On behalf of GSU’s Psi Chi Executive Board and all of our members, I’d like to welcome the 84 new inductees who will be joining our organization this semester. Congratulations on your academic achievements! We look forward to your active participation in our programs. The largest group of inductees in our chapter’s history will attend their formal induction ceremony on November 12th in the presence of family and friends. Dr. Kelly Lewis, Assistant Professor, will be our guest speaker and will share her career path to her current position in GSU’s psychology department.

Psi Chi’s significant increase in membership this semester is undeniably due to our increased visibility and dynamic programming. Much thanks and appreciation goes to our awesome executive board who meet monthly to plan our activities (extra credit for meeting at 8:15 in the morning!) and spend significant amounts of time organizing, publicizing, and attending our programs. Spring semester 2012 programs included a Movie Night (A Beautiful Mind, with guest speaker Dr. Tricia King), a Graduate Student Panel (with six graduate students from different programs in the psychology department), and a GRE Information Session. Additionally, we were honored to host presentations from two graduate schools: the Mental Health Counseling and Behavioral Medicine Program at Boston University and the Forensic Psychology Program from John Jay College of Criminal Justice at CUNY.

During this fall semester, we sponsored two workshops that have become a staple of our programing: How to Write a Personal Statement and How to Write Curriculum Vitae. Given our tremendous turnout last fall for our first Graduate School Event, we invited representatives from six different graduate programs to our Second Annual Graduate School Event. Students who attended found the panel discussion extremely helpful in clarifying questions about what graduate programs are looking for and how best to prepare as an undergraduate.
Psi Chi again cosponsored the Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference (PURC) and the Practicum Fair with the psychology department. During an informal Graduate Student Roundtable, three graduate students from the clinical and counseling programs met with undergrads to offer guidance and advice in preparing for graduate school. We hope to continue these informal conversations with graduate students on a more regular basis during the upcoming spring semester. Thanks to our psychology department graduate students who are willing to give of their time to share their experiences with us.

Remember (and spread the word) that all programs sponsored by Psi Chi are open to any GSU student. Please join our Facebook page where we announce our events and offer ongoing information of interest to students majoring or minor in psychology. Stop by our newly remodeled Psi Chi lounge (1159 UL) that houses our lending library and offers a place to meet other students and enjoy a snack. Our undergraduate peer advisors, Colton Brown and Alexis Avery, also meet with students in our lounge. Contact Colton at cbrown107@gsu.edu and Alexis at aavery7@student.gsu.edu to set up an appointment or just stop by during peer advising hours: Monday, 3:00PM-4:30, Tuesday, 4:00-5:00, Wednesday, 10:30-11:45, Thursday 2:30-5:00 (Fall semester hours). We are excited for all that the coming semesters have to offer you as a member of Psi Chi and we are looking forward to being a part of your undergraduate experience as a psychology major or minor here at Georgia State University!

By Deborah Garfin, PhD

Research Opportunities at Georgia State University’s Language Research Center

Not many students realize, but GSU is one of few places on earth with chimpanzees that have been raised to communicate using a human-like language. This non invasive, longitudinal research, which recently celebrated its 40th year, is designed to elucidate the cognitive, neural, and experiential requisites of language and other competencies. GSU faculty like Duane Rumbaugh, Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, MaryAnn Romski, Rose Sevcik, Robin Morris, and many others have studied these apes. Michael Beran, Sarah Brosnan, Bill Hopkins, Charles Menzel, and David Washburn are some of the current scientists who conduct behavioral research with these chimpanzees, as well as with two species of monkeys at the LRC. Although the monkeys do not have language training, they have a wide range of other behavioral competencies that make them ideal for comparative psychological investigations. Each of the current scientists provide opportunities for select undergraduates to contribute to
ongoing research. Some examples of the research opportunities available to undergraduate students are described below.

Dr. Brosnan’s research team investigates the evolution of economic decision-making using nonhuman primates as a model. Currently they are doing projects studying barter behavior in chimpanzees, cooperation and reciprocity, and “irrational” behaviors such as negative responses to inequity, the endowment effect, and loss aversion. Students may be involved in coding and analyzing data for one of these projects, and will have the opportunity to participate in interactions with lab members involved in all of these projects. Students in this lab attend bi-weekly lab meetings, weekly meetings with Professor Brosnan or the Lab Manager, and training and discussions as needed for projects. Students will primarily be involved in data coding from videotapes and data analysis.

