicants who receive offers of admittance exceed the minimum qualifications listed in the book.

**Graduate School Professors’ Expectations**

For this project, we developed a survey and sent it to one third of the psychology graduate faculty members in the United States. We had 765 graduate school professors complete the survey (Hughes et al., 2019). Our survey asked the professors questions about the research criteria they use when evaluating graduate applicants for master’s and doctoral programs.

We found that faculty from PhD psychology programs and higher ranked PhD psychology programs evaluated research as being more important as compared to faculty who taught in other types of programs (i.e., master’s programs in psychology, PsyD programs, and PhD psychology programs housed in education departments). These faculty also expected applicants to have spent more time gaining research experience, and they wanted the applicants’ experiences to match their research areas. Finally, they were more likely to want applicants to have conducted independent research.

So, what does this mean? It means that undergraduate students who hope to get accepted to PhD programs in psychology departments, and especially for the higher ranked programs, will want to

- spend a considerable amount of time getting quality research experience,
- match the area of the professors they apply to work with, and
- possibly conduct independent research.

For students who plan to apply to master’s programs in psychology, PsyD programs, or PhD psychology programs housed in education departments, they will want to get some research experience, but that experience does not need to be as extensive.

Also, in the editorial, we presented information from our examination of subfields within psychology and looked specifically at PhD programs in psychology departments (i.e., clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, industrial/organizational psychology, neuroscience, social psychology, and quantitative psychology; Hughes et al., 2019). We found that almost all of these subfields were the same (i.e., did not statistically differ). These faculty

- viewed research as important and expected at least a year of research experience,
- expected a match between the applicant’s research experience and the professor’s area of research, and
- many hoped to see independent research experience.

Industrial and organizational psychology was the only area that showed some differences. The possible reasons for the differences are listed in our editorial. We were surprised that faculty in clinical psychology did not differ in the other areas evaluated (i.e., except for industrial and organizational psychology) because clinical psychology programs often have the most applicants, so they have been seen as being more selective with their applicants (American Psychological Association, 2007; Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology, 2017; Dunn & Halonen, 2016; Prinstein, 2017; Wegenek & Buskist, 2010).

When we included psychology PhD programs housed in education departments (i.e., counseling psychology, educational psychology, and school psychology) into our analyses, we did find differences. Those faculty typically had lower expectations for research in the areas listed above.

**Advice for Applicants**

The comments written by the PsyD, master’s, and PhD faculty in education departments were fairly similar in that they wanted to see some involvement in research, but they did not expect to see as much research experience as the typical PhD applicant would have. Because of this, only the comments from the PhD faculty in psychology departments were content-analyzed. Before those results are presented, it should be noted that several respondents who taught in PhD programs in psychology departments stated that they used different criteria when accepting applicants with a bachelor’s degree as compared to a master’s degree, which often included more research experience expected for those with a master’s degree. The following themes emerged from the content analysis of the open-ended responses.
**Research experience.** Most of the faculty who wrote responses stated that research experience was very important for an applicant to be accepted. For example, one professor wrote that “research experience and products of that research are the best predictor of success in graduate programs; it reflects persistence.” Faculty often mentioned that applicants should provide evidence of their roles in the research they conducted. For example, a professor wrote, “I look for independence and initiative, and a first author publication or presentation is definitely one way to demonstrate that. Coauthorship can also be, but it would depend on how they talk about the project and what the letters of recommendation say about their role.” Many of the faculty said that applicants should be able to describe the research they were involved with by stating how they conceptualized the research question, analyzed the data, and wrote the research paper. Faculty also mentioned that applicants’ letters of recommendation should vouch for student’s strong research interest and skills.

**Research fit.** Many PhD psychology faculty members wrote that research fit was the most important factor for accepting applicants. One faculty member wrote that applicants can demonstrate this in personal statements by

1. articulating how well they understand the professor’s research program from reading the professor’s previous publications,
2. stating how they would like to contribute to that research program with new project ideas, and
3. describing how their past research experiences will aid in being able to execute those ideas.

The professor also added that applicants with less research lab experience who clearly understand how to read and extend ideas from the professor’s journal articles are more sought after than applicants with lots of research experience, but who do not tailor their personal statement research goals to the specific research lab. Another faculty member wrote, “I look for interest in my specific area, program, and school; I tend to be turned off by applicants who have very general or cookie cutter statements and letters of interest, rather than addressing specific components of my program and school (e.g., I compare it to dating; nobody wants to be asked out on a date ‘because you were just there and I felt like seeing a movie,’ but would prefer a date express common interests or specific attributes).” Finally, many of the faculty included statements about wanting to see evidence of applicants thinking like scientists.

**Personality.** As mentioned in the editorial, many of the faculty wrote about personality and how it can be the deciding factor when it comes down to their shortlist of applicants (Hughes et al., 2019). They said that they had to go with their general feeling about the applicant’s fit with their lab. The type of personality they were looking for varied (i.e., maturity, grit, curious, conscientious, humble, etc.; Hughes et al., 2019). One professor wrote, “I prefer applicants who are dedicated, hardworking, and passionate and who possess a more cooperative than competitive orientation.” A few of the faculty also said that they look for nice or helpful applicants who will contribute positively to their lab culture and ask their current lab members to give their assessments of the applicants as well.

**Knowledge of statistics.** Several faculty members wrote about how important it was for applicants to know statistics well and to be able to use statistical software. They suggested that applicants seek opportunities as undergraduates to create strong statistical skills and then to mention those in their applications. Several respondents also said that they expect grades in applicants’ statistics and research design and methods courses to be stellar.
Writing. A faculty member wrote that “applicants should be strong writers and enjoy writing papers.” Applicants can demonstrate writing ability through their personal statement and writing samples (e.g., research papers). Several faculty noted that writing errors in personal statements, generic personal statements, personal statements that are not mostly about research, and oversharining in the personal statements represented red flags to admission committees.

Apply to multiple programs. Finally, a few faculty wrote about how hard the decisions are to admit applicants and that applicants should apply to many programs to increase their odds of getting accepted. For example, one faculty member wrote “the hardest part is having to turn down numerous very qualified applicants each year. Applicants should not take it personally when they are rejected, the margins between who to accept and who to reject are often razor-thin and quite subjective.”

Conclusion

The results for our research study and from our content analysis of the open-ended responses of our survey reinforce that research experience is important to faculty when accepting psychology graduate students. This is especially true for the PhD programs in psychology departments, higher ranked programs in PhD psychology departments, and most subfields housed in psychology departments. If you want to be accepted, you should meet with your faculty or advisor to come up with a plan to find quality research experiences that can help you become a more qualified applicant.

References


Jennifer Hughes, PhD, is a professor of psychology at Agnes Scott College and has taught there since 1998. She earned her PhD in industrial and organizational psychology from Kansas State University and her BA in psychology from Auburn University. She has been involved with the Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research since 2002 and has served as an Associate Editor for the journal since 2012. She also has served as Agnes Scott’s Psi Chi advisor for the past 21 years. She enjoys teaching, advising, and working with students on research projects. Her two main research areas are the psychological and physical effects of commuting to and from work and positive psychology applied to work and in relationships. She has coauthored research papers with 175 students. That work has resulted in 31 published journal articles (including 16 in Psi Chi Journal), 143 presentations at national and regional conventions, and 141 presentations at Agnes Scott’s research conference. In addition, she has received several awards such as the Vulcan Materials Company Teaching Excellence Award at Agnes Scott College in 2010, the Florence L. Denmark Faculty Advisor Award from Psi Chi in 2016, and the Mentor Award from the Southeastern Psychological Association in 2014.
Can Psychology Majors Prepare for a Career in Business?

Part III: Strategic Employability

Drew C. Appleby, PhD
Professor Emeritus of Psychology
Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis

See Part I at https://psichi.com/HOPE
See Part II at https://psichi.com/Employability
In the previous installment of this series, I explained why psychology majors make a wise choice when they decide to use their undergraduate education to prepare themselves for a career in business. I accomplished this challenging task by introducing the concepts of Actual Employability (i.e., many psychology majors actually are employed in business careers), Specific Employability (i.e., psychology majors enter many specific business careers such as management, sales, finance, advertising, marketing, and public relations), and Potential Employability (i.e., the KSCs necessary to successfully prepare for and enter these specific careers are the same as those that you can acquire as a psychology major).

In the present article, I will introduce you to the concept of Strategic Employability by providing you with a series of strategies that you can use to develop these KSCs by taking full advantage of both the curricular and extracurricular opportunities your undergraduate education in psychology provides.

The word strategic in Strategic Employability refers to the specific plans you will need to give a convincing answer to yourself and others to the question, “What strategies can I produce to use my undergraduate education to develop and strengthen the KSCs I will need to enter and succeed in the specific business career to which I aspire?” Before I provide you with suggestions about how to answer this question, I want you to engage in some serious reflection about how you view the purpose of your education, which should produce the answer to another very important question, which is “Are you an occupationally savvy or an occupationally not-so-savvy psychology major?” The following information—taken from the article I previously invited you to read (Appleby, 2015, p.1) will help you to understand why your answer to this question is so important.

The experience of teaching, advising, and mentoring thousands of psychology majors during my 40-year academic career led me to conclude that this group is composed of two subgroups: occupationally savvy students and occupationally not-so-savvy students. These two groups approach their professional futures in profoundly different ways.

Occupationally savvy students adopt a proactive, two-stage approach to their collegiate experience by deliberately using it as an opportunity to explore, identify, and refine their career goals. They then create and follow a well-crafted plan to acquire the KSCs they will need—and the evidence that proves they have acquired them—to attain their post-baccalaureate aspirations. In other words, they intentionally use their undergraduate educations to decide who they want to become and then begin a systematic process to construct themselves in the image of that person.

On the other hand, occupationally

What strategies can I create that will enable me to use my undergraduate education to develop and strengthen the knowledge, skills, and characteristics (KSCs) I will need to enter and succeed in the specific business career to which I aspire?
not-so-savvy students live their undergraduate lives under the ill-fated illusion that they are entitled to and will acquire a good job after they graduate simply because they possess a college diploma certifying their accumulation of enough credit hours to graduate. These students take classes to “get them out of the way,” avoid challenging classes in which they could strengthen important career-enhancing skills (e.g., writing, public speaking, and math), choose easy rather than skill-building electives, and spurn extracurricular opportunities because they believe them to be a waste of time, rather than opportunities to develop valuable collaboration and leadership skills.

One way to determine if you are occupationally savvy or not-so-savvy is to read the following two statements and then decide which of them is a more accurate description of how you have been using your education to prepare yourself to enter the workforce.

I have been buying a “credducation” by spending my money on tuition so I can earn enough credit hours to graduate. My most important collegiate goal is to attain my diploma because I can then use it as a credential to gain a better-paying job than I could if I had only a high school education. I will worry about the specific job I want to obtain after I receive my diploma. My most important goal now is to graduate as quickly and easily as possible. I just want to earn my tassel without a lot of hassle.

I have been earning an “education” by investing my money in academic opportunities such as classes, extracurricular activities, and internships that will help me (a) discover the occupation I would like to enter; (b) identify, acquire, and strengthen the KSCs I will need to enter and succeed in that occupation; and (c) create strategies to successfully bring these KSCs to the attention of employers during the hiring process. The most important goal of my undergraduate journey is not the piece of paper I will receive when it ends. My most important goals are to discover the person I want to become and then use my undergraduate education to create myself in the image of that person. I believe that Henry David Thoreau was correct when he said, “What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.”

However, if your beliefs were reflected more accurately in the second statement, then you are beginning to realize that using the information contained in this series to help you create a plan to obtain the career of your dreams could very well cause you to use the same words I have shared with you in Part I of this series, which were written by one of my student to describe the results of her experience in my BI03 Orientation to a Psychology Major class. “It feels good to be a savvy psychology major with a strong sense of hope for my future success. My new sense of hope is due solely to this course, which gave me the tools to succeed, the confidence to pick them up, and the motivation to use them.”

FOUR People Who Can Help You

It is now time for me to assist you in the process of becoming “strategic” by helping you identify the resources that will enable you to create specific plans to take advantage of both the curricular and extracurricular components of your undergraduate education to develop and strengthen the KSCs you will need to prepare for and enter the business career you wish to pursue. But first, I want to bring your attention to four people, other than myself, who can help you develop these strategies.

The faculty advisors in your department have earned graduate degrees in specialized areas of psychology (e.g., neuroscience, social psychology, and quantitative psychology). They can provide you with expert advice about how to prepare for, apply to, and succeed in graduate school and then obtain a job as a faculty member in a psychology department because these are the components of the professional journeys they travelled and the professional destinations they reached. However, there are two reasons why they may not be the best choice to provide you with advice about how to use your bachelor’s degree to prepare for, obtain, and succeed in a job in business. First, because this was not the career path they followed, they have no personal experience upon which to base the advice you would like to receive from them. Second, few psychology faculty have had the professional experience they would need to help you accomplish this goal.
This second reason is extremely important because, according to Section 2.01a of the American Psychological Association’s (2017) Ethical Principles of Psychologists, “Psychologists provide services, teach, and conduct research with populations and in areas only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study, or professional experience.” This means that faculty advisors are willing and able to provide you with advice based on their professional experience with graduate school, an academic career, and your school’s academic policies, procedures, and degree requirements. However, they may believe that it would be unethical to advise you about how to obtain a career in business because they lack the necessary information about (a) specific careers in business, (b) the KSCs required for these careers, and (c) the strategies to gain and market these KSCs in order to obtain employment in business.

Because of these challenges faced by faculty advisors, and their resulting reluctance to advise psychology majors who plan to enter the workforce after they graduate, many psychology departments have hired professional staff advisors to meet the needs of these students. These advisors have often earned master’s degrees in areas such as student development, higher education leadership, and career development, which provide them with the professional experiences necessary to successfully advise psychology majors about a wide variety of post-baccalaureate career paths that do not require further education in graduate or professional school. The knowledge and how to earn certificates in business specializations (e.g., Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, the Music Business, Business and Sports, Workforce Diversity, International Business, or Organizational Leadership and Supervision). I urge you to discuss how to obtain a business minor with this person or, perhaps better yet, how to select a unique constellation of business courses that, in combination with your psychology major, could prepare you to be a great fit for a career in a specialized field of business such as sports, music, or health care.

Finally, I also strongly urge you to seek the assistance of a career counselor who works in your college or university’s career center. This person has been trained to help you with career self-assessment, introduce you to the job-search process, make you aware of job-placement opportunities, and provide you with professional counseling if you struggle with personal issues such as indecisiveness that can erode your confidence during the career selection process. In the next part of this series, I will explain how this counselor can build upon the advice you can receive from your other three advisors by helping you master the skills you will need to make a successful college-to-career transition such as writing effective cover letters, crafting a strong résumé, and creating confident and convincing answers to challenging interview questions.

Each college campus provides a unique set of educational opportunities that psychology majors can use to prepare for their occupational futures, and your academic advisor and career counselor are the most appropriate sources of this inform-
Customer and Personal Service

The principles and processes for providing customer and personal services including customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.

**STRATEGY**
If you are able to fit work into your busy academic schedule, try to obtain a job in which you will interact with and/or provide services to customers. Remember that Customer and Personal Service was reported as important for all 24 of the specific careers listed in the Potential Employability section of this series, which means that it is crucially important for you to (a) possess this experience if you want to obtain a career in business or to (b) come to the conclusion that a business career would not be a good fit for you because you do not enjoy working with the public in this capacity.

**STRATEGY**
Ask an advisor in your business department to recommend business classes such as Consumer Behavior or Product and Service Management that will increase your knowledge of customer and personal service.

**STRATEGY**
Serve as a peer advisor or peer mentor in your department, and participate in the evaluation of the impact of these services by collecting feedback from those who you serve and then using this feedback to help yourself and your department to improve the advising and mentoring services both you and it provides.

The English Language

The meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.

**STRATEGY**
Take your required English composition class very seriously so you can strengthen your spelling, grammar, and compositional skills, and also have a high grade on your transcript to prove your possession of these skills. Then, enroll in advanced writing classes (e.g., Professional Writing, Technical Writing, and Business Writing) to further strengthen your mastery of the English language and to prove your awareness of the importance of this skill within business settings.

