When Psi Chi Journal Editor Dr. Debi Brannan approached us with an invitation to write about Psi Chi’s response to the coronavirus pandemic, we were pleased to share with Journal readers. Just as the past 12 months have not been “business as usual” for any of our members, neither has it been for Psi Chi’s staff or Board of Directors. None of us expected to face a global pandemic, sudden massive economic stress, societal reckoning on racial justice, or political turmoil—much less all of these in the same year. Even so, the 14 staff members, nine Board members from universities across the United States, our Journal Editor and five associate editors, as well as committee chairs and members around the globe have worked tirelessly to support Psi Chi’s members in the moment, as well as to ensure the viability of our Society into the future.

Psychological Science: We Have Answers

Dr. Harris O’Brien became President of the Board at the close of the July 2020 Board meeting and launched her Presidential year theme of Psychological Science: We Have Answers. Her theme expanded on that of her predecessor, Past-President Dr. Regan A. R. Gurung. His theme promoted the ideas that psychology is present in every aspect of daily life and that psychological science can be applied to solve problems at the level of individuals, communities, and even societies.

The current presidential theme builds on our rich history of psychological research by showing that there are empirically based answers for the most pressing challenges we face, such as inequality among people, climate change, and resolving the coronavirus pandemic. You might have seen the theme appear in several ways over the last few months. Her Presidential column, “Psychological Science: Make Hope Our Goal,” appeared in the spring 2021 Eye on Psi Chi. The President and Psi Chi staff worked with psychologists around the country to develop webinars and podcasts related to her theme. Check out recent podcast topics such as “How to Study During the Pandemic,” “Racial Slurs (That People Use All Too Often),” and “Conquering COVID-19 Loneliness,” available at https://www.psichi.org/page/Podcast. A sample of related webinars includes “Respectfully Engaging Across Our Differences in Divided Times” and “Learning Science/Student Success in the Time of COVID,” which you may access at https://www.psichi.org/page/learningresources or by logging in to your member portal.

Expanded Resources and Support for all Psi Chi Members

In fact, let all your friends know about Psi Chi’s resources! Because of the pandemic, the Board decided to make all of our learning resource webinars free to not only members, but to anyone interested. Other Psi Chi publications such as the Journal, podcasts, blog, and Eye on Psi Chi magazine were already available free to the public. These are each full of helpful tips on applying for jobs and graduate school, requesting letters of recommendation, writing a résumé or CV, and articles about current issues in psychology.

The Board also took action to support faculty advisors and chapters. As a temporary measure, faculty advisors may consider Pass-Fail grades, which many universities instituted during the pandemic, when determining new member eligibility. The Board also acknowledged that, in the sudden move to remote learning, graduating seniors might not have had opportunity to join Psi Chi before leaving campus. Normally that opportunity is lost after graduation; however, the Board decided to temporarily allow recent graduates to join. Students who graduated between March 1, 2020 and August 31, 2021 may join until December 2021—if they met chapter eligibility criteria as students at the time of graduation. The Board also voted not to move any Short Term Inactive chapters to Long Term Inactive status this year. Staff will instead contact these chapters to see what assistance their advisors and officers need to become active and induct new members.

President Dr. Harris O’Brien, Executive Director Dr. Martha S. Zlokovich, and staff have also
worked hard to make induction and graduation ceremonies special even though online only. Drs. Harris O’Brien and Zlokovich have been speakers at virtual induction ceremonies. Dr. Zlokovich and Director of Membership & Development Cynthia Wilson worked with the Communications Department to create induction and graduation videos for chapters to use during their online ceremonies.

Last spring, Wilson and Board members created the COVID-19 Member Support Fund to help students facing financial hardships due to the pandemic. Psi Chi set aside a $25,000 match and continues fundraising to reach $50,000 total. Advisors may request help from this fund to cover the new member fee for a deserving student to join Psi Chi, or for free honor cords to celebrate the accomplishment of a graduating senior who cannot afford them. The fund also allowed us to offer a second round of Chapter Activity Grants—because most of our chapters have remained active and adapted to full or partial online campus life.

Did you know that Psi Chi staff are all working from their homes? As part of protecting the health of our staff, Psi Chi began virtual operations in March 2020. So when you (a) order merchandise, (b) join, or (c) apply for awards, grants or scholarships, the staff members are working remotely. Although they are working from home, you are still able to reach them by phone, email, or Psi Chi’s mailing address.