Dr. Beran’s lab is engaged in four lines of research with nonhuman primates, humans, and other animal species. First, they investigate the planning and prospective memory abilities of nonhuman animals and children, to see how well other species can engage in mental time travel. Second, they investigate self-control and delay of gratification across species, to better understand the emergence of behavioral inhibition and other self-regulatory competencies. Third, they investigate metacognition in nonhuman primates. Metacognition is “knowing what one knows” and is demonstrated using tests where animals can choose to either take tests or opt instead to wait for another test or to look for more information. Finally, this lab is interested in numerical cognition and its emergence across species and through human development. This line of research determines how young children and animals represent and operate on quantities so that decisions can be made on the basis of numerical and quantitative information. Practicum students have the opportunity to assist with behavioral observations, video coding, and data analysis for one or more of these projects.

In Dr. Washburn’s research, nonhuman and human primates respond to game-like computer-based tests, typically by manipulating a joystick so as to control computer-graphic stimuli in accordance with the rules of various tasks. In this way, monkeys, apes, and humans (adults and children) can be directly compared with respect to attention, learning and memory, problem-solving, and other aspects of cognition. Undergraduate students working with Dr. Washburn may help with the design and administration of these tasks to the monkeys, apes, or humans; may assist with the analysis and reporting of data from these studies; or may otherwise support the research through activities like data coding, behavioral observation, and programming.

Research opportunities at the LRC should interest students who intend to pursue doctoral study in comparative psychology, cognitive psychology, cognitive neuroscience, or any other area of science in which research experience is important. Note that the LRC is located off campus. Internships, practicum experiences, and volunteer opportunities at the LRC typically require that students have their own transportation, although on-campus research options are also available. For reasons of safety and security, undergraduate interns and research assistants will normally not interact directly with the animals—and in any case, students must be approved both by the faculty researcher who will supervise the intern and also by the Director of the LRC. Given these considerations and the relatively few facilities like the LRC anywhere in the world, demand for LRC internships typically exceeds the number of slots available. However, for the fortunate few outstanding students who are selected for research opportunities at the Language Research Center, the experience of studying psychology in a species other than our own can be life-altering!
This spring there are eight sections available for 4800 Critical Thinking Through Writing seminar class (CTW). Each semester the GSU psychology department offers from 12 to 14 sections of 3530 Research Methods and Statistics, which is the initial requirement in the CTW series. Unfortunately, too many of us know these numbers are inadequate for the demand. Many students have faced what must have seemed a stone wall as they attempted to schedule one of these required classes. If you have not yet negotiated this barrier or have been lucky enough to sail through the registration process, the blanket email recently sent to Psychology majors by Dr. Goode, Director of Undergraduate Studies, should have alerted you to the issue. Dr. Goode was seeking data on how many students had been unable to schedule 3530 or 4800.

I recently interviewed Dr. Kim Darnell, CTW Ambassador and 3530 course coordinator, regarding the situation. According to Dr. Darnell, the CTW courses are “a way that the faculty member can see how students are thinking. The goal is to facilitate student’s critical thinking. The writing is simply the medium through which we are tapping into how students are thinking. The original idea was that those courses only be taught by regular faculty, never by graduate students, never by visiting faculty. That way, majors would be guaranteed to have two upper division courses in their major with no more than 25 students taught by a regular faculty in the department.”

With the 25-student limitation, clearly the difficulty lies in the ratio of students to available faculty. While those eligible to teach a Psychology CTW course has risen 4% since 2005, the number of enrolled psychology majors has increased 63%. “We're truly overwhelmed and this is across the university, this is not just a psych issue,” says Darnell.

Interestingly, another drain on available faculty is their research productivity. “Our psychology faculty and graduate students are increasingly successful at securing funding that permits them to buy out of teaching. This puts additional burden on the faculty who must cover the courses listed in the schedule,” Darnell said. “There are limits to how much any one faculty member can teach.”

The department is considering changes to the psychology curriculum to clear the logjam. However, fall 2013 is the earliest substantial changes can be made. Until then, Dr. Darnell suggests that students “enroll in 3530 as soon as they can. What we do not want to happen is the student enroll in 3510 and wait two semesters before they can get into 3530. Students need to take the three courses (3510, 3530, and 4800) as close together as they possibly can.” Moreover, Dr. Darnell asks those who are left out during registration to “notify the department. Because if we know we have unmet demand, we can make a case to the university” that more faculty are needed.