**STRATEGY**
Learn to write in APA style, which is the style you will be required to use when you write formal papers in both your psychology and your business classes. You can do this by choosing instructors who will (a) require you to write in APA style, (b) provide you with constructive feedback on both the style and content of your written work, and (c) enable you to improve the quality of your writing by allowing you to submit multiple drafts. (Hint: Use the APA Style Workshop available on the Purdue Online Writing Lab to help you master this complex writing style. You can access this workshop at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/664/1/)

Active Listening

Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

**STRATEGY**
Although this may sound odd at first, enrolling in a counseling class is one of the best ways to develop and strengthen your active listening skills if you plan to prepare for a business career. You will learn to make eye contact, pay attention to body language, show understanding of what another person is saying, and avoid giving advice so you can provide the people to whom you are listening with the opportunity to come to their own conclusions and make rational decisions based on these conclusions. This set of counseling skills will improve your effectiveness in business activities such as sales, employee management, and financial advising. BTW: One of my students who became a very successful real estate agent reported that the most valuable class she took in college was her Introduction to Counseling class.

**STRATEGY**
Once you have taken a counseling course to improve your active listening skills, your next step should be to volunteer to be a peer advisor or mentor (as described above in the Customer and Personal Service section above) so you can practice and become more confident and proficient in your active listening skills and have evidence on your resume to prove it.

Speaking

Talking to others to convey information effectively.

**STRATEGY**
Take your required speech class very seriously so you can improve your public speaking ability and also earn a high grade as proof of your skill. Given that glossophobia (i.e., the fear of public speaking) is one of the most common phobias, your ability to speak in a confident, clear, and compelling manner will serve you well, both on-the-job and especially during the interviews that will determine whether or not you obtain the job you want.

**STRATEGY**
Once you complete your required speech class, plan to enroll in other classes to further strengthen both your public and your personal speaking skills. Good choices for these classes would be Business Communications, Interpersonal Communications, Persuasion, and Nonverbal Communication. Most students refuse to take another speech class after they complete the one they are required to take. You will be the exception to this rule, and this will give you an advantage during the hiring process because it will provide you with an opportunity to show that you are willing to go “above and beyond” what is expected of you.

**STRATEGY**
Once again, serving as a peer advisor or mentor will prove to be valuable experience because it will allow you to practice and strengthen both your speaking and active listening skills.
Beliefs in Twenge’s quote, I urge if you recognized some of your these age-defined groups, but you are a member of either of requirements of your job. I personal concerns than on the higher priority on your own entitled to come to work late, cause you to believe you are treatment, success, and more belief that one deserves special entitlement characterized two sentences because you negatively to the advice I Ever Before and More Miserable Than Confident, Assertive, Entitled Young Americans Are More Generation Me: Why Today’s Millennials are described Millennials or a member of the Millennial or a member of the generation as described by Twenge (2006) in her book Generation Me: Why Today’s Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled More Confident, Assertive, and More Miserable Than Ever Before, you may respond negatively to the advice I just provided in the previous two sentences because you may possess an attitude of entitlement characterized by Twenge as “the pervasive belief that one deserves special treatment, success, and more material things.” This may cause you to believe you are entitled to come to work late, leave work early, and place a higher priority on your own personal concerns than on the requirements of your job. I hope I have not insulted you if you are a member of either of these age-defined groups, but if you recognized some of your beliefs in Twenge’s quote, I urge you to do everything in your power to keep these beliefs in the form of private thoughts rather than displaying them as publicly observable behaviors, both at school and on-the-job.

**Strategy**

You should avoid classes taught by instructors who reinforce procrastination and irresponsible behavior by accepting flimsy excuses for late assignments or missed tests and who do not seem to care if their students come to class late, leave class early, or miss class entirely. The lessons you learn from these instructors produce the types of on-the-job behaviors and attitudes that can lead to reprimands from your supervisors or, worse yet, termination from the job you believed you were preparing for during your undergraduate education. BTW: If you are a Millennial or a member of the Me Generation as described by Twenge (2006) in her book Generation Me: Why Today’s Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled and More Miserable Than Ever Before, you may respond negatively to the advice I just provided in the previous two sentences because you may possess an attitude of entitlement characterized by Twenge as “the pervasive belief that one deserves special treatment, success, and more material things.” This may cause you to believe you are entitled to come to work late, leave work early, and place a higher priority on your own personal concerns than on the requirements of your job. I hope I have not insulted you if you are a member of either of these age-defined groups, but if you recognized some of your beliefs in Twenge’s quote, I urge you to do everything in your power to keep these beliefs in the form of private thoughts rather than displaying them as publicly observable behaviors, both at school and on-the-job.

**Strategy**

Be the type of student whose teachers would use the following sentences to describe you if they were contacted by a potential employer to provide support for your job application. “Ashley was a joy to teach. She attended class faithfully, was never late, and always submitted her assignments on-time. She understood what was required in my class and completed her assignments in a correct and cheerful manner.” A potential employer will interpret a description like this to mean that you will be the type of employee who always comes to work, comes to work on time, understands your required tasks, and carries them out in a correct and positive manner. What more could an employer ask of an employee?

**Strategy**

If you work while you are in school, make sure your supervisors would be able to say the following things about you if they were asked to describe you to a potential employer. “William was a reliable, responsible, and dependable employee. He never missed work, he was never late, and he always completed his assignments and duties correctly, on-time, and in a cheerful manner.” Once again, what more could an employer ask of a potential employee?

**Integrity**

**Being honest and ethical.**

**Strategy**

You should be aware that job interviews can include questions designed to evaluate your ability to think and act in an ethical manner, such as “Tell me about a project that required you to be aware of and act in accordance with a set of ethical principles.” The only way to answer this question in a credible manner is to have actually participated in such a project. Therefore, you should engage in (a) research projects that require the creation of IRB protocols to ensure that you treat your participants in an ethical manner; (b) writing assignments that require you to conform to guidelines that prohibit plagiarism; and (c) internships that will require you to be aware of, understand, and act according to ethical guidelines such as those you would need to follow if you work with clients whose confidentiality must be protected or who may be exposed to risks.

**Strategy**

A study published by Michigan State’s Collegiate Employment Research Institute (Gardner, 2007) revealed that unethical behavior is the most common reason employers give for firing new college hires. One way to bring your ability to behave in an honest and ethical manner to the attention of a potential employer is to enroll in a Business Ethics course, include this on your résumé, bring up the importance of being honest during your interview, and then share what you learned in this class with your interviewer in a clear and convincing manner.

**Strategy**

To become familiar with the topic of ethics across the full spectrum of business, go to your library and skim through several issues of the Journal of Business Ethics, which contains articles on ethical issues related to business topics such as advertising, accounting, labor relations, public relations, marketing, production, consumption, advertising, accounting, and organizational behavior.

**Strategy**

Join a student organization like Psi Chi or Psychology Club and run for the office of treasurer. This will provide you with an opportunity to act in an ethical and honest manner as you collect and disburse the club’s money, keep accurate financial records, and create complete and truthful financial reports. Your next step should be to include this on your résumé—and discuss it during your interviews—as proof of your honest and ethical behavior.

Deciding upon a particular career without actually engaging in that career is a strategy that is as unwise as learning how to drive by reading a book about driving without ever having actually driven a car.
Secondary Attributes for Entering a Career in Business

Administration and Management

The business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership techniques, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.

**STRATEGY**

Become an officer in a student organization. This will provide you with abundant opportunities to engage in its administration and management by helping to create its goals, plan its activities, allocate its financial resources, and motivate its members to achieve the goals of the organization.

**STRATEGY**

Enrolling in business classes such as Management and Leadership, Strategic Planning, Project Management, and Introduction to Human Resources will familiarize you with the fundamental principles and practices of these essential business processes.

Sales and Marketing

Principles and methods for showing, promoting, and selling products or services including marketing strategy and tactics, product demonstration, sales techniques, and sales control systems.

**STRATEGY**

Enroll in business classes such as Consumer Behavior, Sales Management, Introduction to Marketing, and Marketing Research.

**STRATEGY**

Enroll in an internship or seek employment in a part-time job in which you are required to show, demonstrate, promote, and/or sell products to the public. If you are considering a career in sales or marketing, this will help you discover the following two very important things about yourself: do you enjoy the process of convincing people to purchase products and are you capable of doing this in a successful manner. Internships are a truly wonderful opportunity to help you identify, prepare for, and obtain a particular career. They can provide you with abundant opportunities to begin building a professional network in a career field that interests you. They can also provide you with potential job offers because, if you are working at a paid internship, 60% of the time that internship will turn into a job offer because some organizations use internships as recruiting tools (Adams, 2012). Internships are also wonderful opportunities to become familiar with the “real world” of work in which you can clarify and affirm your career direction. Deciding upon a particular career without actually engaging in that career is a strategy that is as unwise as learning how to drive by reading a book about driving without ever having actually driven a car. An internship is like the learner’s permit that requires you to drive with a licensed driver in your car for a specified period of time before you earn the privilege of driving on your own.

Critical Thinking

The ability to use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.

**STRATEGY**

Enroll in “problem-based” classes that will require you to create solutions to real-world problems. Many capstone courses are designed to help senior psychology majors apply what they have learned in their previous classes by working alone or in groups to manage projects designed to simulate—or actually engage in—the solution of problems that exist in business, health care, educational, or social service settings. This experience will enable you to identify, use, and strengthen the critical-thinking skills of comprehension, analysis, application, evaluation, and creation as you work to (a) understand (i.e., comprehend) the nature of a problem, (b) break down (i.e., analyze) the problem into manageable parts or stages, (c) put what you have learned to use (i.e., apply) by beginning the process of solving the individual parts of the problem, (d) determine the effectiveness of (i.e., evaluate) the problem-solving processes you have constructed, and (e) combine the four previous stages of this process into an integrated whole (i.e., create) to solve the problem.

**STRATEGY**

Enroll in business classes that will offer you opportunities to practice and strengthen your critical thinking skills. An online search using the words “business classes” provided me with the following titles of classes that could meet this criterion: Analysis of Business Decisions, Business Application Development, Critical Thinking and Decision Making, Retail Strategy, Global Business Analysis, and Strategic Management and Leadership.
Reading Comprehension

Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.

**STRATEGY**
Participate in an undergraduate research project that requires the creation of a literature review. This process will require you to read and understand the research that has been previously conducted on the topic you are investigating and then to use your understanding of this research to generate a clear and compelling rationale for your study.

**STRATEGY**
Ask your librarian to show you where the business journals and periodicals are located and to give you some suggestions about those that would provide you with introductory material that would increase your understanding of the literature of business.

**STRATEGY**
Go online and purchase a used copy of a textbook for an introductory business course such as *Understanding Business* (Nickels, McHugh, & McHugh, 2012). This book will have chapters on each of the basic areas of business and, as you read it, it will increase your business reading skills, your business vocabulary, and your understanding of the world of business. It may also help you decide that business is not a good career fit for you if you find its contents to be confusing, boring, or in conflict with your personal values and ethics.

**STRATEGY**
Read for pleasure on a variety of topics that interest you. Reading is a skill. The more you practice, the more proficient you will become.

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If you are working at a paid internship, 60% of the time that internship will turn into a job offer...

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**Classroom and Workplace Attributes**

The next set of five characteristics completes the category of “Attributes of Secondary Importance for Psychology Majors Who Are Preparing to Enter a Career in Business.” The best places for you to strengthen these five crucial attributes are in the classroom and in the workplace, and the best people to provide evidence that you possess them are your teachers and those who supervise you on-the-job. My two pieces of strategic advice about how to attain these characteristics are presented at the end of this five-item list.

**Attention to Detail**—Being careful about detail and thorough in completing work tasks. **Cooperation**—Being pleasant with others on the job and displaying a good-natured, cooperative attitude. **Initiative**—The willingness to take on responsibilities and challenges. **Persistence**—The willingness to persist in the face of obstacles. **Achievement and Effort**—Establishing and maintaining personally challenging achievement goals and exerting effort toward mastering tasks.

**STRATEGY**
Be the type of student whose internship supervisor would write the following in her end-of-semester evaluation report. “John was one of the most competent and cooperative interns I have ever met. He worked hard to understand exactly what he was supposed to do, and he was willing to expend the extra effort to complete his tasks in both a timely and accurate manner. He was also willing to ‘pitch in’ and help his fellow interns when they had trouble meeting their deadlines or understanding how to complete their tasks correctly. His initiative, persistence, and attention to detail were exceptional. I plan to offer John a position in our company as soon as he graduates, and I will be extremely disappointed if he does not accept my offer.”
Additional Strategic Recommendations

Enroll in an Introduction to Business course as soon as you can. You may think you know what business is all about, but until you are familiar with the many different subareas of business, you are playing a risky game in which your misconceptions may lead to unwise decisions about your occupational future. A quick glance at the table of contents from a text by Gareth Jones (2007) titled Introduction to Business: How Companies Create Value for People can provide you with an idea of the subcategories of business. In it, you will find chapter titles such as Information Technology and E-Commerce, Human Resource Management, Marketing and Product Development, and Customer Relationship Management. You could also consult O*NET or the Occupational Outlook Handbook (https://www.bls.gov/ooh/) to get information about these occupations/fields. Although you will gain valuable KSCs in all your psychology classes, perhaps the one that will be of most value in your preparation for a career in business is Industrial/Organizational Psychology, especially if a career in management interests you. If you read the table of contents for a text by Paul Spector (2017) titled Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Research and Practice, you will see why I recommend this class so highly.

BTW: It may interest you to know that according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017), the median salary of Industrial-Organizational Psychologists is $87,100, and that those in the top 10% of the salary range for this profession earn $184,520. You will need a graduate degree to enter this field, but these salary figures may motivate you to take a serious look at this occupation. If you would like to become better acquainted with I/O psychology, use the following URL to access a very readable introduction to this field (Coulton, 2017): https://psichi.com/IO.

In conclusion, many KSCs are valued by those who hire college graduates for careers in business and there are many strategies—both curricular and extracurricular—you can use to acquire and strengthen them. But your mere possession of these attributes will not be enough. You must also be able to “sell” them by convincing those who are in the position to hire you that the KSCs you possess are both stronger than those possessed by any of the other candidates for the job and are also a better match for the unique set of KSCs that are contained in that position’s job description. To put it another way, you must learn how to successfully promote your possession of these attributes during the competitive hiring process so you will be hired because you are considered to be the best candidate for the job. This leads us to my next employability concept, which I will discuss in Part IV of this series, Promotional Employability.

References


Drew C. Appleby, PhD, earned his BA from Simpson College in 1969 and his PhD from Iowa State University in 1972. He chaired Marian University’s Psychology Department, was the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the IUPUI Psychology Department, and served as the Associate Dean of the IUPUI Honors College. He used his research on teaching, learning, advising, and mentoring to help students develop academic competence and achieve their career aspirations. He published over 200 books and articles; made over 600 professional presentations (including 29 invited keynote addresses); received 44 institutional, regional, and national awards for teaching, advising, mentoring, and service; and was honored for his contributions to psychology by being named a fellow of the American Psychological Association and the Distinguished Member of Psi Chi. Over 300 of his students earned graduate degrees in a wide variety of professional fields, and he was designated as a mentor by 777 IUPUI psychology majors, 222 of whom indicated that he was their most influential mentor by selecting the following sentence to describe his impact: “This professor influenced the whole course of my life and his effect on me has been invaluable.” Dr. Appleby retired from IUPUI with the rank of Professor Emeritus in 2011.
Please welcome Psi Chi’s 2019 Distinguished Members, Drs. Jane S. Halonen and Antonio E. Puente. These two renowned individuals were selected by Psi Chi’s Board of Directors in recognition for their international contributions to the science of psychology in the areas of research, service, and teaching, as well as their long-time support of our Professional Organization.

Other Psi Chi Distinguished Members include: Drs. Albert Bandura, Elizabeth Loftus, Robert J. Sternberg, and many more.

View the complete list at www.psichi.org/?Dist_Members

Jane S. Halonen, PhD
University of West Florida

Jane S. Halonen has been a professor of psychology at University of West Florida, James Madison University, and Alverno College (WI). Her scholarly contributions have focused on helping psychology students, faculty, and departments achieve optimal performance. She has been involved over the course of her career with helping the American Psychological Association (APA) develop guidelines or standards for academic performance from high school through graduate levels of education. Dr. Halonen served as the Chief Reader for the Psychology Advanced Placement Reading from 2004–09. The Society for Teaching of Psychology, which she presided over in 2000, named their Early Career Award to honor her mentoring of generations of new faculty. She won the American Psychological Foundation Distinguished Teaching Award in 2000. In 2003, APA named her an “Eminent Woman in Psychology.” In 2013, she won the APF Award for Applications in Education and Training in Psychology.

