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Acknowledgements

The Gray Matters staff extends our deepest thanks to Alexandra Duncan for assistance with formatting. Special thanks to Dr. Deborah Garfin for giving us the opportunity to be a part of the Gray Matters team, and to all the members of the Psi Chi Executive Board for helping our vision become reality.
Greetings Psychology Majors and Minors,

 Psi Chi and the Department of Psychology have once again provided students with a fall semester packed with programs to help undergraduates get the most from their college experience. Well-attended workshops addressed the critical components of a curriculum vita (academic resume) and personal statement, both an important part of graduate school applications. Our annual Practicum Fair was a huge success as over 150 students took advantage of the opportunity to meet with representatives from 18 different research and applied practicum sites. The 14th Annual Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference (PURC) demonstrated the impressive research accomplishments of our students who inspired both faculty and students with their professional-level posters and presentations. Critical information about graduate school preparation and the application process was presented at the Graduate School Event by representatives from seven different graduate programs (GSU programs from the Departments of Psychology and Counseling & Psychological Services, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Georgia, Valdosta University, The Professional School of Psychology at Argosy University, and Auburn University). Current graduate students from our psychology department will be sharing their experiences and advice about applying to graduate programs on November 13th (Graduate Student Panel). The semester will end with a Movie Night (November 17th) showing of Temple Grandin along with a guest speaker. Finally, Psi Chi welcomed 51 new members to our organization at our Fall Induction Ceremony. Congratulations to these students who have worked hard to achieve excellence in their education.

For those of you interested in joining Psi Chi, applications are available on the 11th floor of Urban Life. Join our Facebook page (Psi Chi @ Georgia State University - open to any GSU student) to keep informed about our programs as well as other events of interest to psychology students (e.g., internship positions, volunteer experiences, campus events). Psi Chi welcomes suggestions for future programming - please contact any of our executive board members.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the many people who contribute their time and expertise in order to facilitate the personal and professional development of our students. Our Psychology Department is comprised of an exceptional faculty who consistently demonstrate a commitment to our undergraduates. In addition to their teaching responsibilities, faculty manage to find time to mentor our students during office hours, in their research labs, or through participation in our programs. Psi Chi’s growth over the past several years and the organization’s ability to provide quality programs for our students would not be possible without their dedication. I also want to thank the Psi Chi Executive Board Members who work hard each semester to plan and execute our programs. These students go far above and beyond the call of duty and are responsible for the vibrant organization Psi Chi has become. On behalf of all of our psychology students, thank you!

Dr. Deborah Garfin
Psi Chi Faculty Advisor
Hi all,

Welcome to all of you new Psychology majors, and, to the rest of you, welcome back! This semester has been an incredibly productive one. Hence, I hope you find this newsletter full of helpful information. I hope this semester’s issue allows you to learn more about your fellow students, our department, and psychology as a field of study and career.

The beauty of a major in psychology is flexibility. Studying psychology as an undergraduate can open doors for students to pursue careers in hundreds of fields. Many of the writers in this issue of Gray Matters have provided you with valuable information to assist you during and after your undergraduate career at Georgia State.

I encourage you to embrace the flexibility of your undergraduate major by exploring your options. Don't be afraid to face the future!

Karishma Lakhani
Editor-in-Chief

P.S. Here's an opportunity for you! Submit a writing sample to Yemimah, the Co-Editor (yking5@student.gsu.edu) or me at klakhani2@student.gsu.edu and you may be published in the next issue of Gray Matters. Check out the box below for instructions.

Submit to Gray Matters

☐ Be a Student
☐ Have an Idea
☐ Write a Sample
☐ Send it to klakhani2@student.gsu.edu or yking5@student.gsu.edu

Psst! You can add this publication to your CV!

Psi Chi Eligibility

- Declared major/minor in Psychology
- At least second semester sophomore standing
- 9 semester hours of courses completed in psychology at GSU
- Minimum GPA of 3.0/4.0 in general and psychology coursework
- Pick up an application on the 11th floor of the Urban Life Building

Psst! You can add this publication to your CV!
From the outside looking in, individuals have a difficult time understanding it; from the inside looking out, it is difficult to explain it. And that is why Elyn Saks's memoir is so profound. She gives readers a personal account into the mind of someone who is struggling with a very debilitating, stigmatized mental disorder – schizophrenia.

As Saks displays in her autobiography, mental disorders do not discriminate, which is a common misconception. She grew up in a suburban, middle-class home with a loving mother, father, and two brothers. Her mother stayed at home to raise the three children, and her father was a successful lawyer. Her parents were both hardworking, ambitious, and driven people who expected nothing less than the same from their kids. It is evident from Sak's memoir that her parents instilled these attributes into her and her two brothers, because one of her siblings ended up becoming a trader on Wall Street, and the other became a civil engineer. Both men ended up having their own loving families.