By Robert Reagin

Join Us On Facebook!
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Undergraduate Psychology @ Georgia State University
By Robert Reagin

There are a number of career opportunities available to those with a graduate degree in Psychology. One interesting field that I have grown to love is Forensic Psychology. Careers in Forensic Psychology can range from research, to consulting, to working with the FBI to teaching. I fortunately was awarded the opportunity this summer to intern with The Forensic Panel, a multispecialty forensic science practice in New York. The Forensic Panel is comprised of specialists that consult with attorneys and courts on criminal and civil questions, of a psychiatric, neuropsychological, toxicological, emergency medicine, neuroradiological, and pathological nature. Attorneys come to The Forensic Panel in order to resolve issues of competency, wrongful death, or others including testamentary capacity.

The Forensic Panel is known for its forensic peer review protocol in which specialists with complementary or nuanced expertise provide oversight to the primary expert on the case. The benefit of peer review is the assurance that the opinions arrived at by the primary examiner are given the utmost due diligence, adhere to the standards of the field, and are objective. In this way, The Forensic Panel maintains a reputation of providing unbiased and superior quality services for their clients.

While an intern, I researched various topics, such as false confession incidence rates and psychiatric disorders. These topics influence a defendant’s risk for violent behavior or susceptibility to confess falsely. I also conducted background histories on experts scheduled to testify in cases in which we were involved in order to get a better understanding of their previous positions on specific issues and how that might influence their testimonies.

If Forensic Psychology piques your interest and you want to learn more about the field, you can visit the American Psychology-Law Society website at www.ap-ls.org or for more information about the Forensic Panel go to www.forensicpanel.com.

By Rebecca Auchter

"A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other."

Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities
This past summer I had the opportunity to begin an internship with the Georgia Center for Child Advocacy (GCCA). There, I helped meet the needs of children who have been physically or sexually abused. The center works directly with law enforcement, medical personnel, the Division of Family and Children Services (DFACS), school counselors, and the juvenile court system. Working with this Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) has been rewarding for many reasons, including insight into the role of psychology at the intersection of other fields.

Because the center coordinates the activities of several organizations, it has the unique ability to process cases more quickly, limit the number of times children are required to rehash their story, and reduce the number of cases that go unresolved due to missing information.

The GCCA conducts over 1,000 forensic interviews annually to determine the legitimacy of child abuse allegations. Interviews are based on the child’s developmental level and language capacity. The interviewer gathers information without the use of biased or leading questions that could generate unreliable evidence. Meanwhile, a detective watches from another room, taking note to determine how to proceed with the case.

During the child’s interview, a GCCA team member interviews the non-offending caregiver. I was given the opportunity to train on conducting these interviews. The primary goal is to assuage the parent’s fears and answer any questions they may have. The center provides these parents information on an array of support services such as housing assistance and victim compensation. To assess the parent’s future ability to protect the child, information is gathered regarding their understanding of the allegations and how they learned of the abuse.

After the initial interview, free Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) is offered to children who disclose abuse. Upon entering the program, parents fill out a Child Behavior Checklist rating key behaviors on a continuum of normal to clinical severity. This pinpoints areas for the therapists to target. If a child is required to testify in court, forensic staff prepares the child for the hearing and may often speak to the jury.

The GCCA also reaches out to the community, hosting workshops that educate therapists on proper implementation of TF-CBT. As a prevention initiative, adults in the community are educated to recognize the signs of abuse and the steps to take if they suspect it. Data the GCCA has gathered is shared with lawmakers promoting programs and interventions that benefit children and families. The Georgia State School of Public Health is also a partner with the center in defining factors that may prevent families from seeking the care they need.

The positive impact the GCCA has on children and families makes it an excellent practicum for someone interested in advocating for any kind of underserved population. It affords the opportunity to witness and support strides in advocacy at the level of the individual, the family, the community, and the government.