Antonio E. Puente, PhD
University of North Carolina Wilmington

Antonio E. Puente is a professor of psychology at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW), and was elected 2017 president of the American Psychological Association. Born in La Habana, Cuba, Dr. Puente received his undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Florida and his master’s degree and PhD from the University of Georgia. He has lectured in more than a dozen foreign countries and holds appointments as a visiting professor at the Universidad de Granada (Spain) and University of California Los Angeles. Dr. Puente founded and edited the journals Neuropsychology Review and Journal of Interprofessional Education & Practice as well as a book series (33 books) in neuropsychology. He is the author of eight books, 79 book chapters, and 106 journal articles (in English, Spanish, and Russian). In addition to activities at UNCW, Dr. Puente maintains a private practice in clinical neuropsychology, ranging from clinical to forensic assessments.
CROSSING CLASS
Michelle Obama, a first-generation college (FGC) student, described her first days at college this way (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2014):

You're in a whole new world… When I first arrived at school as a first-generation college student, I didn't know anyone on campus except my brother. I didn't know how to pick the right classes or find the right buildings. I didn't even bring the right size sheets for my dorm room bed. I didn't realize those beds were so long. So, I was a little overwhelmed and a little isolated. (para 24)

Her experience is not unique. Although FGC students represent a third of incoming college students today, they have poorer adjustment, performance, and persistence compared to their continuing-generation college (CGC) counterparts (NCES, 2014). FGC students are defined as those for whom neither parent has attained a four-year college degree (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Part of the discrepancy in performance between FGC and CGC students is explained by poorer academic preparation before college: FGC students have lower high school GPAs, are less likely to have taken advanced placement courses, have lower scores on standardized tests, and are more likely to come from high schools that lack college preparation (Engle & Tinto, 2007; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001). However, even after controlling for students’ demographic backgrounds, enrollment characteristics, and past academic performance, FGC students are still at higher risk of failure and withdrawal from college (Tinto, 1993). Thus, the social class achievement gap is as much due to differences during college as differences before college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Cultural Mismatch

One such difference is that, unlike CGC students, FGC students must navigate an unfamiliar cultural context. American universities tend to embody middle- and upper-class norms of independence (Fryberg & Markus, 2007; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012). This assumption guides beliefs about how students should learn, interact with one another, and perform. Stephens and colleagues (2012) found that university administrators were more likely to endorse independent norms (e.g., challenging norms, working independently) as ways that students would be successful at their schools. Thus, a good student in the college context is willing to approach the teacher, ask questions, and even interrupt to make a point (Stephens, Markus, & Phillips, 2014).

FGC students, conversely, tend to come from working-class backgrounds characterized by interdependence, where the “good” and “healthy” person is connected to others. When students from one context enter a context that has different understandings about the appropriate way to behave, it may result in a cultural mismatch (Markus & Conner, 2013). Thus, FGC students may experience a cultural mismatch with the university context, where they are uncertain about the proper way to act, and may begin questioning whether they can be successful there (Johnson, Richeson, & Finkel, 2011). This cultural mismatch may explain, in part, why FGC students have adjustment problems, poorer academic performance, and lower retention rates in higher educational settings.

Social Class Bicultural Identity Integration

FGC students come from a culture whose values, norms, and behaviors differ from those that are predominant in the college context. Biculturalism is defined as having experienced or internalized two or more cultures (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007). Although research on biculturalism has previously focused on immigrants, international students, and people of mixed ethnicity, people from working-class backgrounds who inhabit middle-class contexts such as FGC students might also be thought of as bicultural.

The social class achievement gap is a persistent issue.

Previous research on ethnic biculturals and immigrants, people who have experienced or internalized more than one culture, suggests that ease of integrating different cultural identities is related to a host of positive outcomes. If
FGC students can in fact be considered bicultural, then those with high social class bicultural identity integration (SES-BII)—who perceive their home (i.e., working-class) and school (i.e., middle-class) identities as harmonious—should experience improved outcomes relative to those who perceive their identities to be in conflict.

Indeed, recent research demonstrates that FGC students with integrated social class identities had higher life satisfaction, physical and mental health, and lower depression, stress, and acculturative stress, relative to FGC students who were low in SES-BII, who experienced greater difficulty managing their cultural identities (Herrmann & Varnum, 2018). Integrated social class identities were also linked to better academic performance and persistence. Additionally, the effects of integration on health and well-being were mediated by acculturative stress, such that participants high in social class bicultural identity integration had lower acculturative stress, thereby improving health and well-being.

**How Psychological Interventions Can Increase Performance and Persistence**

By gaining a better understanding of the psychological variables that contribute to FGC students’ performance and persistence, we can enact effective, inexpensive, scalable interventions to reduce the social class achievement gap. A variety of studies demonstrate that one way to reduce the acculturative challenge is for relevant role models (i.e., older students or faculty members) to normalize challenges in the transition to college for FGC students and to provide culturally based advice. One study by Stephens and colleagues (2014) tested whether exposure to a panel of senior students who acknowledged college generation status and stressed strategies specific to students’ cultural backgrounds would improve student performance (Stephens, Hamedani, & Destin, 2014). Namely, incoming FGC and CGC students attended a panel session that either did or did not acknowledge panelists’ college generation status. Both the treatment (i.e., difference education) and control panels offered students valuable advice on strategies to succeed in college (e.g., attending office hours), but panelists in the control condition did not acknowledge college generation status. At the end of students’ first year, there was no difference in GPA for the CGC students by panel; however, among the FGC students, those who had seen senior students out themselves as FGC students and offer culturally matched advice had significantly higher GPAs than those in the control condition, who were less likely to take advantage of resources.

**FGC Faculty**

Another ongoing study examines whether exposure to FGC faculty can increase students’ engagement and performance. There has recently been a push to increase visibility of FGC faculty members; for example, many FGC faculty in the University of California system wear T-shirts and buttons identifying their college generation status for the first week of school and are featured on websites highlighting their experiences and offering advice. This is important because college generation status is a concealable identity, meaning that it is not apparent unless people “out” themselves.

My colleagues Giselle Laiduc, Rebecca Covarrubias, and I wanted to know whether brief exposure to a webpage detailing FGC faculty stories and advice would increase institutional commitment and performance on an anagram task for FGC students (Herrmann, Laiduc, & Covarrubias, in prep). We created mock websites featuring brief biographies from five faculty members. In our control condition, faculty members discussed their academic histories and offered advice (e.g., take advantage of tutoring services), without mentioning college generation status. In the intervention condition, faculty mentioned that they were FGC students, briefly
discussed how it impacted their experiences, and provided culturally relevant advice (e.g., sharing the journey with your family and community). Then, we had students complete an anagram task and rate their institutional commitment—how likely they are to return to the university and graduate. Although CGC students had similar anagram performance and institutional commitment regardless of condition, FGC students exposed to first-generation faculty had significantly higher task performance and institutional commitment than those in the control condition.

The social class achievement gap is a persistent issue. Traditional interventions to improve FGC students’ performance and persistence by increasing their academic and financial support have been costly, time consuming, and limited in effect. Although CGC students complete an anagram task and perform better than FGC students, the studies discussed above, these interventions can be as simple as having first-generation faculty “out” themselves, or providing senior student role models through orientation programs or FGC student clubs (e.g., I’m First!, IvyG).

The Role of Psi Chi
There are a variety of ways that Psi Chi chapters can assist in the effort to improve FGC students’ experiences, performance, and persistence in college. Below are some suggestions that can help FGC students, but would also be likely to increase membership and involvement among underrepresented students from a variety of backgrounds.

- **Be proactive about membership.** One of the main challenges facing FGC students is lack of “cultural capital,” or insider knowledge about how the university works, including how to become involved in clubs or honor societies like Psi Chi. Rather than waiting for students to come to them, Psi Chi advisors and chapters can actively seek out and invite qualified students. Work with your department or college advisors to assess which students satisfy the requirements for membership and invite them to join.

- **Choose your meeting times wisely.** Psi Chi chapters should be sensitive to the constraints of their FGC members. FGC students are more likely than their CGC counterparts to work part- or full-time jobs while attending college, live off-campus, and have family responsibilities to attend to. Thus, chapters should be sensitive to when they hold their meetings, and can use tools like Doodle or When2Meet to find a time that works best for the majority of members. Even if students can’t make regular chapter meetings, try to plan service events, panel discussions, research groups, and socials at a variety of times (e.g., morning coffee and bagels, movie night Fridays).

- **Publicize scholarship and funding opportunities.** Psi Chi offers a wealth of opportunities. Psi Chi advisors and chapters can help FGC students, but would also be likely to improve FGC students’ performance and all students’ college transition. Psychological Science, 29, 948–953. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797618761107

- **Make graduate school a reality.** Many students, especially FGCs, don’t know that PhD programs frequently offer tuition waivers and stipends to graduate students. This simple fact can take a seemingly impossible path (i.e., four to seven more years of education) and make it a reality. Once students are convinced that graduate school may be accessible to “people like them,” chapters can demystify the application process by holding workshops on how to apply to graduate school or panel discussions from graduate students, alumni, or faculty on their experiences in graduate school.

**References**

Sarah D. Herrmann, PhD, is an assistant professor of psychology at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. She graduated in 2010 with a BA in psychology from the University of Arizona and received a doctorate in social psychology at Arizona State University in May 2017. Sarah’s program of research explores the impact of underrepresented identities (e.g., social class, ethnicity, gender) on experiences and performance in academic contexts. She has been a member of Psi Chi since 2009 and currently serves as a faculty advisor for Psi Chi at Weber State University.
As we near the end of another academic year, some college students will be assessing their major, some will be considering different career paths, and others will be making decisions about graduate school. The commonality is that each person is making and assessing plans. This process can be anxiety provoking, as individuals wonder whether they are making the correct decision and if that decision will turn out as expected. The true, and often unappreciated, wonder is that sometimes Plan A goes awry in the most beautiful of ways, with a closed door forcing a focus on previously unexamined open doors.

The stories to illustrate this idea are like flowers in a pot. There is a striking difference between what is visible on top and what lies beneath. The gorgeous, vibrant flowers and their patterned leaves rise above, while beneath the soil is a tangle of colorless roots, sometimes burrowed into holes of the basket and often bent into uncomfortable configurations. Looking backward, life journeys are like the colorful flower, easier to see than the dirt-covered, tangled roots that were necessary for the flowers to grow. In this article, we want to provide encouragement of Plan B by talking about the dirt of circumstances and about how messy roots of unexpected plans can create the most pleasing blooms.
### Changing Majors

A recent report from the U.S. Department of Education (2017) found that 33% of undergraduate students at four-year universities change their major at least once, and 10% of those will change multiple times. Other sources claim a much higher number, arguing that 50% or more of college students change majors (Best Value Schools, n.d.; College Rank, 2018). In other words, rethinking your college focus is a common experience for students.

### Darren’s Story

Darren was a first-generation student, leaving for college with only a vague idea of what was in store for him. Because he was told he was “good at math and science” in high school, he started as an engineering major. He soon began to question this decision after a semester of decent grades but unfulfilling coursework. With very little guidance, Darren signed up for a wide range of general education classes to see where his true interests might lie. One of his classes was Introductory Psychology taught by a man with a passion for the topic. This influential teacher convinced Darren to change his major to psychology and modify his career goal to becoming a professor. Now, after almost thirty years of teaching university students, Darren says, “Changing majors was a pivotal turning point in my life where I went from doing what others expected of me to doing what was the right fit for me. Making the change was scary; however, it was very fortunate that I was willing to consider Plan B.”

### Chloe’s Story

Chloe (an alias) started college following the advice of her parents, who wanted her to have a “practical major.” As she majored in business, she wondered if it was the correct path for her, especially as she found herself preferring her psychology classes to her business classes. Chloe took psychology in high school and loved it, but was discouraged from pursuing that major because her family thought it was a “dead end.” By her junior year, Chloe had taken enough psychology classes to meet the prerequisites for graduate school admission. A psychology faculty member noticed her enthusiasm for the discipline, reached out, and asked if she might want to apply to their PhD program. At first Chloe was terrified at the prospect of spending four or five more years in school and not earning money during this time (except a modest stipend as a graduate assistant). Despite these apprehensions, her gut told her to follow the path that would help her establish a meaningful, energizing work life. Business was certainly not her passion and so she decided to take the plunge and apply to psychology graduate programs. Because she loved everything she was learning and doing in graduate school, the five years passed in a flash and upon graduation, Chloe was able to become a psychology professor at a highly respected university where she could teach and do research on topics of great interest to her. Changing majors literally changed her life.

### Donna’s Story

Donna ended high school with no goals and no interest in going to college. She translated her minimal typing skills to a job writing obituaries and church news for the local paper. After two years, she decided to, in her words, “give college a try;” however, she entered with no major and still lacking clear goals. She learned that Eastern Airlines was conducting interviews for stewardesses (now known as flight attendants) and made it through the first round. The airline flew her to Miami, FL, for more interviewing, which ironically, was Donna’s first time on a plane. She made it through the selection process (which at that time included having her legs checked for scars and reporting her body measurements), and served airline passengers for two years. She knew that one day she would want a more stable job, and after getting married, Donna moved to a job at the local bank. She recalls a frustrating experience where she confronted her boss about a new male employee who was hired at a higher salary than her salary and was given the explanation that the new employee “needed money to buy a house,” as if a woman would never have this need. To add to the injury, her boss then told her that she could leave the company if she wanted because “the door swings both ways.” Donna said that it was at that point when she realized that “nobody would tell me again that I would not walk out the door” and returned to college, this time with a clear plan and a major of business administration. Seventeen years after her first college class, Donna graduated and spent the next 40 years working her way up through the banking hierarchy, ultimately ending her career as a Senior Vice-President. As she reflected back on the twisting path that led to her niche, Donna advises, “Enjoy the journey. Enjoy the moment and be present. You are in charge of your own destiny. There are times when you hit a rough spot, but in the long haul, things work out and life is good.”

### Changing Jobs

Moving among jobs also appears to be a common experience, particularly for young adults. The U.S. Department of Labor (2017) recently reported that adults change jobs an average of 11.9 times between the ages of 18 and 50, with an average of 4.5 of those job changes occurring from 25 to 34 years of age. LinkedIn supports this data by reporting that millennials change jobs an average of four times in their first 10 years following college graduation (Berger, 2016). These numbers may be higher than estimated because many individuals change positions within organizations, a move that is not necessarily included in a quantification of “job changes.” You might find it helpful to remember that a career move does not signify a need to leave an unhappy situation. Changing jobs can lead to increased income, responsibility, skill development, or challenge, as well as improved work-life balance and better employee-employer fit.

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**EYE ON PSI CHI**

SUMMER 2019

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Changing From a Graduate School Focus to the Job Market

Another issue that leads to change for many students is the pursuit of graduate studies. If you are in a psychology department in early spring, then you have most likely waited someone in the process of nervously waiting to hear about admission status from graduate programs. Graduate programs in psychology are competitive, with median admission rates for master’s programs ranging from 35–65% and for PhD programs ranging from 8–32% (Michalski, Cope, & Fowler, 2018). The reality is that not everyone who applies will enter graduate school immediately. Although this might be disappointing, the stories we gathered suggest that an initial rejection from graduate school can be a blessing in disguise.

Trista’s Story

The path that led Trista to law enforcement was full of twists and turns. She started college as a mathematics major planning to go to optometry school after getting her undergraduate degree. After taking a psychology class her first semester, she concluded that she enjoyed it much more than math and changed her major. She discovered criminology while researching different job opportunities within psychology, which led her to add sociology (with a concentration in criminology) as a double major. Trista volunteered with her local police department to complete internship hours for her two majors, which led her to work as a telecommunications operator (dispatcher) for the police department. Despite her growing interest in the field of criminology, Trista applied for graduate programs in clinical psychology. Trista says, “I actually thought that I wanted to work in the prison system as a psychologist. I wanted to help criminals see their mistakes (and reasons for their choices) and help them learn ways to avoid reoffending when they got out of prison.”

When Plan A, getting into PhD programs, did not pan out, Trista started working as a dispatcher and then police officer in the very department at which she had previously interned. During this time, she pursued her backup plan, taking online classes to earn a master’s degree in criminal justice. After a couple of years of work and education, she transferred to the Street Crimes Unit and then to the Professional Standards Unit doing background checks on police officer candidates before transferring to the Criminal Investigation Division. There, Trista says, “I quickly realized that my passion is investigating crimes against children. In college, I didn’t even know that this field of law enforcement existed. I thought that crimes against children were investigated just like any other crime, but they are not. In most cases, children are abused and/or neglected inside their home with no witnesses except for their abusers or other children. As part of my psychology major, I took a child development class and volunteered one summer at a SC Department of Mental Health youth camp. I had always enjoyed working with children but had never considered seeking justice for them."