Saks succeeded in life, as well. Not only did she become a well-known author of five published books, but she also became an Associate Dean at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. Additionally, Saks became a Professor of Psychiatry at the same university in the Behavioral Sciences department, and with her expertise in mental health law, she was also a Professor of Psychology and Law. In 2004, she was awarded the Associate's Award for Creativity in Research and Scholarship, while also being awarded the Faculty Recognition Award by Phi Kappa Phi; an honors society. A few years later in 2009, she also won the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship Award for writing her extraordinary memoir. She was awarded $500,000, which she mainly used to continue spreading awareness about schizophrenia.

Everything Saks came to know about herself changed when she was eight years old. She began struggling with various compulsive rituals; one example being she would have to wash her hands not once, not twice, but three times consecutively. Not long after her compulsion behaviors invaded her life, night terrors consumed the time when she was supposed to be peacefully sleeping. Her mind continuously told her that a man was right outside her bedroom window waiting to attack her and her family as soon as she fell asleep. Around puberty, the eating disorder, Anorexia Nervosa, overtook her mind and body, and in high school, she had the realization that the houses around the area where she lived were putting thoughts into her mind.
However, these changes and peculiar behavior within this young girl were only the beginning. Saks never could have predicted that all of these symptoms were subtle warning signs for what her mental health was directing her towards. It was during her undergraduate studies when her mental health really began to deteriorate. Her personal hygiene became severely neglected. Saks wrote, “What, then, was happening to me? After all, I’d been brought up by attentive parents, in a family with means, plus two brothers who wouldn’t have hesitated to tell me, ‘You stink!’ So why was I unlearning the most basic of lessons: simple cleanliness?”

Schizophrenia rolls in like a slow fog, becoming imperceptibly thicker as time goes on. At first, the day is bright enough, the sky is clear, the sunlight warms your shoulders. But soon, you notice a haze beginning to gather around you, and the air feels not quite so warm. After a while, the sun is a dim lightbulb behind a heavy cloth. The horizon has vanished into a gray mist, and you feel a thick dampness in your lungs as you stand, cold and wet, in the afternoon dark.

For me (and for many of us), the first evidence of that fog is a gradual deterioration of basic common-sense hygiene (pg. 85-86).”

And that’s when schizophrenia really took a hold on her. She began outwardly displaying bizarre behavior, and because of the reactions she would receive from those who witnessed her actions, she had a notion that her behavior was not socially acceptable. Hence, she eventually began to isolate herself. Not long after she was enduring the inability to control her actions and mind, she had her first psychotic episode that resulted in her being hospitalized. Kept there for several weeks, upon being discharged, it does not take long for her to slip back into anorexia. Merely eight months later she found herself back in a psychiatric hospital again.

For the next several years, her life became a pattern. She would be admitted to a hospital, and go through remission due to the treatment she received. Then she would get discharged, which resulted in her finding herself back in a hospital where this whole cycle began. Saks was given a poor prognosis, and was struggling with delusional thinking, hallucinations, and disorganized speech and behavior. However, her determination to fight this illness never wavered. She never allowed it to affect her ambitions of making it through her schooling to eventually make a successful life for herself.

For over thirteen years Saks struggled with schizophrenia severely overtaking her life, and yet she did not let it keep her from living as best as she could. Although her extraordinary story is atypical, it gives those who struggle with any kind of mental disorder hope that no matter how much you are struggling, or how long it takes to get a hold on your disorder, it is possible. Sometimes all you need is the desire to never give up.

Any student interested in purchasing this book may find it at the following retailers:

- Barnes and Noble - Paperback: $16.00, Hardcover: $32.99
Study Abroad: Psychology Edition

Zahira Jasani

Study Abroad: Psychology Edition

Studying abroad not only permits access to new scenes, people, and languages, but it also permits students to learn the value of global networking, develop crucial career skills, and experience personal, professional, and academic growth. In a recent Georgia State University magazine interview, Dean Larry Berman, the Dean of Georgia State’s Honors College, noted that he wants all Georgia State undergraduates to become global scholars. What better way to do that than global networking? Georgia State offers several study abroad programs (http://www.studyabroad.gsu.edu/). Two topics that are sponsored by the psychology department include the psychology of skin bleaching (Tanzania, Africa) and human rights and democracy (Argentina).