By Chandler Puhy
The Georgia State Experience: from Undergraduate to Lecturer

With over 30,000 students at Georgia State, it is not a far stretch to say that some students will return as lecturers and professors. This is the case for Marina Wheeler, PhD. Wheeler received her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, her Doctoral degree from Emory in Neuroscience and Animal Behavior, and worked in the Pediatrics department at Emory for her post-doc. “I loved coming to Georgia State as an undergrad because the student body is fantastic and diverse,” she said. Wheeler also felt it was a good fit because of the mix of traditional and non-traditional students. “I took some time off,” she said, “and had been working before I came to Georgia State.”

“I started here not knowing what to do, but I liked neuroscience. I took the drugs and behavior class and it was amazing.” Wheeler had an extra incentive to work hard in the class as well. “Whoever did best in the class got an internship,” she said. She ended up getting the internship and “loved it!” Wheeler was also a member of Psi Chi. “It was a great experience,” she said. “I liked all of the workshops and support centered around going to grad school.”

When talking about preparing for graduate school, Wheeler emphasized the importance of the personal statement. “It’s your chance to shine—not something to dash off,” she said. “It’s also not just academics that are important—college is a time to try a lot of stuff. Get involved and do it now if you are interested in pursuing a career in psychology and psychological research. Working in labs was the best part of my undergraduate experience. It prepared me in many ways for grad school.” Wheeler also commented that working in a lab can help you become an independent thinker. “You can learn from different labs,” she said “and you can explore different areas.”

Wheeler transitioned from largely focusing on research to teaching. When asked about it, she said teaching was always something that she had wanted to do. “My training hadn’t really allowed for much teaching,” she said, “so I am really focused on teaching now.” Wheeler teaches four courses: Psychology of the Atypical Child, Introduction to Research Design and Analysis, Cross Cultural Psychology and General Psychology. “I’m really passionate about teaching,” she said. “I encourage all of my students to come and talk to me—my door is always open.”

Psi Chi Community Service Event

In October, Psi Chi hosted its first volunteer event of the year. Eight members came out to Piedmont Park to help set up for the largest AIDS fundraising walk/run in the Southeast, AIDS Walk Atlanta. It was great seeing members establish connections with new people and work together around such a good cause. We hope this sets the precedent for further involvement in volunteer events. We’re looking forward to hosting more community services opportunities to offer our contributions to our community and help us unite within Psi Chi. We would love your input on what organizations you would like Psi Chi to support in the future. Contact a member of the executive board and make your voice heard.

By Coleen Conner

By Polina Shvidkaya
You may recognize the beginning of the title from the third debate between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. In light of the recent presidential election coverage, which has reminded us all of the frazzled state of America’s economy, I focus on the hope of finding fulfilling employment, which resonates in the minds of many students of all majors at Georgia State. For psychology majors, hope is also directed toward thoughts of graduate school for a master’s or doctorate degree. Unfortunately, what some psychology students do not realize is that a bachelor’s degree is enough to maneuver this nation’s job market.

Too often have I heard that a bachelor’s degree in psychology is a “dead end,” and that one must pursue graduate school if they desire a job in the profession. Well, it depends (Typical psychological answer). If one does not plan on practicing clinically or going into research, it is unnecessary to get a PhD or even a master’s degree. I ask, what drew you to psychology in the first place? For me, as a German scholar and an avid subscriber to worldly matters, it was interpersonal relations rather than a clinical degree or a specific field of research.

Charles Brewer from Furman University says that viewing a bachelor’s degree in psychology as a “stepping stone” to a master’s or PhD program may be looking at it through the wrong lens. Those of us who have been told to apply to graduate school because we think we will not find a job otherwise should undoubtedly pause and look at the big picture.

After conducting research, I found that some of the most common career fields for those with a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in psychology include research analysis, management, social work, administration, marketing, real estate, insurance, and business services (The College Majors Handbook). While perusing “indeed.com,” a widely used job search engine, I found a number of jobs in Atlanta that I, myself, would qualify for after having one to two years of experience along with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. These positions included myriad research analyst and marketing positions and a position in Turner Broadcasting’s “Standards and Practices” division. Color me thrilled!

In addition, a plethora of internships exist for students pursuing bachelor’s degrees in psychology. If you are an undergraduate student worried about finding a job, a wonderful idea would be to research internships in a career field of your choice. For instance, I have found many professional internships in the field of psychological analysis and marketing research right here in Atlanta, GA.