For the past six years, she has worked in the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and is currently a Special Agent in the Special Victims Unit–Department of Child Fatalities, where she assists local law enforcement agencies investigate child deaths. Trista’s graduate degree was not a requirement to become a police officer; however, it helped her clarify her life goals and along with her experience, it qualified her to teach sociology and criminal justice courses at local colleges. Trista wanted you to know, “If I had stuck to my original plan of being an optometrist, or even my second plan of counseling prisoners, I never would have had the opportunity to make such valuable impacts in others’ lives or seek justice for the many children killed senselessly by the people who were supposed to protect them the most. My ‘backup plan’ has become my career and my passion. I am very thankful God led me away from my original goals and put me exactly where I was meant to be.”

Claudia’s Story

Claudia also faced a life plan that did not go as anticipated when she graduated. Claudia had a stellar undergraduate career that included work experience, leadership positions, grants, publications, and awards. She applied to three PhD programs in clinical psychology and five master’s programs, earning acceptance into all of the master’s but none of the PhD programs. At the same time, Claudia experienced some unexpected personal challenges that made her rethink her life direction. She says of this time, “Once I graduated, one of the hardest things for me was getting used to my ‘life plan’ not going as I originally expected.” Instead of heading off to graduate school, Claudia accepted a position as the Lead Research Assistant working in an adolescent brain development laboratory at a large university. She was thankful for mentors who reminded her that “if things do not go as planned, it is because something even better is around the corner.” With this attitude in mind, Claudia took advantage of every opportunity available and continued to conduct and publish research. She sought these educational and professional growth opportunities in anticipation of one day reapplying to graduate school, but this time, as a much more competitive candidate. Claudia says that two inspirational quotes that have helped her maneuver through unexpected life events are: “Going through things you never thought you’d go through will only take you places you never thought you’d get to” by Morgan Harper Nichols; and a popular, unattributed meme that states “During your transformation, you might feel like everything is falling apart, but in reality, everything is coming together for the highest good. You are being pushed to evolve and get out of your comfort zone so you can live and experience your true greatness. Welcome change.”

CAREER PREPARATION
Changing Direction While Pursuing Graduate Degrees

You may imagine that changing majors is limited to the undergraduate years; however, change is always an option and even occurs at the graduate level. Given the wide array of possible graduate programs, it is sometimes difficult to choose the best path, especially with limited experience. Luckily, sometimes life circumstances provide the path.

Gary’s Story

Gary, like many psychology majors, decided to apply to PhD programs in clinical psychology. One of his professors humorously warned him about the difficulty of acceptance by telling Gary, “You know how they pick new students? They throw all the applications in the air, and the ones that stay in the air get admitted.” Gary persisted, but six programs denied him admission. Again, like many psychology majors, he had not considered a Plan B. His friend happened to tell him about a job opening, so after graduation he ended up working as a special education teacher for students with behavioral and emotional problems. In this position, Gary gained exposure to the field of school psychology for the first time. He liked the fact that school psychologists do a variety of tasks including assessments, counseling, and behavioral interventions. The more he investigated, the more interested he was. Gary eventually applied to graduate programs in school psychology, and with his newfound focus and experience, he earned his PhD six years later and in a different field than he had originally planned. He is now a long-time faculty member who is able to help other students work through the same decisions he had to make.

Amy’s Story

With a lengthy list of undergraduate accomplishments and awards, Amy applied to four PhD programs in psychology (developmental and neuroscience) during her senior year of college. She says that it was "humbling" and "devastating" to be accepted by none of them. She decided to continue at her undergraduate university and earned a master’s degree in biology with intentions of reapplying to PhD programs later. To fund her graduate study, she took advantage of different opportunities such as a graduate assistantship through the Department of Residence Life where she ran a small residence hall, as well as working in the Academic Success Center with academically at-risk undergraduate students. Amy also helped to develop and teach a course to first-year biology students on metacognitive study strategies. Intended as ways to make money, these opportunities instead inspired a love of teaching. So, Amy also earned a master of arts in teaching in secondary science education, another degree that was not part of her original plan. Upon graduation, Amy took on the position of Residential Learning Coordinator and now runs a residence hall of primarily first-year women, supervises and develops student leaders, creates and implements an intentional residential curriculum, and assesses and assists students of academic and behavioral concern, while still keeping up her teaching chops by adjunct instructing for the biology department. When we contacted her recently, she made the comment, “At the end of my senior year of college, I thought the world was ending, but now I do fulfilling work that combines my love of working with students, teaching, and research, and I’ve developed skills that I never would have otherwise. I always tell my students to follow opportunities and keep an open mind.”

Leah’s Story

Leah also ended up pursuing a different graduate path than she originally expected. After a stellar undergraduate career, Leah applied to nine PhD programs in clinical psychology. She received one interview, but got wait-listed. Luckily, she had also applied to three master’s programs and received offers from two of them. Leah says of this time, “I remember being extremely bummed out about this, and it was a huge blow to my confidence since this wasn’t part of my ‘plan.’ However, it turned out that going to a master’s program instead of straight into a PhD was very helpful for me.” While earning her master’s degree, Leah realized that her research interests had not been clearly focused during her first round of applications. In fact, she says, “I think that admissions committees could probably sense that lack of focus.” Leah took the time in graduate school to identify her true interests and find her niche in psychology. The second time around, she applied to 11 PhD programs, got six interviews and two offers. She is currently finishing her doctoral degree in clinical psychology at a school she did not even apply to in her first application process. She says, “Looking back at that first round of applications, and also being where I am now, I’m very happy with the way everything turned out. It may sound cheesy, but being somewhere now where I feel like I fit perfectly, it makes sense why everything happened the way it did. Also, I feel like the cliché ‘everything happens for a reason’ applies here, and that everything worked out the way it was supposed to. I’m sure that knowing that I would eventually end up where I was supposed to be may have brought me comfort when I did not get accepted to a PhD program the first time around.”
Changing Direction in Graduate School

Even students who gain immediate admission to graduate school are not immune from a change in direction, although this might be a less common transition than some of the others we have discussed. Graduate school is a difficult time to transition, as you run the risk of losing money, time, professional relationships, and educational credits (Rowh, n.d.). However, Dr. Katherine Brooks, a career counselor, says it is not uncommon for people to find themselves feeling dissatisfied in the middle of graduate school, “I see people get stuck all the time. They’re mad at themselves, they have regret, and they are comparing themselves to others in their field.” (Frederickson, 2018). However, she also says that changing plans in graduate school is not a tragedy, because “education is always good … it never hurts to learn.” (Frederickson, 2018). A secondary benefit of graduate school transitions is that sometimes such a move is necessary for people to identify and pursue their true passion. Being in the wrong environment can block the view of a better environment.

Savannah’s Story

Savannah spent her undergraduate years interning and volunteering in positions that convinced her that clinical psychology was the perfect path for her. She focused her graduate search on a PsyD degree, and chose to attend one of the two programs that accepted her. Reflecting on that time in her life, Savannah says, “I think students get so wrapped up in the here-and-now that they lose focus on the endgame. I feel like that was me. I wanted to be a psychologist so bad that I had my blinders on, which deterred me from what I really wanted. I was focused on what was expected of me and not my dream.” Savannah started her graduate program and quickly realized that she was working long hours and sleeping very little. Three months into her graduate program, she had a heart attack, which led to ongoing medical issues for the next six months. She continued her graduate training, often doing her school work lying in a hospital bed. She was determined to reach her Plan A goal by finishing the program; however, it slowly dawned on her that maybe Plan A was not her best option. She says, “After a while, I realized that I was ‘living to die.’ To me, this meant that I was waking up every morning to live the same monotonous life that was surely going to lead me to my death. For some, it may seem a little dramatic, but after you stare death in the face, it seemed more realistic.” Savannah had to take a hard look at her priorities and decide what the hours of her life were worth. She found a clinical graduate program that was more flexible, even allowing her to complete her internship hours through paid, international positions. Savannah found a path to helping others when she stopped running down the path she was on and took a slower look around.

Merry’s Story

Merry had a similar experience in graduate school. She entered graduate school certain of the type of research she wanted to do and found a charismatic advisor to support her. Merry started her thesis research but says, “I could not seem to make progress. I wrote and rewrote sections of my thesis, I met with my advisor, and I sought encouragement from other students. Everything seemed perfect, but nothing felt right. One day, I was driving to campus and had the thought, ‘If I got in a car accident today, I wouldn’t have to go on campus.’ Wow. You don’t have to be a psychologist to know that this thought was a bad sign.” Merry finally admitted to herself that she was not happy in graduate school, which left her questioning every decision she had made for the past three years.

Merry stopped the thesis project that was underway, but continued in the graduate program. During this time, she says, “I recall a feeling of utter panic and even embarrassment, wondering how I was going to explain to people that I had failed in graduate school and no longer had a life plan.” Merry ended up working in an animal laboratory in the psychology department to make some money in the midst of this identity crisis. Despite having as she puts it “many preconceived, and mostly incorrect, ideas about animal research,” Merry was surprised to find that she enjoyed working with the animals and was fascinated by the research being conducted. She began to see light at the end of the dark tunnel and asked the faculty member in charge of the laboratory to be her advisor. According to Merry, “thus began a professional relationship that has been one of the most meaningful in my life. I started a new project, and having discovered a topic that I loved, I finished the entire thesis in less time than I had spent working on the introduction section of my previous one. A situation that seemed devastating turned out to be one of the most important and positive stepping stones in my career.”
Conclusion
We hope you have found some encouragement in learning about messy roots that, over time, nourished pretty flowers. The constant theme from all of the people to whom we spoke is that happiness is not hiding down a single life path, and in fact sometimes the overlooked path is the one leading to success. The fact that happiness can be reached in multiple ways does not suggest that walking the path is all that is required. In reflecting on her own life, Donna emphasized, “It takes hard work and determination.” According to Mike Rowe, the host of television’s Dirty Jobs, “Happiness does not come from a job. It comes from knowing what you truly value and behaving in a way that’s consistent with those beliefs.” (Be, n.d.) He further states, “Job satisfaction is important, but from what I’ve seen, it has less to do with what you do, and more to do with who you are.” (Rowe, 2019). We hope that you will seek happiness where you are, whether that be in the midst of Plan A, B, or C.

References

Merry J. Sleigh, PhD, is a professor at Winthrop University (SC) who has been actively engaged with Psi Chi for almost three decades. She earned her undergraduate degree from James Madison University (VA) and her doctorate from Virginia Tech. Dr. Sleigh has won numerous awards for her mentoring, teaching, and advising. She is particularly passionate about helping students develop skills for future success through participation in undergraduate research.

Darren R. Ritzer, PhD, is currently an associate professor of Winthrop University (SC). He earned his undergraduate degree in psychology from Lafayette College (PA), and he earned his PhD in industrial/organizational psychology from Virginia Tech. Before arriving at Winthrop University, he was a major in the U.S. Army. Dr. Ritzer teaches a range of undergraduate courses, including an introductory course that helps incoming students develop skills and strategies to succeed in college.
Mass Murder in the News: How Religion Influences Perception of Terrorism

As psychologists, we have the unique privilege of providing data and research that can expose the existence of prejudices against minorities in our society. As a Muslim woman, I was inspired to run a study that I hypothesized would provide evidence of the disparity in how Muslim perpetrators are characterized in comparison to Christian perpetrators for the same crime. Based on this supported hypothesis, I theorize that a lack of diverse representation of Muslims in our entertainment and news media influences the general public to associate Islam with terrorism, thus driving the news media to report crimes by Muslim perpetrators differently than Christian perpetrators. A probable consequence of this differential reporting is that negative stereotypes about Muslims in America are further strengthened. It is critical to focus on these diversity topics and issues in our research because social change only arises when issues are continually exposed to the unaware world at large. Through scientific process we can be the megaphone for the minorities of our society who are continually shouting for their deserved equal treatment.

https://doi.org/10.24837/1235-7423.23.5.354

Katie Keegan graduated from McDaniel College with her Bachelor of Arts in psychology in May 2017. She currently resides in Maryland and works for the Department of Homeland Security on a recruitment marketing, advertising, and data analytics team. Katie aims to continue her higher education and hopes to one day earn a PhD in social psychology. She owes her success to her mentor Dr. Wendy Morris, who coauthored their published work “Mass Murder in the News: How Religion Influences Perception of Terrorism” in the Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research.

Four Ways That Good Intentions & Well-Meaning Behaviors Derail Inclusion

My research on workplace diversity is motivated by my desire to make the experience of work personally and professionally fulfilling for everyone regardless of their identities. In many cases, I believe that individual acts of discrimination and institutional systems of bias and oppression persist unintentionally. Cultural taboos that silence conversations about sensitive topics like racial and gender disparities in education and other locations normalize systems of oppression thus making them difficult to identify and eliminate. I view diversity science as the most difficult and valuable research one could conduct today if we are to resolve the major challenges of our time. Our ability to ultimately eradicate cancer, poverty, and global warming and other challenges is incumbent upon our ability to ensure that every individual is valued and has the opportunity to reach their full potential and to ask new and different questions and contribute new solutions to problems too often deemed unsolvable.

https://doi.org/10.24837/1614-8612.Eye22.2.34

Kecia Thomas, PhD, is a professor of Industrial/Organizational psychology and African-American studies and the senior associate dean for the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Georgia. She is the author of numerous peer-reviewed articles and edited chapters as well Diversity Dynamics in the Workplace (Wadsworth). She has also edited several special “diversity” journal issues as well as Diversity Resistance in Organizations (Psychology Press) and Diversity Ideologies in Organizations (Routledge). She is an elected fellow of both the Society for Industrial/Organizational Psychology and the American Psychological Association. She is a graduate of Bucknell University (PA) and Penn State University.
At Every Stage of Your Career...

When you’re a graduate student
You risk potential legal actions every time you provide psychological services in supervised and other settings. Being insured through someone else’s malpractice policy doesn’t guarantee you will be a priority or receive personal coverage when you need it the most. That’s why it pays to have your own coverage, and The Trust has made it affordable with Psychology Student Liability Insurance.*

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Think about the unique characteristics of each letter of the alphabet—the various sounds that each letter can make, the straight or sometimes curvy shape of different letters, and the associations of each letter with other letters. Did you know that L, G, B, T, Q, and I people each face challenges that are similarly unique from one another?

As licensed psychologist Dr. Theodore Burnes explains, it is true that LGBTQI+ people do face many of the same challenges that other people face, as well other pressures such as the challenge of transcending gender roles, workplace harassment, and harassment by large systemic systems like law enforcement and even the medical healthcare system. However, because this is fairly well-known, LGB people’s challenges are often incorrectly assumed to be the same as those of trans, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary people, among others. In this interview, Dr. Burnes shares the ABCs on the distinct barriers that different groups and individuals face (as well as advice for helping people better understand one another).

“For example,” Dr. Burnes says, “for gay and lesbian people specifically, a lot of challenges often don’t just deal with a person’s gay identity, but with how that identity interacts with their other identities. Increasingly, especially in large urban areas, we find that gay people often face challenges from their racial, ethnic, or cultural community in terms of how that community may value their sexual orientation.”

“However, for bisexual individuals,” he continues, “who are not gay . . . one of the things that they uniquely face is biphobia, which originates from not only the heterosexual community but also from gay and lesbian communities as well. Many gay and lesbian communities may actually consider bisexuality to be invisible, and so this concept of bi-erasure comes up a lot. A lot of the daily struggles are around visibility. And also accurate visibility.”

Some of the unique challenges, especially for transgender people, involve trying to understand themselves, and not just necessarily in terms of their attraction but also who they are in terms of connection to their own bodies. Elaborating, Dr. Burnes says, “Many times, transgender people have challenges with regard to a persistent discomfort with their gender identity, which is the gender that they know themselves to be within their physical bodies. That is very different from challenges with regard to the person who they are attracted to. In other words,
although the two challenges are linked, the gender that I know myself to be is distinct from the gender of the person who I’m attracted to.”

A licensed professional clinical counselor in California, Dr. Burnes is an expert in human sexual expression and sex positivity, teaching and training pedagogy in mental health services, and mental health and wellness for LGBTQI+ individuals. He is also the Director of Training and Educational Programs at the Los Angeles Gender Center, where he supervises prelicensed professionals in working with transgender and gender nonconfirming clients.

As he advises these professionals to understand: “Transgender people often have to discover the steps that they need in order to make physical or social transitions . . . which LGB people don’t do. Trans people often have to undergo a series of processes to know their own pronouns and change their names. They may look different in some way—from taking hormones or having a series of surgeries so that their bodies are more congruent with who they know themselves to be. Those kinds of processes, which are inherent for many trans people, are unique processes that LGB people may actually never undergo.”