This Maymester, Dr. Kelly Lewis will be taking 25 students with her to Tanzania to study the psychology of skin bleaching. Imagine the opportunity to travel to Dar es Salaam, Bagamoyo, Arusha, and Zanzibar. Not only will there be visits to historical sites, monuments, and museums, but also discussions and lectures with experts on skin bleaching products and practices. On weekdays, take courses from the University of Dar es Salaam or Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, and on weekends, venture out to beaches, entertainment venues, and local restaurants. There is no minimum GPA requirement to apply for this program, but students are expected to be in good academic standing at Georgia State. Applicants can receive either undergraduate or graduate credits and must be over the age of 18. The application deadline is on January 30, 2015.

This program will allow you to obtain experience in both cultural and cognitive psychology through examining how cultural affiliations influence individuals’ behaviors and decision-making. Aside from the leisure of traveling the world, this program is an excellent way to gain experience in the field of psychology. Additionally, you can learn Swahili and take your psychology knowledge to other countries like Kenya, Mozambique, or Uganda as you gain experience with different types of people and hopefully have a much deeper appreciation for contrasting cultures. As Tanzanians would say, “kuwa na safari kubwa”, have a great trip!

If tropical weather is more your forte, then be sure to apply for Dr. Gabriel Kuperminc’s Human Rights in Argentina: From Dictatorship to Democracy program. This Maymester program will last for two and a half weeks in the beautiful country of Argentina, examining transition from dictatorship to democracy after undergoing the most traumatic period in its history. Learn about how 30,000 people were abducted, tortured, and killed in secret detention places. Similar to the Tanzania trip, this will also further your understanding of cultural and cognitive psychology. Find out why this strong dictatorship decided to handle their people in such a manner and how those people felt. Get answers to your questions of how citizens dealt with these horrors for years and what it felt like to finally be free. To apply for this study abroad program, a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 is required. The program does not require students to speak Spanish, as it is conducted fully in English. In addition, students will receive three semester hours of course credit at Georgia State. Professors and human rights activists at the National University of Cordoba will accommodate with lectures in the morning in courses such as history and psychology and afternoons will be occupied with touring. Take this trip to further understand psychology, and develop your critical thinking skills.

Although there are several amazing opportunities to study abroad, choosing a program can be difficult. Not only are you choosing a country, but choosing a price. If you are having trouble dealing with the funding, there are scholarships to look into. Georgia State students are eligible to apply for the International Education Fee (IEF) Study Abroad Scholarship/Georgia State University Foundation Scholarship. Additionally, there are all types of scholarships for students, including scholarships for those who have never left the country or those who speak multiple languages. Pricing should not be completely detrimental, as our university provides opportunities to help. Many have testified that studying abroad is one of the best experiences college can offer, so don’t let the opportunity slide; take the chance and better your understanding of psychology and develop a diverse worldview. As J.R.R. Tolkien would say, “not all those who wander are lost.” Good luck, travelers.
Undergraduate Timeline

No matter where you are in your collegiate journey, it is important to prepare yourself to complete your undergraduate studies and organize future goals (i.e., graduate school, employment, etc.). Below is a general timeline for this preparation.

FRESHMAN YEAR
Ψ Embrace downtown Atlanta and remind yourself why you chose Georgia State! There is an amalgam of opportunities for studies both on and off campus.
Ψ Get to know your professors and attend office hours to create a professional relationship with those who have careers similar to your interests.
Ψ Get involved in the community as a volunteer. Volunteer experience will help distinguish you as a student that went above and beyond the classroom.
Ψ Take introductory level psychology courses, while talking to upperclassmen psychology students.
Ψ Research potential study abroad programs.
Ψ Maintain a competitive GPA.
Ψ Develop study skills.

SOPHOMORE YEAR
Ψ Start researching possible career ideas and looking into necessary qualifications you need in order to be a promising candidate. Contact the University Career Services (www.career.gsu.edu), located in 260 University Center between the hours of 8:30 a.m. – 5:15 p.m., for help finding internships and jobs, exploring graduate school options, and pursuing your professional goals.
Ψ Begin immersing yourself in upper level psychology courses.
Ψ Volunteer/work in a psychology setting (i.e., research lab, clinic, not-for-profit organization).
Ψ Consider enrolling in PSYC 2300 (Careers in Psychology).
Ψ Continue further research and if possible apply to study abroad programs.
Ψ Take on leadership opportunities. They will look good on your curriculum vitae (CV) or resume later on when applying to jobs.
Ψ Join Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology.
Ψ Research potential graduate programs (i.e., psychology, medicine, law, public health, social work).
Ψ Maintain a competitive GPA.