Regardless of whether students plan to apply for a job after receiving a bachelor’s degree in psychology or decide to attend an education program, there are certainly plus sides to having a degree in psychology. While writing a resume or embarking on a job interview, skills psychology majors have mastered include an in-depth understanding of human behavior (e.g., in groups and organizations), interpersonal and written communication, and experience in innovative thinking and problem solving.

I am proud to be earning a psychology degree, and hope that I have shed light on the attractiveness and availability of jobs with a bachelor’s degree in psychology in today’s job market. A bachelor’s degree is not a stepping stone to a master’s degree if you do not want it to be—it can just as easily be a stepping stone to a career. As you persevere toward new horizons in psychology, I bid you viel Glück!

By Laura Anderson
I thought long and hard about whether I wanted to publish this article the way I originally wrote it. The easy and comfortable answer would have been not to, but I wouldn’t have been addressing the true nature of mindfulness if I hadn’t. You can’t have mindfulness without vulnerability—and vulnerability is scary and uncomfortable, raw and real.

It’s 7:45 a.m. and I’m walking down Piedmont, headed to my first class, Psychology of Interpersonal Relationships. I’m beginning the day how I normally do: headphones on and occasionally smiling at the people I pass on the street. Everyone on campus before 8 a.m. seems to be in a hurry to get to where they are going, either to class or to the nearest coffee shop. I arrive to GCB and take a seat on the floor outside the classroom surrounded by my peers as we wait for the professor to arrive and unlock the door. The group near the stairwell is chatty. Others, like myself, sit quietly outside of the stairwell. I try to let go of some of the tension in my shoulders. I am anxious; the idea that I could possibly be late and miss something is one of the most anxiety provoking and heart racing thoughts that runs through my head. Sometimes it’s enough to send me into a mild panic.

At 9:20 a.m. I take a seat in my next class, Critical Thinking. I feel annoyed and maybe a bit haughty. I notice I am leaning back in my chair and that my arms are crossed. Then, the TA starts talking about sport teams... again. The frequency that I glance at my watch increases in steady intervals until 10:20. After that, I take my usual position on the third floor of the library for a couple hours of studying until my thoughts start drifting off every few minutes. It’s time to stop.

There’s a lone chair in the corner by the back stairwell—probably my favorite spot. I pull out a book: “On Becoming A Therapist,” by Jeffery Kottler. I pick up where I left off and a particular passage brings me to tears. Suddenly I am feeling terrified, doubtful, a little tinge of loneliness, and completely powerless.

The scariest part of mindfulness for me, self-awareness, is to know what I’m feeling when I feel it. It is also one of the most beautiful tools that we have as psychologists (and future psychologists). I think that it reminds us of the fact that we too are one and the same as those who we study and help. Our most powerful asset isn’t some new piece of technology—but ourselves. When we feel something uncomfortable, or when self-awareness brings us self-doubt, as it did for me in the library, it won’t be there forever, but that it served as an important moment in the grand scheme of moments.

By Coleen Conner

“Authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we’re supposed to be and embracing who we are. Choosing authenticity means: cultivating the courage to be imperfect, to set boundaries, and to allow ourselves to be vulnerable; exercising the compassionate comes from knowing that we are all made of strength and struggle; and nurturing the connection and sense of belonging that can only happen when we believe that we are enough.”

Brene Brown, PhD, LMSW
Georgia State Undergrads presented at the Southeastern Ecological Psychology Conference in Durham, North Carolina

Checklist for Undergraduate Psychology Majors

- Join Psi Chi!
- Attend a Psychology Conference
- Present A Poster
- Psi Chi Workshops
- Work in a Lab
- Practicum or Internship
This semester I was fortunate enough to be a part of the Careers in Psychology class taught by Dr. Weyer-mann. We discussed how to get involved within the undergraduate psychology department, how to prepare for graduate school and different career paths in psychology. As a freshman, I was clueless as to what was required to succeed in the field. Yet, after having taken this class, I now know which degree I want, what I need to apply for that degree, and how to attain the career I want after graduate school.

Prior to this class, my career goal was to obtain a master’s degree and open a private practice for child therapy. A PhD seemed unnecessary and I thought unattainable. How to finance my education is an issue and I learned that master’s degrees generally require you to pay tuition, as well as, being responsible for all your living expenses. Conversely, I learned in this class that there are financial benefits often available while pursuing a PhD, including paid tuition, receiving a stipend for research or both! Of course, PhD programs, which can take as long as seven years, are much more strenuous and competitive, but if you want to work within academia, you must have a PhD.