Steps to a Career Working With LGBTQI+ Clients and Communities

Dr. Burnes’s journey to become a licensed counselor first began when he was an undergraduate studying psychology and Spanish. As a student, he obtained a work study position at a LGBTQ resources office, which served to create a safe space for students and awareness at the campus level. It was through this opportunity that he realized the benefit of thinking about how LGBTQ students need safe spaces and the benefits of good therapy so that they can process some of their own internal structures and external processes.

He pursued a master’s degree at the University of Pennsylvania. There, he met a series of mentors who he says were instrumental in helping him recognize that therapists need more knowledge about the communities that they serve in order to do great work. At the time, there wasn’t much research out there on either area, and so his instructors basically said to him, “Look, if you want this work to be done, then you’re the one that you’re waiting for to do it. You need to step into a role as a leader.”

Looking back, Dr. Burnes says, “I wasn’t sure if I wanted to do that, but the more I started doing it, the more I started realizing that it wasn’t that I didn’t want to do it, but that I was scared. I had thought that I would be rejected and that I wouldn’t get into the schools that I wanted to. But once I really stepped into the mindset that this was my calling, fear changed to my second priority because serving communities was now first.”

Dr. Burnes went on to pursue a doctoral degree at the University of California Santa Barbara, which he loved every minute of. “I worked with a mentor who was really passionate about LGBT-related discrimination processes in the field of psychology. I also got involved in research, and through my doctoral studies, I really realized that I wanted to go on and do more training work. Obviously clinical practice was important to me, but of equal importance was training clinicians. I currently work in a master’s program where I get to do what I love. I feel really fortunate to have a career that continues to nourish me.”

Every Person Is Different

Dr. Burnes drives east with the Hollywood Sign ahead in the distance as he speaks with us today. Prefacing how he has become less focused with categorizing people’s genders, he declares, “All good scholars are open to change and feedback, and as their work and constructs evolve, their thought will evolve, too. Because the human existence and experience is wrought with change, the work that we do might not radically change, but it will shift.”

When Dr. Burnes first started focusing on LGBTQI+, he was very intent on thinking about sexuality in terms of labels and identity. But during his work, he has become increasingly interested in not just identities and labels but also in thinking about process. “What I mean by that is—it’s not just important to understand the label that someone comes to know themselves by, but also the processes of who they are and how they came to know who they are. That process can look different

The Value of Mentorship

At the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Jeanne Stanley was Dr. Burnes’s master’s degree advisor. He says, “She continues to be a mentor. And I think I didn’t know how important it was for me to actually have a mentor who really valued the intersections between gender and psychology. Having someone role model that for me was really important—and not just someone who I thought was really supportive but who was also doing the actual work.”

At the University of California Santa Barbara, Dr. Tania Israel was Dr. Burnes’s doctoral advisor. She was phenomenal, he says, and through his work at UCSB, he also completed a couple teaching assistantships. One was in the Department of Black Studies with Dr. Ingrid Banks. He also took a college and university teaching course with Dr. Shirley Jackson who really helped him with the way that he thinks about knowledge.

Advice for Students

A Cross-Cultural Psychology class was one of the first classes that Dr. Burnes took as an undergraduate student that was really helpful to him; he highly encourages students interested in working with LGBTQI+ to take this course. Although the course is usually geared toward diversity more broadly, he feels that this kind of knowledge can be really helpful.

Likewise, any type of women’s or gender study class can also be useful for thinking about gender roles. He says, “If your campus is lucky enough to have a sexualities studies class, then obviously take that as well. If your college doesn’t have a department of sexuality and gender studies, then these classes are usually held in either psychology, sociology, or anthropology departments.”

He also recommends for students to consider opportunities to infuse topics related to gender and sex in the final papers of their more traditional undergraduate courses. Fondly, he recalls, “One of my favorite papers was for Abnormal Psychology, in which I deconstructed gender identity disorder. My professor told me that it was an amazing paper, and we had a great debate as a result of my writing. There are so many ways that the field of human behavior impacts sexuality and gender. You can apply sex and gender in most of the coursework within our discipline.”
for so many different people. For me, that feels really important to acknowledge.”

Although Dr. Burnes was initially involved in the LGB focus, he has found through his work that people are not just LGB or T. He says, “They also have families and cultural communities. They also have jobs. And they also have political aspirations. So, if you do LGB rights work or any type of social justice work, you are committed to multi-issue organizing.”

During a Psi Chi talk last year in Oregon, Dr. Burnes spoke about how “social just-us” does not work because social justice should actually be about people who are “not just us.” In other words, although a person may identify as a member of the gay community, the gay community may not all look like that particular person. Therefore, he says, it is important to think about the ways that you can advocate for individuals who may share some of your identities . . . but not all of them.

Moving Forward

So, what can be done to help LGBTQI+ and heterosexual people become more accepting of one another?

Dr. Burnes thinks that talks like his upcoming Psi Chi Distinguished Lecture at WPA 2019 are a huge start. Further, he believes that it is especially important for individuals who are involved in the social sciences field of any kind—whether that be psychology, sociology, or anthropology—to understand the distinct ways that individuals are different. “Knowledge and awareness of differences will often lead to empathy for difference,” he says, “So, part of the solution is not just providing spaces for education for individuals in those communities but also for people who serve those communities.” As readers might be able to guess, creating safe spaces to create further awareness is one of Dr. Burnes’s specific life callings.

A second strategy to bring people together, he says, is trying to look at things through the lens of social justice. About this, he elaborates, “No matter what group that you might be a part of or working with, whether it is a family system, a cultural group, or even a community, try to understand who might be on the margins of that group and if there are ways that individuals within that group might feel marginalized as a result of who they are.”

For example, in the LGBTQI+ community, trans people often feel marginalized by LGB people. Therefore, Dr. Burnes encourages this community to have larger conversations to ask questions like this: “As a community, are we practicing what we preach, not just externally in terms of having people’s awareness raised, but also internally in terms of the in-group work needed in order to create the socially just spaces that we want?”

Media Inaccuracies

Another area where change is needed is within the media and entertainment industry. Dr. Burnes says, “The media continues to spurn, not only individuals who are LGB identified, but also individuals in a variety of subpopulations such as heterosexual and cisgender communities of color and folks who may actually have diverse relational categories such as people who are in polyamorous relationships or who identify in the kink community. There are media depictions that are grossly inaccurate about how individuals function.”

A solution to this issue, Dr. Burnes advises, is for more individuals within the social sciences, and especially within psychology, to advocate and consult with media groups. These professionals can and should help the media and entertainment industries to develop a better awareness and a diversity tolerance to think about the ways in which popular media is depicting and using art to portray individuals’ experiences.

Further, Dr. Burnes urges Psi Chi students to get involved in this conversation too. He says, “If members of Psi Chi are seeing inaccurate portrayals—which I’m sure they are because we’re all seeing them—then it’s not enough to just stop watching a media or unsubscribe from a YouTube channel. Send a letter or an e-mail to a producer. Tell them, ‘I’m going to stop watching your content because of your inadequate depiction of a particular character.’ I think more and more producers are becoming desensitized to the fact that their inaccurate depictions are going to result in less viewership or less consumption.”

Some Counsel for Counselors

Fifteen years ago, Dr. Burnes believed that the most important things for counselors to do in order to better support LGBTQI+ people was to learn more basic knowledge in terms of historical understanding, terminology, and current laws and policies that impact LGBTQI+ people. Now, he says, learning basic knowledge is still important, but his advice to counselors is also somewhat different.

“There’s so much more that individuals need to know about building individuals’ resilience as LGBTQI+ people. That can be accomplished through advocating for social support, knowing the various kinds of cultural communities and people’s understanding of sexuality, and knowing the diverse ways that individuals are consistently understanding their own intimate partnerships and making families.” About that final point, he says, “I think it has become a much more visible trend because fewer people openly made families in the past.”

It is in these areas that Dr. Burnes sometimes sees counselors entering the field without a lot of information. He says, “I think building resilience is important.
for a lot of groups. When we train counselors to work with individuals with various ability statuses and class backgrounds, we really try to help them build their clients' resilience that they might need to sort of combat their daily oppressions.

In addition to building resilience, he has also found that teaching rogue knowledge creates stereotypes, which can cause counselors to inadvertently ask their clients to conform to a certain knowledge base that may or may not fit for that client. So instead of counselors going into a room and saying, “In my class, I learned that all gay people do bla bla bla” or “all Mexican Americans do such and such,” he wants them to have a working knowledge and to build skills of curiosity and humility when they work with individuals who may in some way be culturally different than they are.

Psi Chi Chapters Can Help Too!
Dr. Burnes encourages local chapters to collaborate and build partnerships with other campus or community organizations. Ask yourself, “Are there student groups on campus that are fighting for rights for a certain cultural group?” Or “Are there community organization representatives that my chapter could invite to come in and speak at a meeting?” This will create an awareness for the entire chapter as well as a partnership so that your chapter can get involved in some advocacy work without necessarily having to “recreate the wheel” or deplete resources.

The second way that chapters can make a difference is to think about the ways in which a department, community, or university can recommit itself to inclusion and diversity. He says, “In California, one of the things that we’re seeing right now is that many chapters are thinking really specifically about the recent passing of the Gender Recognition Act, which is related to nonbinary gender identities on driver’s licenses. Because of this, college campuses throughout the state are really beginning to partner with LGBT resource centers and community agencies to determine ways to make nonbinary individuals feel welcome and accepted into the university community.”

He adds, “And I know Psi Chi is no exception to that. After a presentation I gave recently, three Psi Chi members came up to me and said, ’Oh, my gosh! We’re so glad that you’re here, and that you’re a psychologist. It shows us that we can do different things!’ ”

In response, Dr. Burnes asked them a simple question. Reader, he asks you the same question now: “Great! So, how are you supporting existing efforts in your community?”

Theodore Burnes, PhD, of Antioch University Los Angeles (CA), is a licensed psychologist and a licensed professional clinical counselor in the state of California. His interests include the psychology of human sexual expression and sex-positivity; teaching and training pedagogy in mental health services; clinical supervision; social justice and advocacy; mental health and wellness for LGBTQ individuals; qualitative research epistemologies and ontologies. Dr. Burnes is also the Director of Training and Educational Programs at the Los Angeles Gender Center.

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Is Leadership the Most Important Gender Issue of All?
With Alice Eagly, PhD

Bradley Cannon
Psi Chi Central Office
With regard to women in leadership roles, esteemed social psychologist Dr. Alice Eagly is impressed by the progress made during her lifetime. She says, “I remember when it seemed to be a miracle that there was one woman in the Senate, Margaret Chase Smith. She was very famous—as the only woman senator!”

Most students these days can probably hardly fathom a world with only a single female senator. But indeed, when Dr. Eagly began her graduate studies at the University of Michigan in 1961, there were far fewer women leaders across the board, including far fewer women professors in the psychology positions that she sought. However, rest assured, that did not stop her from setting an example for others by obtaining her PhD and going on to make numerous contributions in the areas of gender and leadership, prosocial behavior, partner preferences, and attitudes. Well-established at Northwestern University, she is the author of *Sex Differences in Social Behavior* and the first author of *The Psychology of Attitudes* and of *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders*, as well as numerous journal articles and chapters.

Snow lightly falls outside her home study window in Illinois as she takes a few minutes to share her interests in gender research with Psi Chi. It is likely that you too have asked yourself many of the very same questions as the ones that she researches. As she explains, “I think everybody is interested in gender in their daily lives. We are all born, usually of one sex or the other, and then we have to figure out what it means in the world and why women and men do or do not behave and think differently. It’s one of life’s great puzzles. I think it’s helpful when psychologists can provide research in this area to answer such questions from a scientific perspective.”

As for researching gender and leadership, she says that her motivations are somewhat more political because leadership is one crucial area where women are underrepresented. “In terms of gender, I think that leadership is the most significant topic because leaders control more resources than other people do in society. When you find few representatives of a group in leadership contexts, that group usually ends up not doing as well in society because leaders don’t take their interests equally into account. No one is there at the table, or few people, to speak up for that group. Women are in that situation, as are many ethnic minorities in the United States. Understanding these leadership issues from a scientific perspective is extremely important because, if change is to happen, it’s helpful to understand the contours of the problem. In this way, I think that leadership is the most important gender issue of all.”

**Two Types of Leadership**

According to Dr. Eagly, there are two types of leadership roles that professors are often interested in. The first is being an intellectual leader in your field, whereby you’ve done work that interests people in your field. The other is organizational leadership where a psychology professor might become, for example, president of a psychological organization such as the American Psychological Association, or a department chair or dean in a university.

Regarding gender and intellectual leadership, she says, “I wrote a paper with David Miller on eminence as a psychologist. And one thing we saw is tremendous progress for women. If you look at lists from the middle 20th century of the hundred or two hundred most eminent psychologists, there were few women on the lists. But, if you look at current versions of such lists, there are many women. Women are still underrepresented, but there is considerable progress, and so we have to look at most kinds of social change, including this one, as a gradual process.”

As for progress in universities, Dr. Eagly says, “Psychology graduate programs did have women students when I was a graduate student although we were in the minority. As for the professors at the time, there were very few women who were full professors at research universities. Of course, it’s not like that now, where almost half of tenured psychology professors at universities are women.” In organizational leadership, women are also well-represented as psychology department chairs and deans, and now about 30% of college and university presidents are women in the United States.

**Women Leaders Are on the Rise**

There are many reasons why progress is slower than Dr. Eagly would like. For example, she says, “There are some barriers and biases that women have to overcome. And then there are the issues of pursuing any intensive career, which requires people to put in fantastic amounts of work over the years and tends to limit other aspects of their lives.” This career pattern can be especially challenging if you have children, Dr. Eagly imparts, because children quite rightly take up a big chunk of a parent’s time. Unfortunately for women with ambitious career goals, a lot more parental responsibility has fallen to women than men.

“Even now,” she says, “the ratio of wives’ to husbands’ hours of domestic work is about 2:1 in sociological studies.” Thus, men in general are advantaged in being able to spend more time on their careers and less on domestic work.

**People may value women’s more collaborative and relational style, but it is also true that they receive more resistance as leaders**

However, the progress is at least steady, and Dr. Eagly believes that over time equality may eventually prevail in career success in psychology. “Gradually, women became educated and now women are more educated than men, with more overall college degrees at all levels—bachelor’s masters, and now PhDs. Sure, there is some sex discrimination but when women have the abilities, over time, most get through and achieve their career goals. During my career lifetime, women first had to obtain professor positions and then stay in those academic careers and overcome what challenges that they might have faced—perhaps initially not being thought of as talented or committed or whatever. Their successes can then inspire younger women!”

According to Dr. Eagly, some external factors have also played a big part in enabling more women to enter the workforce. Specifically, technological advancements come to mind first. She says, “As people developed more and more ways to
Dr. Eagly’s Advice for You

1. What can women do to ease the transition back to work after taking time off to have a child?

For career success, the first rule is not to stop working in the first place. I think that’s what most of us who have successful careers have done. I have two children, but I never dropped out. Studies have shown that many women who dropped out of professional careers never have a full-time job again or do not obtain a job as desirable as the one that they left. Some women who dropped out to raise children do recover a rewarding professional position, but these outcomes can be elusive. Feminist women are consistently arguing for better childcare to help women stay in the workplace and more sharing of responsibilities with their life partners.

If there is sharing between the couple, it is usually feasible not to drop out. However, if a woman feels that there is not enough support to stay employed full-time, then she should try to stay in part-time. Women who continue to work at least part time are more successful in general in attaining their career goals than those who quit employment. But I should add that many women just can’t afford to drop their employment because their income is essential to their families or themselves. That is certainly the case for single mothers.

If a woman does drop out, then of course challenges depend on how many years she was out of the workforce. Will she need to retrain? In some jobs, it is possible to re-enter without a lot of difficulty, but that is typically not the case in most professions, where required skills and knowledge change a lot over time.

2. What should a woman do who finds herself in a primarily male academic or workplace environment?

Show courage! When I started out in my first job at Michigan State University, there were only two other women in a very large psychology department. And so I was in this minority. When you are in this position, you are more visible. People watch what you do, and so if you make mistakes, they’re magnified. But at that time, I didn’t feel that I was a target of prejudice. I think that my male colleagues wanted me to do well, although the situation wasn’t as favorable as having more female colleagues. Sometimes work colleagues may say things that are unfavorable or hurtful, but just try to move on and do your work.

That being said, it’s not good to be blind to gender. If you feel that there is unfairness related to your gender, try for calm and polite correction to let others know that you felt their comment reflected poorly on you or on women in general. Such an approach is often quite good in terms of changing the tone and creating awareness of gender discrimination. Then just go forward and see how the situation develops. Of course, clear-cut and persistent discrimination demands sterner interventions.