JUNIOR YEAR
Ψ Enroll in a Research/Applied Practicum to earn course credit towards your degree while receiving research/applied experience.
Ψ Take PSYC 3510 (Introduction to Research Design and Data Analysis) and PSYC 3530 (Advanced Research Design and Data Analysis). These are historically difficult psychology courses, but do not let that intimate you. Be sure to check out the Undergraduate Psychology Support Center in 228 Kell Hall where the statistics/methods, writing, and peer advising centers are.
Ψ Study for and take the GRE.
Ψ Visit schools in which you are interested in for future graduate studies.
Ψ Apply to graduate once you have earned 90 credit hours.
Ψ Continue to be involved in psychology organizations, research, and community service activities.

SENIOR YEAR
Ψ Enroll in PSYC 4800 (a required Critical Thinking Through Writing course)
Ψ If you have not already done so, take the GRE (Check out Georgia State’s free three week GRE Prep Course administered by Michael Wyatt here: www.classjump.com/m/michaelwyatt/).
Ψ Present your research at the Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference (PURC), the Georgia State Undergraduate Research Conference (GSURC), or other research conferences.
Ψ Apply to graduate programs or begin exploring job possibilities.
Ψ If you are a student in the Honors College, complete an Honors Thesis.
Ψ Prepare and regularly update your curriculum vitae/resume. Visit the University Career Services (www.career.gsu.edu), located in 260 University Center, anytime Monday – Friday between 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. to meet one-on-one with a staff member to receive feedback on your resume; no appointment necessary!
Ψ Request letters of recommendation/evaluation.
Ψ Keep all deadlines organized when applying to various jobs or graduate/medical schools.
Ψ Maintain a competitive GPA.
When applying to graduate school, the personal statement is the one component in which the applicant has a chance to shed light on their personality and expertise. Due to this, it is important to start working on it as early as possible so that you will have ample time to make any needed revisions. It is always a good idea to request feedback from professionals in the psychology department (i.e., graduate students, faculty members, advisors, etc.) to provide you with feedback and suggestions to make your personal statement stronger.

It is important to take into account that other than your GPA, GRE scores, and letters of recommendation, the admissions department will only have your personal statement to learn about who you are and what you can contribute to their program.

It is also crucial to discuss what led you to choose the field that you are pursuing and what your long-term goals are for your professional career interests. It is also important to describe how your experiences (i.e., practicum courses, internships/assistantships, research, volunteering, courses, etc.) have influenced your career choice. In addition, when examining the admissions statistics, if you notice that you are below the average in a specific area, the personal statement allows you to provide justifications. Be sure to write about skills and attributes that set you apart from other applicants (i.e., research or clinical experience, leadership positions) so that you will be portrayed as a more qualified and competitive candidate.

Working while going to school can also be beneficial because this can demonstrate time management skills. Also, working can yield different experiences such as interpersonal skills that would be considered to be valuable traits. Be sure to mention these experiences in your personal statement. International experiences such as studying abroad are also proving to be more and more advantageous for graduate school applicants as well as applicants in the professional world. The personal statement is the perfect domain to promote your accomplishments. Hence, be sure not to omit anything that could present you in a better light.

When writing your personal statement, try not to sound like you are reiterating facts and information. Cater each personal statement to the program that you are applying to and be sure to answer all of the questions (if applicable) in the prompt. This may seem like a lot of work if you are applying to multiple programs, however, if you take the time to create a template, it will be easier to personalize each essay prior to submission. Start early, take your time, welcome feedback, and create the best portrayal of yourself that you can in your personal statement.
Due to the increased number of students obtaining bachelor’s degrees, it is crucial to be a more competitive candidate for graduate school. Below is a list of things to consider while writing a personal statement for academic positions.

1. **Experience** – Many admissions counselors believe that this is becoming one of the most meaningful portions of the application. Gaining experience in the field that you are hoping to become a part of implies that you have taken what you have learned in your academic courses and have applied it to real-life situations. It demonstrates that you have grasped the material enough to have looked for opportunities to enhance the skills that you have in an attempt to master them. This is especially valued in scientific fields. If you would like to receive a graduate or medical degree, it would be a great idea to become involved in a research lab with a faculty member that has research interest similar to yours. Also, you could enroll in a practicum course and/or complete an Honors Thesis project. Often, a strong Honors Thesis could lead to a publication in an academic journal, which would really make you a strong candidate for graduate school.

2. **Grade Point Average (GPA)** – Your grades in your undergraduate courses are reflective of your performance as a student as well as of your future performance as a graduate student and professional. If your GPA is low, prospective programs are likely to skip over your application (unless valid explanations are detailed in your personal statement). Many academic advisors discourage students from applying if their GPA is below a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. It is in your best interest to keep your GPA as high as possible, especially in your major coursework.