We also studied the graduate school application process in Careers class. One thing I might have never known is the benefit of mentioning a faculty member from the school to which you are applying in your personal statement. When applying to a PhD program, it is imperative to review the focus of each faculty member’s research. It is essential that an area of research in the program compliment your interests. Once you have found a match and apply, you should make that synergy clear within your application. Often, if you and a faculty member share interests, you have specific qualifications to perform well in his or her lab. Faculty members are more likely consider you for their program if you bring value that aids them in their research. Making this information prominent in your personal statement can really help you stand when applications are reviewed.

In most Careers in Psychology lectures, a speaker from a different department offers information regarding his or her specific field of psychology. Some of the speakers also relate their own personal career path. The speaker of most interest to me was Dr. Garfin because of the meandering paths that lead her to her current position. The moral of her story was that even if you think you have your heart set on one career choice you should always keep your mind open.

I hope each of you will consider taking the Careers in Psychology class as I have found it to be an abundance of useful information. If you are unable to schedule this class, there are still other ways to get more information on graduate schools and career options within the psychology department. Advisors in the psychology department are extremely resourceful and helpful for providing guidance and advice for psychology majors. Professors are usually willing to answer your questions and graduate students are a wonderful source of information. Probably the best resource on campus is Psi Chi and the numerous programs they sponsor to aid prospective graduate students.

By Allison Leonard

Special Thanks to Our Guest Writers

David Washburn, PhD, from The Language Research Center

Christina Sims Cummings, MPA, from The Gerontology Institute
Gaining Confidence at the Writing Center

A college education should include attaining an outlet to push you past the boundaries of your comfort zone. I have found that outlet in tutoring for the Psychology Writing Center. The Writing Center, along with the Stats/Methods Center, constitutes the Undergraduate Psychology Support Center located in 228 Kell Hall. Assisting psychology undergraduates in recognizing and repairing the weaknesses in their writing is the purpose of the center.

Each semester, Dr. Marika Lamoreaux, who supervises the center, emails faculty to get their recommendations for tutors. “Tutors are psychology undergraduates, just like the students who come to the tutoring center, so students can feel comfortable that the tutors know what it’s like to be in their shoes”, Dr. Lamoreaux explained. “Sometimes students need more time with a knowledgeable person than they can get in class. By going to the tutoring center, students get one on one help and don’t feel like they are taking up the whole class’s time,” she added.

The tutoring is free and students can go as many times as they can schedule an open appointment at https://gsu.accudemia.net/. Because the demand for tutors rises during the semester, students who are proactive in seeking help are at an advantage. Issues addressed include paper organization, clarity of meaning, grammar, conforming to APA style and satisfying each requirement the instructor placed on the assignment.

Students bring to each session any instructions they have for completing the assignment, any source material they will be citing and a paper copy of their “work in progress”. After describing the program, tutors have the student explain the assignment in his or her own words. Next, the tutor will review the paper with the student discussing its assets and flaws. The pair will then consult to identify an appropriate focus for their work together.

It is important to note that the tutors are not editors. The program’s purpose is not to correct an individual paper, but to share “information and tools that bring out the best of a student’s skills and make them a more effective communicator” says Chandler Puhy, one of the tutors. Often, a step towards that improvement can be exciting to both the tutor and student. When asked to name the most rewarding aspect of being a tutor, Chandler stated, “When you are working with a student and they have a “break-through” moment when something suddenly makes sense.”

Many tutors believe tutoring improves their own writing. “In order to be an effective tutor, one must be knowledgeable about the subject being taught. Being a tutor makes me constantly fine-tune my own skills in writing,” explains Casey Reynolds. “It highlights what you don’t know when someone asks you a question and you have to look it up,” adds Chandler. Practical experience in giving instruction is also a benefit. Chandler believes participating, “gives you practice in constructively critiquing someone’s work. It forces you to come up with different or creative ways of explaining the same concept.”

The Center also features a “Writing Pal” program, pairing a student with a tutor for weekly sessions. Conducting “general tutoring you don’t often get the same person. That is why I like the writing pal program,” says Administrator, Chilson Stallworth. “I have seen my writing pal go from a C+ paper to an A- paper by the end of our work together. Every week you get to see that your help is making a difference,” Chilson adds.