3. If students are interested in pursuing a career in researching gender, what steps should they take?

You want to gain a good grounding, not just in the particular topic that you’re interested in, but in your field more generally—that is, in psychology. I think that’s extremely important. If you want to study gender, then you will also need a framework of theory and method in order to be able to do good work. Learning psychology more broadly will help you be well-trained in a variety of theories and methods.

Also, as a graduate student, you should partner with one or more professors who are working on your preferred topic. If you’re interested in gender, then you should find a professor who works in that area and does interesting work. You would apply to that psychology program and hope to be admitted as a graduate student.
transformational than men in leadership style, the specific component of this style in which women are most different from men is the relational aspects, says Dr. Eagly. “Your best guess for a woman’s leadership style is that she would be more collaborative and relational than the typical male leader. But again, these are quite small differences, so it’s not a very good guess in the sense that there are also men who also offer that leadership style.”

Interestingly, many gender trends tend to be fairly universal across cultures. As an overview, she says, “The major theme is that women are more communal, kind, and sympathetic, showing empathy and social skills. Men are more agentic, competitive, and assertive.” One cross-cultural exception to this, she notes, is in East Asian cultures, specifically Japan and Korea, where gender stereotypes suggest that men are more communal than in other cultures. In that culture, there evidently are norms about politeness promote men’s communal behavior.

Do Women Make Better Leaders?

“Well, I don’t think I can answer that in general,” Dr. Eagly says. “I’ve already explained the ways that women tend to be different than men in leadership in terms of having a more collaborative and relational style. Also, we don’t know if women use different leadership styles because of some intrinsic skills that they bring to leadership, or whether they learn on the job that if they are tough and talk down to people, then they get quite a bit of resistance because such behavior seems overly masculine. In other words, women may learn in part on the job that being more collaborative and involving others in the decision making works better for them.”

“So is that better? I mean, it sounds better, right?” Dr. Eagly pauses for a quick chuckle. “Many people would say that it’s wonderful to be more democratic and relational as a leader. But it’s not true that this approach is always better. Sometimes, particularly when organizations are doing poorly, they may need somebody to change things and overcome resistance, which may favor a more directive style. The optimal leadership style depends on the situation of the organization and its traditions.”

As an example, Dr. Eagly asks you to consider university settings, which she playfully explains are full of professors who “think they’re important!” After another laugh, she says, “We professors don’t like autocratic leadership in universities. And so, I’ve seen situations in which a man becomes a dean and tries to tell everybody what to do, but he gets profound resistance because the faculty are used to having a say in everything, and so it doesn’t work. In a university setting, a more collaborative leadership style tends to work better, although it takes a good deal of skill to enact it well.”

People may value women’s more collaborative and relational style, but it is also true that they receive more resistance as leaders, which can make it more complicated for women to lead. In some cases, this resistance can take the shape of sheer prejudice. For example, in her best grumpy male voice, Dr. Eagly says, “We don’t want a woman telling us what to do!” Or people can sometimes also expect women to be nice, and resist them when they act assertively to exert their authority in a leader role. Both of these forms of resistance can result in it being more challenging for women to be effective leaders.

To answer the original question, Dr. Eagly ends by saying this: “I wouldn’t say that women are better leaders. Or men. But, when I do see women leaders doing well, I admire them immensely because they have to possess a great deal of skill to succeed. There are many women who are effective leaders, and they are an inspiration to other women.”

Alice Eagly, PhD, is professor of psychology and James Padilla Chair of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern University. She is a social psychologist known for her work on gender, feminism, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping, and leadership. She has received several awards including the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award from the American Psychological Association and the Gold Medal Award for Life Achievement in the Science of Psychology, and the Eminent Leadership Scholar Award from the Network of Leadership Scholars of the Academy of Management. She is also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Photo Credit: iStockphoto.com
Dr. Jane S. Halonen once had a student named John (Trey) McClendon in her positive psychology class who became quadriplegic as a result of a swimming pool accident. About halfway through the course, during content on human possibility, she asked her students to do a creative presentation about the “possible self” they wanted to be in five years. This assignment had to be a visual display or a performance of some sort. It had to have psychology principles built into it. And it had to be performed in front of the students’ classmates, as well as a group of external assessors that she uses to review and further benefit her students.

This amazing young man wrote a song about how his swimming pool accident didn’t change his horizon. He still wanted to pursue a graduate degree in social work, and he still wanted to build his own house and take care of his young children. The song was so powerful that there wasn’t a dry eye in the entire class. Then, after the song, one of the assessors approached him. She was affiliated with Habitat for Humanity, and she encouraged him to apply because she thought a house could be a real possibility.

Dr. Halonen describes high-impact experiences, like the creative presentations in her class, as basically the latest trend in higher education to discuss strategies that can make a difference in students’ lives because they involve a profound or transformative element. According to Dr. Halonen, “I think people typically attribute the phrase high-impact practices to a researcher named George Kuh, who looked at lots of literature on student experience in order to articulate what kind of things helped students to be more successful. As he found, students who reported having a high-impact experience were much more likely to persist to graduation and beyond.”

So, how can students and teachers create high-impact learning experiences like this that will influence the rest of...
their lives? Of course, Dr. Halonen can’t guarantee a house for everyone. But, the fact is that the young man in her class ended up—by virtue of being able to display his creativity in such an engaging way—obtaining a remarkable response from his community as well as an incredible opportunity to achieve his life goals.

So can you!

In today’s interview, Dr. Halonen shares a ton of advice that is sure to leave you with concrete ideas for how to seek out and achieve high-impact practices. Dr. Halonen is a renowned professor of psychology at the University of West Florida where she focuses on improving student learning, assessing undergraduate programs, and helping the public understand the discipline of psychology. She was named an “Eminent Woman” in psychology by the American Psychological Association in 2003 and also became a Distinguished Member of Psi Chi in 2019. As you might have already guessed, by the end of this article, she will leave you with the inspiration that is necessary for you to take those first important steps toward a meaningful career and future of your own.

What Dr. Halonen Already Suspected (and What You Probably Suspected Too)

It wasn’t an earthshattering surprise to Dr. Halonen when she found out about all of the positive effects of high-impact practices. After all, when she was a student, she was always drawn to teachers who figured out unique ways to make her wrestle with what she was learning. As for the teachers who simply lectured—the “talking heads,” as she calls them—she says, “I could do well in their classes because I could take good notes and memorize, but I found that the learning didn’t stay with me.”

As she explains, a classic article by Barr and Tagg back in the 90s said this: “If you’re a content centered teacher, you’re going to talk, you’re going to transmit content to students, and you’re going to test it. But, your students are not likely to remember much of it for long. However, if you’re going to be student or learning centered, then you’re going to try to figure out how to use your time to produce some architecture that makes students hang onto whatever you’re teaching. Potentially, if you’re really lucky, your students may even be transformed in some way that works for either your purposes as a teacher or their purposes as students trying to get in some particular direction in life.”

That article really helped Dr. Halonen to consolidate her ideas about being a teacher who makes her students work hard. She says, “I want students to wrestle with their learning—in a good way, of course. I want them to be victorious in the end. I don’t want the content to beat them, and I’m going to do all I can in the design of my course to support their learning. In the end, I want them to be able to identify that they are transformed, that there’s something really different about how they think, or what their horizon is in the future.”

Will You Look Back and Wish You Had Done More?

When graduating seniors take their exit surveys at the University of West Florida, they are asked to answer this question: “How satisfied are you that you took advantage of the opportunities that you had?” Sadly, a lot of students say, “Now that I’m at the end, I realize that I could have done more.” For example, “I could have applied to Psi Chi” or “I should have been involved in an undergraduate research team.”

Dr. Halonen exclaims, “Sometimes seniors will even say, ‘I BLEW IT! I didn’t get that internship, and now I’VE SCREWED MYSELF!’”

She pauses to chuckle. “And so, I’ll tell them that it isn’t quite that severe. But the fact is this: students trying to balance very hyperactive social lives such as working, sometimes full-time, are not able to take advantage of all the experiences that college has to offer. This decision puts them in the position of sometimes seeking out the easiest path. So, although they’ll earn their degree, the learning experience that they have is actually short-changed.”

The reason that you should seek out high-impact practices is simple: Growth mindset.

Seniors struggling a little with senioritis is a common occurrence (although Dr. Halonen notes that she doesn’t typically see senioritis in her Psi Chi students!) All too often, students become a little worn out by their senior year, and so they seek out easy classes to merely complete their obligation to graduate. For instance, she says, “they might take a dance class or a yoga class—and, frankly, there’s nothing wrong with those classes. But, if you’re doing something at the end of three and a half years that doesn’t nourish your soul as a scholar, then I think that somehow we’ve ‘missed the boat’ because we haven’t gotten you excited about learning and challenge. Students need to seek our high-impact opportunities because they’re going to be able to figure out who they are if they are sufficiently challenged.”

On Dr. Halonen’s printer, there is a quote from T.S. Eliot, which says, “If you aren’t in over your head, then how do you know how tall you are?” She appreciates this quote, she says, not only because she is five foot two and the paradox appeals to her, but also because it expresses her attitude about learning.

“Look at the array of options that you have, and don’t back away from the things that sound difficult. Sometimes, when professors have a reputation for being more challenging, it really is partly because they are doing things that will require a bit more time.” But, Dr. Halonen argues that this can be a good thing too. For example, a couple years ago, a student told Dr. Halonen her reputation among students in her department; as it turns out, Dr. Halonen is referred to as the “bad-ass grandmother of the department!” About this, she says, “That made me laugh. Okay, I’m not so crazy about the grandmother part. I don’t have children, so I haven’t gotten used to the idea that I could be a grandmother, when in fact at this point I could be a great-grandmother! But I love bad-ass grandmother! I love the idea that students understand that I’m a bit of a handful, a bit of a challenge. The students who seek out classes with me very often do it specifically because they know I’m going to be giving them maximum benefits for the investment that they’re making.”

“If you aren’t in over your head, then how do you know how tall you are?”

—T. S. Eliot
So How Can Students Identify the Right Classes?
The best strategy that Dr. Halonen recommends is one that is taught throughout the psychology major: “Do your homework!” She says, “Don’t just look at what the offerings are. That is the standard strategy that I think most students use; they look at the offerings and they say, ‘I want to work here, and these are my social obligations, so they automatically choose the courses that fit in with that other stuff. But, they don’t really think about who the teacher is or what’s going to go on in their classes.”

In order to “do your homework,” Dr. Halonen suggests this: “Although I don’t normally recommend RateMyProfessor.com, sometimes you can pick up clues from the ways that people write about whether the teacher is doing things that actively involve students—if there are projects and so forth. Sometimes, that shows up as complaints, by the way!”

Also, if you’re in Psi Chi, Dr. Halonen assures you that fellow Psi Chi members are going to be your best resource to help you figure out which teaching and learning experiences will be the most beneficial to you. “Talk with older Psi Chi members, people who are about to graduate, in order to help you sort out which experiences seem to be most beneficial. Ask what was it that was potentially transformative about those particular students’ classes. Then, make decisions that are data based, rather than convenience based.”

Make Your Own Opportunities
“Normally, when people talk about high-impact practices, the intentionality falls on the side of the teacher rather than the student.” For example, because high-impact practices are labor intensive for instructors, Dr. Halonen advises professors to start slow, by embedding a few high-impact practices into courses that they are the most comfortable teaching. She encourages professors to stagger students’ project due dates throughout the semester in order to allow professors more time to provide quality feedback and avoid overload. And she also believes strongly in using rubrics and communicating clearly to students that her expectations are high, but definitely achievable.

She says, “I very rarely hear students ask, ‘What all do you want in this?’ which is the bane of existence for most teachers.” However, multiple projects in a course can be daunting. So, further, she advises instructors to deliberately ask students to identify the purpose of assignments to prevent them from perceiving the assignments as busy work or developing other negative attitudes. As she puts it, “Make students know that assignments aren’t just meant to ‘ruin their weekend,’ but instead to make them fluent in whatever the discipline is that you happen to be teaching.”

At the same time, she also thinks that there are plenty opportunities for students to take matters into their own hands to produce their own high-impact experiences—even if these activities are not scheduled into their classrooms for them. To achieve this outcome, Dr. Halonen suggests going to your professors’ office hours and checking to see if they have time for a chat. “Simply engage your professors about things that you think are most interesting in their classes. That contact, in and of itself, can become high impact. Although it doesn’t require project work or meeting deadlines, the fact is that preparing for it, listening carefully, asking follow-up questions, and demonstrating your interests—all of those kinds of activities end up helping you build your profile as a scholar. Visits like that can also turn into opportunities to join professors’ research teams.”

Beyond discussing classroom lessons, you can also talk about things that will make a difference in your ability to attend graduate school or achieve a specific career that you are interested in. Don’t be afraid to talk about your big dream, Dr. Halonen advises. “What is your big dream? Where do you want to be? What is it that you’d like to do? How is psychology going to play a role in that? What do you need as an undergraduate to support the dream that you’re talking about?”

Professors generally enjoy talking about students’ futures and helping you to progress along your personal journey. “This is a discussion that the mechanical aspects of registering for classes, specific coursework, and so forth can sometimes get in the way of IF you don’t think to ask.”

Want to increase your high-impact experiences? Dr. Halonen advises you to ask yourself these key questions:

- **Are you taking too many classes?** “When you amass lots of course credits too quickly, you may also end up amassing less stellar performances. In the long run, stellar performances are what will set you apart from everybody else. These are what will make a difference in your fitness for graduate school and the caliber of reference letters that you receive, so be intentional about reaping as much positive experience as possible.”

- **Have you left some space between your classes?** “This practice will allow you time to consolidate what you learned in the prior class, so that you don’t have to study quite as hard when it comes time for exams.”

- **Can you form your own study group?** “Even if you’re a good student, forming a class study group where you get people together to talk to each other and talk through examples can make your preparation for exams more fun and interesting. And I’m willing to bet—in the absence of data—that your test performance is probably going to be better too. Generating a study group can, in and of itself, be high impact because the friendships you develop in that group may sustain you well beyond graduation.”

- **Can you form a group and take turns with having a master note taker?** “This will help you manage your workload and allow you to sometimes experiment with listening to the class because you will know that a friend next to you is taking the notes.”

What Can You Do?
When Dr. Halonen travels to other psychology departments as an academic program reviewer, she routinely pulls seniors aside and says, “Okay, you’re about
to graduate. Tell me what you can do with your education." She adds, "It is pretty standard that they can’t answer the question. They can rattle off the courses they have taken, but the courses haven’t translated into skill development. Dr. Halonen concludes, "If students can’t answer the question for me, then how are they going to be able to do that when they have a whole lot more at stake such as during a job interview?"

This inability for students to communicate their goals drives a lot of the high-impact projects that Dr. Halonen provides in her classes. In particular, her capstone classes attempt to make sense of the curriculum that students have been through, thus providing students with a unique opportunity to learn how to talk about their experiences.

Further, at the end of each capstone course, she matches students with professionals who are working in the field that they aspire to go into. She says, "The challenge that I throw before my students is to develop a portfolio to explain what they want to do when they graduate. The portfolio should include a career plan with both a Plan A and a Plan B (in case Plan A doesn’t come to pass), a resume, a list of references along with the rationale for their selection, and a cover letter (for the workforce) or personal statement (for grad applications). Then, the students have to visit their assigned professional in the setting where that professional works and have an hour-long conversation. At the end, that person is going to rate whether they think the student is a good exemplar, a distinguished exemplar, or whether the student needs a little more time ‘in the oven.’"

Dr. Halonen laughs at the thought of how students usually get a ‘deer-in-the-headlights’ look when she introduces them to this assignment. She can often tell that they’re thinking: "Oh, my God! How hard is this going to be?!" But, when the assignment is over, she says, "I have students practically cartwheel with what a profound experience it was to have the opportunity to hear themselves explain who they are and what they can do, armed with the APA guidelines. They get extremely animated about that. And I have never once had an assessor say that a student wasn’t ready to graduate. Instead, what transpires is that the students have a remarkable conversation that they have to lead with an outsider, which allows them to make first-job interview mistakes where it’s not going to cost them very much."

A Happy Ending

On February 20, 2019, one day before the interview that you’re reading right now, Dr. Halonen received a picture of her Positive Psychology student’s new Habitat house. About receiving this news, she says, "It’s probably the proudest connection for teaching in my life that illustrates the effects of high-impact experiences.”

On that uplifting note, and on behalf of other bad-ass professors everywhere, Dr. Halonen exclaims these final words of advice, "When I design my classes, I do so with an eye toward doing justice to the discipline. But, more important for me is doing justice to creating an environment and learning opportunities that will make a huge difference in students’ lives. Your college education is your opportunity to prepare for the next stage of your life. And so, my goal is to help you build the best résumé that you can. By the end of the classroom experience that you have with me, I want you to have a résumé that people will read and say, ‘Oh, wow!’ And I want you to have a really firm grasp on who you are and where you’re going next.'”