3. **Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores** – Per the Educational Testing Services, your performance on the GRE is indicative of your knowledge in basic mathematics, writing, and language skills. Poor performance in one of these areas may lead prospective graduate programs to believe that you are not appropriate to take on the challenges that graduate school students have to endeavor. However, there are ways to ensure that you perform well. Free test preparation materials are provided by the ETS (http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare/). Kaplan Test Prep provides online practice tests with feedback (http://www.kaptest.com/gre/enroll?zip=&tab=events) as well as free practice tests on campus at least once a semester. You can also pay for GRE preparation courses or purchase math and verbal workbooks to help you study. Prior research has shown that the more an individual takes practice GREs, the better their scores are. Most graduate programs take your highest scores, so this can be used to your advantage. Although this may encourage you to take it more than once, remember that each test is about 200 dollars, so choose wisely and be as prepared as you possibly can!

4. **Personal Statement** – The statement of purpose or personal statement is your opportunity to reflect your personality and intellect. This is your chance to show the admissions department that you are more than a GPA or GRE score. You are a three dimensional person with hopes, dreams, aspirations, and tons of potential. Take this opportunity to tell your story, discuss what led you to pursue this career and apply to their particular program and explain why you are a good match. Let them know of any external hardships or situations that may have led to short-comings in other areas of your application (e.g., GPA, GRE scores, etc.). When doing this, be careful not to sound like you are complaining; this will not appeal to the admissions department. Instead, let them know how those situations have motivated you to be successful and persevere. This is the only part of the application that you have complete control over, so be sure to take advantage of it!

5. **Letters of Recommendation** – Most graduate programs require three letters of recommendation from faculty members at your undergraduate institution. When asking faculty members for letters of recommendations, ask professors you have had for prior classes, volunteered for, worked with, or simply those who know you well enough to speak regarding your professional and academic qualities. If you have developed a professional relationship with a professor, he or she will be able to speak highly and strongly regarding your abilities.

Continued on page 11...
You want your letters of recommendation to speak about your strengths as a student and, if applicable, as a person. When asking professors to write these letters, it is useful to send them a copy of your resume and/or curriculum vitae (CV), a list (with dates) of classes you have taken with them and other ways you have worked with them (e.g., research lab assistant, teaching assistant, practicum student, Psi Chi executive). While you have the right to waive your right to see letters of recommendation, be aware that it is rare for students to waive this right. Thus, those reviewing graduate school applications might wonder at the reasons for your atypical decision. Be sure to ask your potential letter writer if they would be able to right you a “strong” letter of recommendation. If the letter writer does not know you well, the recommendation will carry much less weight. Choose your letter writers wisely!

Although representatives of various graduate admissions departments state that some of these items are more (or less) important than others, the items above all contribute to the overall picture you provide to the graduate program. While you should definitely apply to some schools that you have a reasonable chance of getting in to, consider adding a couple of top tier schools. After all, you will never know the admissions decision unless you apply!

What Can I Do With My Psychology Degree?

Although a large number of undergraduate students plan to attend graduate programs after acquiring a bachelor's degree, there are several careers one can pursue without graduate training. Below is a list of the some of the opportunities available to recent graduates with a Bachelor's in Psychology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
<td>Assist professors and/or graduate students with a research project by helping to collect data and/or enter data into computers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation/Parole Officer</td>
<td>Counsel and supervise criminals and their families while the offenders work toward reintegration to society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Representative</td>
<td>Responsible for planning and executing marketing campaigns to generate new prospects and improve client retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Director</td>
<td>Promote and implement human resource values by planning and managing human resources programs and directing staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Worker</td>
<td>Attend to children at schools, businesses, private households, and childcare institutions. Perform a variety of tasks, such as dressing, feeding, bathing, and overseeing play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerontoloty Aide</td>
<td>Health-care, human services or social services aides who assist older adults in their homes, the community and in long-term care facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Manager</td>
<td>In charge of the general operations of a store, making sure it runs smoothly, clean and meets any budget or sales goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Technician</td>
<td>Work in scientific laboratories, operate and maintain equipment, record data, and assist with experiments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric Technician</td>
<td>Assist mental health professionals with care of people with mental illness. Certification as a psychiatric technician is possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Life Specialist</td>
<td>Work with children and their families in hospital settings to adjust to the challenge of the child's hospitalization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Life as a psychology major isn’t
BLACK & WHITE.
We understand that
GRAY MATTERS.

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