Virtual Conventions
Throughout all these changes, staff and Board regrouped to support our regional Vice-Presidents planning for regional conventions, and presidents planning Psi Chi speakers at national psychology conventions as they transitioned to virtual last spring. Virtual and hybrid formats continue for the spring and summer 2021 conventions, so Psi Chi continues to support our members’ participation in these conventions including presenting the normal number of regional research awards for students presenting at each convention. Although travel will not be occurring, Psi Chi will make travel grants available to students for virtual convention registration fees.

Last year Psi Chi’s Board, Research Director, Research Advisory Committee (RAC), and Executive Director Dr. Zlokovich partnered with regional psychological associations and APS to allow students presenting their research at virtual conventions to post their work in Psi Chi’s folders on the Open Science Foundation (OSF) website. This ensures that all students who presented their research at regional and APS conventions in 2020 will have their research in a secure repository. It is important to us that students receive recognition for their work and that it be accessible in the future. We are working with these associations to allow repositories for the 2021 conventions as well. Look for more information on the webpage at https://www.psichi.org/page/ResearchAdvisory and in upcoming digests.

Psi Chi’s Four Advisory Committees Work for You
In addition to the RAC, three additional Advisory Committees are at work on behalf of members. Our Diversity Advisory Committee (https://www.psichi.org/page/Diversity) led by Diversity Director Dr. Susanna Gallor wrote Psi Chi’s response to the calls for social justice, assisted VPs with diversity programming at their regional conventions, and contributed to social media plans for Black History Month and Women’s History Month. They also wrote about the work of Drs. Loretta Neal McGregor and Albee Mendoza for the Eye and presented a webinar on “Difficult Dialogues.”

Dr. Brien Ashdown started January 2020 as our first International Director, chairing the International Advisory Committee, and Psi Chi has been expanding internationally during the past year. We have added new chapters in countries where there were previously no Psi Chi chapters, such as Armenia, Italy, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and Great Britain. The International Advisory Committee (IAC) has been working diligently on expanding Psi Chi connections throughout the world by developing the International Partners in Leadership (IPALs) program connecting a U.S. and a non-U.S. chapter. Chapters in Mexico, Guatemala, Arkansas, and Washington, D.C. pilot tested the program over fall 2020 and it will be launched April 2021 for all chapters. Through the use of technology, chapters from different parts of the world can meet each other, share resources and learn about psychology in other cultures. This focus on creating bridges between chapters fits nicely with former President Regan Gurung’s theme of “PsychEverywhere.” Psychology is everywhere in the world and affects all facets of our lives. In addition, we have started working toward making materials available in languages other than English; some brochures and other materials are available in Spanish, and we have added Google translate on our webpages.

The IAC worked with the RAC, DAC, and Journal Editor to propose an important change to...
the Journal—allowing authors to include a second abstract in the language of their choice. The Board approved the proposal and our first article with an abstract in a second language, Chinese, appears in this same issue.

The fourth advisory committee is brand new. Dr. Seungyeon Lee started January 2021 as our first Faculty Support Director, chairing the Faculty Support Advisory Committee (FSAC). She will be seeking out committee members to develop more resources and opportunities for all Psi Chi faculty members, whether or not they are faculty advisors of a chapter. One of the FSAC’s first tasks will be recommending to the Board how to spend $50,000 in support of psychology faculty that was generously donated to Psi Chi by the David and Carol Myers foundation. The FSAC will support our faculty members who do so much for the students both in and outside of the classroom!

Conclusion
The staff, committees, Editor, Associate Editors, and Board, of Psi Chi have been working diligently to support students and faculty during COVID-19. We have made videos for chapters to use for virtual inductions and graduations, video resources for each officer position and plan more webinars and podcasts in 2021. We hope you will check out all the new resources available to Psi Chi students, faculty, and alumni as well as apply for awards, grants and scholarships. Whether your involvement with your chapter continues online or you are able to return to your campus before graduating, rest assured that Psi Chi has resources to support you.
Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research 2020 Reviewers

We sincerely appreciate the hard work on the part of the following individuals who each completed at least one review in 2020. Without the assistance of such dedicated professionals, Psi Chi Journal would not be able to function.—Debi Brannan (Editor)

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Your Gifts Will
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