Are you seeking high-impact courses and experiences in college? Strive for opportunities that will cause you wrestle with who you are, what you can accomplish through your education, and how to convey what you have learned to others.
Engaging in Cross-Cultural Research With Psi Chi’s Network for International Collaborative Exchange (NICE)

Kelly Cuccolo, MA
University of North Dakota

Network for International Collaborative Exchange (NICE)

Have you wanted to conduct cross-cultural research but don’t know where to start? Are you interested in learning about how various psychological variables may look in different cultures? Do you want to make a long-lasting and meaningful research contribution to the field? Well look no further, Psi Chi’s Network for International Collaborative Exchange (NICE) is here to help you accomplish your goals!

The NICE is a Psi Chi program aimed at fostering cross-cultural research between Psi Chi members and nonmembers both within and outside of the United States. NICE consists of two prongs: CONNECT and CROWD. CONNECT is a network of researchers open to collaboration. CROWD seeks to gather many researchers to answer a specified research question by using the same protocol. Essentially, CROWD is a crowdsourcing initiative where many researchers will work together, using the same protocol, to generate data to answer a specific research question. This is an ongoing collaborative effort with a new CROWD project being launched each academic year!

Understanding Family Dynamics in a Cross-Cultural Sample

In June 2018, the NICE planning committee opened the call for project proposals, seeking NICE CROWD’s first project. Submissions were reviewed and evaluated on feasibility, cultural sensitivity, and long-term impact. The first project was submitted by Mary Moussa Rogers and Cliff McKinney of Mississippi State University and was implemented in August 2018. The project focused on determining if the Circumplex Model of family functioning fits across cross-cultural samples (e.g., regions of the United States, European countries, and Hong Kong). CROWD project contributors each administered a provided self-report survey to 100 emerging adults. The self-report battery included measures which assessed adaptability and cohesion dimensions of family dynamics, parent-child relationship characteristics, paternal discipline, reverence and honor of duty to family, risky behaviors, and emotional and interpersonal adjustment. The project has had over 40 contributors from over five different countries. Together, these contributors were able to collect over 2,600 cases of data!
Why Be NICE?

There are many reasons for faculty and students to become NICE contributors.

**FOR FACULTY.** For faculty, being a contributor on the NICE:CROWD project provides a unique opportunity to discuss the scientific method, collaboration, and diversity with students. Each CROWD project submission is required to complete a preregistration template. A preregistration template is an a priori commitment to a research plan and design. The preregistration forces researchers to specify various aspects of the research plan including hypotheses, sampling plan, sample size, and analyses. After the CROWD project is chosen, the preregistration becomes available for all contributors. This provides you with an outlet to discuss important research methods concepts like power, null hypothesis testing, and the distinction between confirmatory and exploratory analyses, while providing students with a “real life” example they can work with.

Additionally, because NICE:CROWD projects provide outlines detailing study hypotheses, measures, sampling size, analyses plan, and provide all measures/materials/protocols, they are perfect for implementation in research methods classes. Students can get experience with the steps of the scientific method, collaboration, and diversity with students. Each CROWD project submission is required to complete a preregistration template. A preregistration template is an a priori commitment to a research plan and design. The preregistration forces researchers to specify various aspects of the research plan including hypotheses, sampling plan, sample size, and analyses. After the CROWD project is chosen, the preregistration becomes available for all contributors. This provides you with an outlet to discuss important research methods concepts like power, null hypothesis testing, and the distinction between confirmatory and exploratory analyses, while providing students with a “real life” example they can work with.

Psychology has also been faced with criticism regarding the reliance on Western Educated Industrialized Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) samples (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). CROWD provides a diverse dataset which blends itself to discussions regarding issues with relying on WEIRD samples, how and why culture may be expected to impact psychological variables, and challenging ethnocentrism.

**UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS.** CROWD projects are also great opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to get research experience! Being a CROWD contributor offers the benefits of receiving access to the study protocol, all materials needed to run the project, and access to a large and diverse data set. This makes the study readily available for implementation, and access to the dataset provides students and faculty with an opportunity to explore hypotheses not addressed in the CROWD project! Likewise, CROWD provides a great opportunity for you to network with researchers from around the globe. I smell collaboration! Finally, being a CROWD contributor means you are eligible for authorship on potential manuscripts resulting from the project.

Okay, Okay—I’m Sold. How Do I Become a Contributor and What Does It Mean?

The first step to being a NICE:CROWD contributor is to create an Open Science Framework (OSF) Account at http://help.osf.io/m/account/1/696112-create-an-osf-account. The OSF hosts all things NICE, and is where you will be able to join the 2019–20 CROWD Project. Check out last year’s page at https://osf.io/qa7v/. Once you create your OSF account, add your info to this document so we can add you as a contributor on the 2019–20 CROWD Project OSF page (once the project is chosen; details about submitting a project can be found below).

Once the CROWD project for the 2019–20 academic year is chosen, you will be added as a contributor to the project’s OSF page. After that, your first task as a contributor is to submit the appropriate documents to your institution’s institutional review board or ethical body. Don’t worry—NICE is there to help you! We will provide all measures being used in the project, the protocol, and examples of completed ethical documents to help you out. Once you receive approval from your institution’s human subjects review board, you should upload those approved forms to the project’s OSF page. After your approved ethical forms are on the project’s OSF page, you can start collecting data! Contributors are typically asked to collect 100 cases of data within one academic year.

The data collection phase tends to run itself, but NICE’s planning committee is always around if you need assistance. After the data collection phase ends, it is time to analyze the data. This will primarily be done by project authors, with contributors reanalyzing the dataset for reproducibility. Once the data is analyzed, manuscript preparation can begin. There are various tiers of authorship available to contributors depending on how involved they are with the process.

**I’m interested in submitting a project.** Do you have an idea for a research project that is feasible for cross-cultural implementation? We would love to have you submit a project proposal for NICE: CROWD 2019–20. Calls for submissions will open **June 1, 2019**, and close **July 15, 2019**. Projects can be submitted by uploading the appropriate documents to the CROWD Project Submission 2019–20 component of the NICE:CROWD OSF page. Submission requirements include the completion of a preregistration template, and CVs for each researcher involved in the project submission.

Questions and More Information

NICE:CROWD is a wonderful collaborative research opportunity for faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The project is easily implemented at any institution, as all the materials and protocols are available. Being a NICE:CROWD contributor mainly entails creating and maintaining an OSF account, submitting the appropriate documents to your institution’s ethical review board, and collecting data. The benefits of being a CROWD contributor include gaining valuable cross-cultural research experience, networking with researchers from around the globe, and authorship on potential manuscripts.

Any questions about NICE can be directed to NICE Chair at nice.chair@psichi.org

References


Kelly Cuccolo, MA, is a graduate student at the University of North Dakota. Her main research interest lies in understanding how various health behaviors impact cognition. She is additionally interested in open science initiatives and the teaching of psychology. Kelly has chaired Psi Chi’s Network for International Collaborative Exchange for two years, during which she implemented the first CROWD project. Through chairing this project, Kelly has become increasingly interested in advocating for open science practices and diversity in psychological research. She hopes to graduate with her PhD and obtain a job as a full-time professor. In her spare time, Kelly enjoys taking dance classes, baking, and writing.
To many students and professors, “grade” is practically a four-letter word (no, wait, that is “grad,” which has a much nicer connotation).

Secret #13: Many Professors Hate Giving Low Grades as Much as Students Hate Getting Them

Unfortunately, we put professors in the odd position of being coach, referee, and scorekeeper. I first help my students learn, and I then have to evaluate and report their level of learning. Some days the evaluation part of the process is a joy, and I can give my students the high grades and praise that they have earned through hard work and careful study. Other days, I need to communicate to my students that their learning is incomplete, they have misunderstood some concepts, they need to refine their skills, and more hard work is going to be required for them to improve. Making mistakes is part of learning and improving and there is no shame in failure as long as you learn from it and keep working hard. I would probably not trade my role as referee because it improves my coaching. When I see where my students went wrong, I can help them figure out how to do it better, and I can be a better coach the next time around.

If you earned a low grade, chances are that your professor was not trying to trick or punish you and is not angry with you, but simply has the unpleasant task of communicating your level of learning. I am not so naive as to think that there are no “weed out” classes or professors who provide unfair assessments, but these are both rarer than students might think. Most professors think carefully about how to teach, what kinds of assignments to give, how to test and evaluate students’ skills and knowledge, and how course grades are assigned.

Even after 24 years of teaching, when a student does poorly on one of my exams, I feel sad for the student. Most of my colleagues feel the same way. Because we adore our students (see Secret #1), if one of my professor buddies appears especially glum at lunch, chances are that some of her students are struggling in her class.

Secret #14: Professors Prefer Coaching to Refereeing and Scorekeeping (So Leave Shame at the Door)

Students tell me they have heard that my exams are “tricky” and ask if I try to mislead students with my exam questions to make them pay closer attention. In fact, I do not set out to “trick” my students. It is simply the case that most good psychology sounds like common sense. Unfortunately, come exam time, the wrong answers may also sound like common sense. Uh oh, do birds of a feather flock together or opposites attract? Which is it and when?

If you get back a grade that you are disappointed with, keep...
several things in mind. First, remember that the professor did not give you the grade, in most cases you earned the grade. You had an opportunity to study a subject with a professor there to try to assist and encourage you in your learning, but ultimately your level of learning is your responsibility. In the same way that you shouldn’t blame your soccer coach if you missed a goal kick, or the referee for blowing the whistle when the ball goes out of bounds, you also shouldn’t (usually) blame your professor if you did poorly on an exam. Take ownership of your own performance, allow yourself to briefly feel down or upset or angry, and then get back on the academic horse. If you know what went wrong (like failing to spend enough time studying, or doing too much group studying and not enough reading of your textbook), then make concrete plans to fix it the next time around. If you don’t know what went wrong, or if part of your planned solution involves your professor, then hold your head high and go on to talk to your professor. Keep in mind that helping students learn is part of your professor’s life’s work and that you are unlikely to be the first or the last student to have this particular set of difficulties. So, leave your shame at the door (along with any defensiveness, anger, and blame), and ask your professor to help you identify where you went wrong and plan to make it right the next time around. Your professor will respect you for your mature and professional approach and often be delighted to help you get on the right path.

Secret #15: Professors Have to Abide by the Rules of the Game

The same way the referee can’t start making up new exceptions to the rules for a player she likes, a professor can’t decide to treat one student differently from the others. A student who asks for additional extra credit after the semester ends is effectively asking me to treat him differently than everyone else in the class and offer an opportunity to him that I did not offer to other students. I know the student is feeling desperate and is not thinking of it this way, but it is my job to understand his view while considering his classmates. As much as I might like to help, I can only help in ways that are fair and consistent for all students. Any advantages I offer to one student should be offered to all of my students. The university system is similarly constrained and can only offer exceptions for certain mitigating factors like illness and emergencies and otherwise must treat all students in the same way.

Although making mistakes is part of the learning process, unfortunately the system of college grades is not particularly forgiving. The low grades of a footloose first year can haunt students later as they try to raise their GPAs. Some professors can find ways to build in a little forgiveness—allowing students to drop their lowest quiz grade, rewrite a paper, or make first attempts (exams, speeches, etc.) worth fewer points. Try to make the most of these opportunities and use them to your advantage. If you have the chance to turn your paper in early for feedback, make yourself an early deadline and treat it like the “real” deadline, so that your already decent paper can be made even better when you get feedback. As a student, I know it may be tempting to blow off a quiz when you get busy, particularly if you know that you can drop your lowest quiz grade, but remember that later in the semester you may be sick or injured or have an unexpected problem and need this option desperately. Use these like your emergency “get out of jail free” cards and don’t squander them too early or cheaply. Save them for when you need them.

Secret #16: Professors Can Advise You on the Rules and How to Play the Game

Professors are constrained by the rules, but simultaneously are often experts on how to play the game. Consider asking your professors not only for coaching in their specific discipline, but also for advice on the overall academic game, including how many credits you are likely to be able to juggle, which constellation of classes will work well and which could become a “perfect storm,” and when you might need to ask for an extension on an assignment.

Professors can also be invaluable when the going gets really rough. This is often exactly the time when students want to hide out and avoid professors at all costs, but if you are in a no-win situation (or what might be a “no-pass” situation) in a class, your professor can advise you on your options. You might consider taking an incomplete and trying to make up work after the semester ends, dropping a course, withdrawing from a course, or withdrawing from all courses for the semester. These decisions should be made carefully and with much consultation of professors, advisors, and perhaps your parents, but they can be a lifeline in a crisis.

Happily, many colleges and universities also recognize that mistakes and experimentation can be beneficial and have built in some leniency where students can drop or replace their lowest course grade(s). Although this has been criticized by some as being “soft,” I applaud it because it allows students the chance to take risks with classes that they might otherwise be too afraid to take. If you worry that you are a terrible painter, but you want to take a visual arts class to see if you can improve, these sorts of policies allow you to do so with less risk to your GPA and future options. If you’re not sure if biochemistry or ancient Greek philosophy is for you, the best way to find out is to dive in. I challenge you to take a class you’re not sure you will like and take another class you think you definitely won’t like. You might be surprised and find yourself with new knowledge and broader horizons and opportunities you didn’t imagine.

Laura Vernon, PhD, is an associate professor of psychology at the Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University. As an undergraduate at Northwestern University, Dr. Vernon completed two undergraduate honors theses in psychology and sociology and took many small advanced seminar courses. The benefits of that individual attention remain with her and she is delighted to offer the same types of experiences at the Honors College. Dr. Vernon enjoys introducing students to her beloved field in her General Psychology course, as well as exploring the fascinating nuances of Psychopathology, Psychotherapy, Positive Psychology, and Social Psychology with her students. It is her goal to give students enriching and challenging learning experiences and help them apply what they learn to themselves and their lives, all while having fun. As a clinical psychologist, Dr. Vernon’s research is on psychological disorders and their treatment. Her lab broadly examines anxiety disorders, emotion, cognition, and mindfulness. Some of her recent research has examined the effectiveness of a mindfulness-based equine assisted therapy for clinical patients, the usefulness of brief mindfulness interventions for college students, the contributions of fear and disgust to spider phobia, and the cognitive processes of emotion and phobias. She is also interested in the potential for games and online gaming to revolutionize teaching and learning. Dr. Vernon has been faculty sponsor of student clubs such as the Psychology Club, the Newman Catholic Club, and the Quidditch Club.
What Will It Mean to You to Give Back to Psi Chi Once You Graduate?

Cynthia Wilson
Psi Chi Central Office

Many of you are about to graduate. It is a huge accomplishment to set out on a journey to discover how best to navigate coursework, mentor relationships, research, and then to finally see the light of degree completion beckoning you from the shore.

We are hopeful here at Psi Chi that your membership with us has helped you navigate those waters. We hope that you took advantage of publishing in our Journal, that you read many of the helpful articles in our magazine, the Eye on Psi Chi, or perhaps you won a travel grant or a scholarship from Psi Chi.

Now as a reminder from us at the Psi Chi Central Office—your membership is a lifetime one. So as you continue your proverbial journey toward perhaps graduate school or a career, remember that Psi Chi is still here for you. We have many benefits for Psi Chi alumni members such as:

- **Psi Chi Connect**—a free app that facilitates mentor relationships and provides linkage with other Psi Chi members. [https://psichi.vineup.com/](https://psichi.vineup.com/)

- Our **Psi Chi Job Board**—a free job board on psichi.org that will help connect you perhaps with your first, professional position. [https://jobs.psichi.org/](https://jobs.psichi.org/)

- **Faculty Awards**—if you move into a faculty position, remember that there are many awards offerings to faculty each year. [https://www.psichi.org/4_faculty_main](https://www.psichi.org/4_faculty_main)

- Continuing **Research Opportunities**—in particular, NICE: Crowd invites researchers to participate in a large crowdsourcing project each year in order to help gather and publish cross-cultural data related to a particular research question. [https://www.psichi.org/Res_Opps](https://www.psichi.org/Res_Opps)

- Our **90th Anniversary Membership Directory**—a first-of-its-kind project for Psi Chi. We hope to bring this directory to all those who wish to participate.

We at Psi Chi are also now accepting donations for member programs such as our scholarships, research grants, Membership Assistance Fund, and to help students in need after natural disasters such as Hurricane Maria. This is what we call the Give Back to Psi Chi campaign. By encouraging those able to “Give Back to Psi Chi,” we can better serve our current student members who are still navigating through school so they can achieve what lies beyond for them.