The Writing Center is a tremendous asset to students who are looking to improve their writing. It also is an opportunity for the tutors to gain experience useful in graduate school or other pursuits. Yet, the program’s greatest contribution may be the increased confidence it instills in students and tutors.

By Robert Reagin
With upward of 2,000 undergraduates in GSU’s psychology program, it is no surprise that some of us arrived here from nontraditional paths. I would like to share my experience joining psychology at GSU so that new students may gain a bit of wisdom and fellow nontraditional majors may find solace in the fact that we are not all on a four-year plan.

To briefly introduce myself, I began college Fall 2009 at Emory and transferred to GSU a year later to study jazz trumpet with Dr. Gordon Vernick. In early 2011 I sustained a lip injury that sabotaged my performing career, and after an appropriately Eriksonian identity crisis, I decided to study psychology and medicine to become a psychiatrist. I joined the psychology program as a freelance musician who knew nothing of PURC, transference, or double-blind design.

Despite a confused and timid beginning to my studies in psychology, I have grown to love the department at GSU and am now beginning to participate in community and departmental activities. The often-heard advice to “get involved” early is indeed crucial, so I urge other students to confront shyness and stay active. Along with psychological research, clinical experience and local involvement are valuable for anyone interested in psychotherapy or medicine. Shadowing at Grady, attending medical school classes, and speaking with local mental health professionals have stimulated my thinking and reinforced my dedication to the field, and I am eager to get more directly involved in psychology. However, I am currently course-locked and excluded from the applied practicum for not yet taking Interpersonal Behavior and Research Methods, so I urge new psychology students to take these classes as early as possible.

One of the endearing aspects of most academic departments at GSU is the accessibility of the faculty despite the enormity of the school. I have found most, if not all, of my instructors to be helpful and insightful, in and outside of class. Even the busiest of them attend to individual students’ needs when approached. A standout example is my chemistry professor, Dr. Finnegan, who schedules one-on-one meetings with any of his 300 or so students if they ask for help, and who has on many occasions taught extra classes, hosted weekend review sessions, and created supplementary materials to ensure our success. I recommend that any student get to know his or her professors, both for professional reasons and for the sake of meeting considerate, knowledgeable people who care about their students.

A final word of advice is simply to mingle with other psychology majors. Branching out from the music lounge in the Standard Building to meet fellow pre-meds and colleagues in psychology has proven to be rewarding for me. Other students are a wealth of diverse perspectives, new friendships, and an overall sense of solidarity that can be challenging to achieve at urban universities like GSU, where commuting is the norm. Psychology is a fascinating but rigorous field, so engage in research, support the community, and meet new faces before graduate school lies out-of-reach.

By Hadrian Mendoza
What is Gerontology? Gerontology is the interdisciplinary study of aging and older adults. Gerontology can be a focus within any discipline and many of our students go on to pursue careers in psychology, counseling, public health, advocacy, policy, research, social work, law, nursing, business, and more. This in demand career field needs people with a broad range of skills who are prepared to handle the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the aging population.

A career in aging presents endless possibilities. By 2050, one out of every five persons in the world will be over age 65. By 2028, there will be approximately 77 million American baby boomers who will reach retirement age. This demographic shift will change landscape of our country forever and there has never been a more important time to study gerontology. In fact, about 80 percent of the institute’s graduates are either working or continuing their education in gerontology or a related field.

Anyone that is looking for an exciting career in growing field and has a passion for change is a great candidate for gerontology. If you are thinking about going to graduate school, you should consider an MA in Gerontology.

For more information about the Gerontology Institute at GSU please visit our website at www.gsu.edu/gerontology

By Christina Sims Cummings, MPA

Visit the International Psi Chi Website: http://www.psichi.org/
Fall 2012
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Assistant Historian: Allison Leonard

Faculty Advisor: Deborah Garfin, PhD

FUN FACT:
The LRC houses three different types of residents:
Chimpanzees,
Rhesus Monkeys,
& Capuchin Monkeys

DID YOU SEE?!
Jane Goddall came to Georgia State!
What did you think about her talk?
email responses to...
graymatterssubmissions@gmail.com
Life as a psychology major isn’t BLACK & WHITE. We understand that GRAY MATTERS.