Now, as your graduation is imminent, what will it mean for you to Give Back to Psi Chi? Will you become a faculty of psychology and influence new generations of students? Will you become a mentor on Psi Chi Connect and help those who may need some guidance? Will you pursue another career that your psychology background will support? Finally, will you consider giving back to Psi Chi when you can, financially?

The concept of “paying it forward” is very prominent in the field of psychology. Many students say their main reason for choosing to study psychology is their desire to “give back.” As you graduate and begin to pursue new goals, what will it mean to you to give back? How will you choose to stay connected?

Although there are many ways in which we at Psi Chi already support members, perhaps there is a way you have discovered that we could show better support? Will you share that with us? Will you keep in touch with Psi Chi and let us know what you continue to pursue and let us know of your successes?

We would like to think that any of you, our graduating Psi Chi members, will go on to write articles for Eye on Psi Chi. We would like to hope that you’ll serve as a mentor or a mentee and benefit from relationships began during your time as a student member. We hope that you’ll be in touch with us and let us know how we can begin to better serve alumni members.

Winston Churchill once said, “We make a living by what we get, we make a lifetime by what we give.” In that same vein, may I impart to you that Psi Chi will be here for you for the entirety of your career and beyond. With your lifetime membership, we will support you and provide resources however we can. We also encourage you, as you strike out toward making your living, that you consider the value of giving back. Those words of Churchill are visionary and profound. When we give, we increase the value of our own lives and pursuits.

Won’t you consider Giving Back to Psi Chi? Help us move toward growing our professional society to benefit all who join. Help us grow as you grow.

Visit [https://donate.psichi.org/](https://donate.psichi.org/) to easily make your gift.

Thank you for your membership with Psi Chi. We wish you continued success and smooth sailing.

**PLEASE REACH OUT WITH ANY COMMENTS TO:**
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**EAST**

**Slippery Rock University (PA)**

**RECRUITMENT:** This semester, the chapter altered its scholarship fund. The chapter will cover the cost of two new members’ one-time fees to join Psi Chi as lifetime members. The officers understand that college is expensive and many students are burdened by financial factors that create barriers to being involved in student organizations such as Psi Chi. Now, members will have the opportunity to be a part of Psi Chi without having the stress of paying dues.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The university hosted guest speaker Dr. Cristia Spears Brown who has a PhD in developmental psychology and a minor in statistics from the University of Texas. She now works as a developmental psychology professor at the University of Kentucky. The chapter had the opportunity to learn about the power of gender stereotypes, which included the different stereotypes enforced upon children due to group membership as boys vs. girls. Dr. Brown also spoke about gender biases and immigrant children. She discussed how immigrant children are perceived by society and in school settings, as well as how discrimination affects academic achievement.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** The chapter hosted a fellowship event for members at the end of the fall 2018 semester. For 2019, they plan to volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter collaborated with the Lorain County Community College Chapter of Psi Beta to host a graduate school information session on CSU’s campus. Four Cleveland State professors spoke on how to write a curriculum vitae, prepare for the Graduate Records Examination (GRE), write a personal statement, and prepare for graduate program admission interviews. This year, they plan to host the director of the art therapy program at Ursuline College.

**FUND-RAISER:** To raise funds for the WCSU Sebastian Agustin Book Fund, the chapter hosted a Valentine’s Day fund-raiser. Students and faculty were able to purchase flowers and/or chocolate to benefit the scholarship and the chapter.

**Cleveland State University (OH)**

**SOCIAL EVENT:** The chapter hosted several discussion meetings per semester. At these meetings, a member (usually an officer) prepares research and leads a discussion on a member-chosen topic. Attendees are able to enjoy a snack while learning about and offering opinions on the chosen topic. The topics from fall 2018 were forensic psychology and lying, sleep disorders, and positive psychology.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Members were invited to host a mental health booth in the university’s psychology building during finals week. The chapter provided materials such as snacks, beverages, and flyers about mental health and managing stress.

**SOCIAL EVENT:** The chapter hosted a social event in which senior undergraduates presented advice to underclass students about when and how to start looking for graduate schools.

(continued on page 55)

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**ABREVIATIONS**
- ACHS: Association of College Honor Societies
- APA: American Psychological Association
- APS: Association for Psychological Science
- EPAPA: 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
- NEPA: New England Psychological Association
- EPA: Eastern Psychological Association
- APS: Association for Psychological Science

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Above: Cleveland State University (OH) members playing Family Feud.

Left: Cleveland State University (OH) members helping out at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

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The University of Nebraska-Lincoln officers and faculty advisor attend the annual Psychology Department Award Ceremony.
CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

How Psi Chi Austin Peay’s 2018 Got Your Six Throwdown Raised $2,200!

Roxanne Hallisey
Austin Peay State University
Psi Chi President

Got Your Six Throwdown was a Veteran’s Day CrossFit competition hosted by the Psi Chi Chapter at Austin Peay State University (TN) to raise awareness for veteran’s mental health. The event also funded our chapter and Warrior Expeditions, a non-profit that helps veterans heal from their wartime experiences by going on long-distance outdoor excursions.

The event was a mini-festival! Local mental health services were on hand to provide our veteran community with access to mental health care. Chapter members had the opportunity to work side-by-side with these organizations during the event and had the chance to foster professional connections. Additionally, veteran owned business, food trucks, and even DJs added to the festivities!

More than 150 people were involved in this event on November 10. Chapter members served as liaisons for our sponsors, vendors, and athletes. Always Strong Fitness graciously donated their gym space and judges for the 15 competing teams. Many local community businesses also lent a hand by hanging flyers, donating items for our athlete swag bags, or coming to the event to have a great time. We even had a student/veteran team compete this year! Our professor Dr. Brian Hock and Psi Chi members said “this was easily the most successful event the chapter has ever had.”

Inspiration for This Event

The Got Your Six Throwdown was inspired by our chapter, campus, and local community. Austin Peay has one of the largest veteran student populations in the country. Many of our Psi Chi members are veterans, military, or military family members. With our close proximity to Ft. Campbell Army Base, we understand that veterans often face stigmas and barriers to care that the civilian population does not. The CrossFit community is also exceptional in our town, with many veterans using this exercise as an outlet for feeling good.

Understanding veteran needs, we wanted to let them know our chapter has “got their six,” a military term used to tell fellow soldiers that you’ve got their back no matter what. To achieve this, we aimed to make the event a melding of “feel-good opportunities;” taking care of yourself can range from therapy, to working out and eating well.

Our additional goal was to make the event mutually beneficial; the hosting gym, food vendors, DJs, and mental healthcare providers were either veterans themselves, family members, or strongly oriented to helping our veteran community. By having these organizations on board, we also had the chance to show our care and appreciation. One of the coolest aspects of the event was Warrior Expeditions psychological research about the outcomes of their expeditions; their researchers are both psychologists and veterans! This was massively inspiring to our chapter members—veteran
CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

and civilian alike. After volunteering at the event, member Rachel Belvins said she is “beyond grateful to be a part of Psi Chi.” Athletes, vendors, and Psi Chi members are already talking about next year!

Ideas for Next Year
Can we get a billboard?! Just kidding (although that would be awesome). Earlier planning, like having the scheduled posts and flyers completed and set to go before school really revs up would help our members find a balance that is much needed. Next time, we also plan to compile lists of possible promotion opportunities, sponsors, and vendors long before we announce the event.

I’d say it’s never too early to start planning, and it’s fun to look for “out-of-the-box” avenues to promote your events. Is there a local juice bar? Maybe they can name a drink after your event! If you don’t ask, the answer will always be “no,” so don’t be afraid to try! A local group that performs traditional Hula dance put on a show during intermissions, simply because we approached them with a smile.

Roxanne Hallisey is a psychology student at Austin Peay State University. She currently conducts research concerning the perceptions of psychedelics in military and veteran populations, and is collaborating with researchers at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga on a study about meaningfulness. She additionally flourishes in her studio art minor, concentrating in ceramics and enjoys her leadership responsibilities as president of APSU’s Psi Chi Chapter. Upon graduation, she hopes to pursue a doctorate in clinical psychology. She enjoys, in her free time, exploring national parks and spending time in the A-frame home she shares with her husband, Josh, and their cats.

Left: Psi Chi members, athletes and local vendors gather for a group photo to celebrate a successful Got Your Six Throwdown!

Below: Psi Chi member and veteran Maydaliz Bultron, not only volunteered at the event but performed with her group, The Art of Hula, between heats!

Left: Athlete and veteran Joe Neill impressively attempts to complete a weightlifting complex at 315 lbs!

Above: APSU Psychology major and veteran, Zachary Walker, competing on the student-veteran team.

Photo Credit: The Dude With A Camera

Photo Credit: The Dude With A Camera

SUMMER 2019 EYE ON PSI CHI
and get involved in the Psychology Department. The chapter plans to do similar meetings in the future that implement small groups for seniors to take more of a mentorship role.

University of Victoria (Canada)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter successfully hosted The Emoji Cookie Event in January, which was an art-related mental health initiative. The purpose of this event was to use art as a way to promote self-care and minimize stress during exam time. This was achieved by having students decorate cookies with an emoji that best represented their current emotional state, and by sharing advice on how they deal with stress during exams. More than 400 students stopped by to decorate a cookie and share self-care tips! This event produced a flip chart full of strategies to help de-stress, and a lot of positive feedback from everyone involved.

SOCIAL EVENT: The chapter hosted a conversation cafe in February: The Psycho-Tea Palentine’s Day Party. Students from a variety of faculties attended this event to snack, socialize, and make Valentine’s Day crafts for friends and family. This was a fun and entertaining event for all students involved, who were able to relax while getting to know more people in psychology and other programs.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

HELP University (Malaysia)

SOCIAL EVENT: Board games were organized as a platform to let members get to know each other better in the chapter. Because the chapter is fairly new and there were additional new members, this monthly activity helped members release stress and bond over fun games.

FUND-RAISER: The chapter hosted a fund-raising initiative that involved lecturers, tutors, and officers who were auctioned up for bets for two roles: the splasher or the splashed. The highest amount of bets for each category were then showcased for all of HELP University to see on a hot sunny day. The one time you’ll see the HELP University (Malaysia) advisor splashing cold water on the dean!

SOUTHEAST

Austin Peay State University (TN)

RECRUITMENT: The chapter hosted two days of spring recruitment in the psychology building on campus! The recruitment committee worked diligently to inform students of the benefits of joining Psi Chi and recruited more than 17 new members!

RECRUITMENT: Members worked together with the Department of Psychological Science to reach out to graduating high school seniors at the annual spring AP Day event! Area seniors and their parents spent the day exploring the university, and Psi Chi members were thrilled to speak to future members and get them excited about all that the psychology program and Psi Chi has to offer! The chapter hopes to see these students in Psi Chi in future years.

SOCIAL EVENT: Pillow Talk was an initiative to engage with lecturers on topics beyond the classroom and to share the contents to students and the public via the chapter’s YouTube channel. On the first segment of Pillow Talk, four lecturers (Elaine Fernandez, Dr. Ditto Kususanto, Evone Phoo, and Dr. Choy Tee Leng) were invited to share their career journeys by answering questions submitted by students. In addition to that, the lecturers also shared some advice related to building one’s career and life in general.

SOCIAL EVENT: A grief-themed existential conference was organized by HELP University. Psi Chi members were given a platform to assist in various parts of the conference. One part was an activity called 36 Questions of Love. In this activity, participants were paired with a stranger. The pair would sit facing one another while going through a series of meaningful questions within a specified time frame. After that, pairs would share their emotions for four minutes. The purpose of this activity was about self-disclosure and a reminder that difficult burdens are not journeyed alone.

Psi Chi deemed this important for members’ knowledge. The chapter conducted four small-group sessions, which included both theoretical presentation and hands-on practice. This workshop garnered positive feedback from members because it was useful and practical.

SOUTHEAST

Charleston Southern University (SC)

MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT: In the fall semester, the chapter assembled a panel of professors from the psychology department. The purpose of this panel discussion was to offer students an open forum to gather information about the GRE and preparations for graduate school. Professors shared their experiences taking the GRE and helpful tips that they wish they had known. Students were able to express concerns or hesitations about the test, finding the right graduate program, and how to best prepare for it.

INDUCTION CEREMONY: The chapter inducted 15 members this past fall semester. This chapter is fortunate enough to be able to host two inductions during each academic year. The chapter graciously welcomes these new members into Psi Chi.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: As part of the chapter’s service projects, they visit the Eagle Harbor Boys Ranch. This is an annual trip where the chapter gets together to have a cook-out with the boys who live there. The Eagle Harbor Boys Ranch is a home for boys in the foster care system. Members of Psi Chi visit them every year to spend time with them, have fun, and make s’mores.

Milligan College (TN)

COMMUNITY SERVICE: The chapter collaborated with the Science Club to host a hands-on science event for children during homecoming weekend. Members hosted a session on introducing the children to the five senses with demonstrations.
**CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT!**

**University of California, San Diego**

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** A team of members visited the Casa de Manana, a home for older adults in La Jolla, California. The first visit was on February 8, and this will now be a monthly event, extending for years to come. Members hosted a generational discussion and had a fantastic time bonding with the population. In future visits, the residents will be picking activities to teach the chapter such as knitting, bridge, sewing, etc. so that they are spending time together and they get to lead/teach. Members are very excited to have this connection and monthly volunteer project.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** A different group of members volunteered at the Rancho Coastal Humane Society in Encinitas, California. The group assembled Valentine’s Day cards for the shelter and delivered them to locals in nearby neighborhoods as well as local businesses. A video was made by the shelter showing Psi Chi members making and delivering the Valentine’s as an advertisement. The shelter thanked the members with “puppy play time” and many members filled in applications to be individual volunteers.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** The chapter is working with the Mental Health Association of San Diego (MHASD) to have interested members certified in Mental Health First Aid Training. This 8-hour training teaches students how to help a person who is experiencing a mental health emergency until a professional arrives on the scene. MHASD is so kind and come to the campus on the weekend to do this in groups of 25–30 students at a time. Training takes place 4 hours on a Saturday and 4 hours on Sunday. In January, the chapter completed training the first group of students. Another training weekend is scheduled in February and April. If there is enough interest, the chapter will host an additional training in May.

**University of La Verne (CA)**

**SOCIAL EVENT:** The chapter won best Homecoming Booth this past October 2018, with the booth theme of the TCL Chinese Theater in Hollywood. The prize was $450, which will be used for the Research Conference in spring 2019. With the effort of all members and officers, the chapter was able to continue its streak of award winning Homecoming Booths!

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** The chapter participated in the annual National Alliance on Mental Illness walk in Orange County. Members, officers, and the advisor walked 5K around Angels Stadium to raise money and awareness of mental illness.

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** On November 16, 2018, the chapter inducted 30 new members. The chapter hosted a dinner banquet for the new members, with keynote speaker Dr. Michelle Alfaro. Dr. Alfaro was a former chapter president and currently is an adjunct professor at the university.

**University of Nevada, Reno**

**INDUCTION CEREMONY:** On December 6, 2018, the chapter inducted 39 members (a record high for the university). New members were welcomed into the honors society and enjoyed a catered meal and “meet and greet” with more senior members.

**MEETING/SPEAKER EVENT:** On February 8, 2019, the chapter hosted its Scholarship and Grant Writing Workshop. This event provided members and other undergraduates with tools to apply for academic and research funding. The event was led by seasoned undergraduates with experience gaining these types of funds.

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On December 15, 2018, members of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences’ (USUHS) Psi Chi graduate chapter attended the wreath-laying ceremony held at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA. Psi Chi members were among the 60,000 volunteers who placed over 250,000 wreaths on the graves of our nation’s heroes.

“This was such a humbling experience and one that I am fortunate to have finally been a part of.”

–Katrina D. Powell (president)

The wreath-laying ceremony is sponsored by Wreaths Across America, a national nonprofit organization. Initially organized as a smaller venture by Worcester Wreaths in 1992, the tradition commemorating fallen servicemembers gained national attention in 2005. In 2008, U.S. Congress declared December 13 to be Wreaths Across America Day. National Wreaths Across America Day is held annually at Arlington and more than 1,600 other locations across the nation and abroad. The annual event is now held on the second or third Saturday in December. This year, 1,800,000 wreaths were placed at 1,640 cemeteries across the nation.

The mission of Wreaths Across America is to Remember, Honor, and Teach. Psi Chi members interested in learning more about Wreaths Across America should visit the following site: www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/

*The USUHS Psi Chi graduate chapter is a voluntary organization of students attending USUHS. No endorsement of Wreaths Across America by USUHS or the Department of Defense is intended nor should be inferred.*
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