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Gray Matters

Psi Chi's Undergraduate Newsletter for Psychology Majors

Article from Psi Chi Advisor:

Dr. Deborah Garfin

This has been another productive semester for Psi Chi and the Psychology Department at GSU. Our two major events that we co-sponsor each fall semester, the Practicum Fair and PURC, were both tremendously successful. It is always hard to imagine how the quality of students' conference posters can improve each year, but somehow, students outdid themselves again! Thanks to all the faculty sponsors who support our students as they learn about the research process – from design to data collection and interpretation, to presenting their work at PURC and other professional conferences.

Thirty-nine new members were inducted into our GSU Psi Chi Chapter on Wednesday, November 19, 2008. We also held our general membership meeting and were honored to have Dr. Rihana Williams as our guest speaker. Thanks to Dr. Williams for giving of her time and providing us with helpful guidance and inspiration. We welcome our new inductees and encourage them to get involved in Psi Chi and psychology department programs.

Plans for spring semester include GRE Practice Workshops, guest speakers, programs directed at graduate-school preparation such as writing curriculum vitas and personal essays, finding the right graduate school, and selection of references. We also hope to plan at least one program that involves community service. Of course, our spring issue of *Gray Matters* will be published near the end of the semester.

Please contact our President, Sonia Sapp at ssapp4@student.gsu.edu, if you would like to get involved in Psi Chi. We need help in carrying out our programs and welcome your ideas for activities that will enhance your undergraduate psychology education.



Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference (PURC)

Dr. Deborah Garfin

The 8th annual Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference at GSU was held on November 5, 2008 at the Rialto Center. This year, 32 posters were presented reflecting student

research covering an incredibly diverse range of topic areas. The conference was co-sponsored by GSU's psychology department, Psi Chi, the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience, and the Language Research Center. Dr. Roger K.R. Thompson was the keynote speaker whose presentation was entitled, "Knowing (Other) Animal Minds." Dr. Thompson is the Dr. E. Paul and Frances H. Reiff Professor of Biological Sciences at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Poster winners this year included:

Overall 1st place: Cedrick Dortch, *Minority students' learning beliefs and the academic achievement gap.* (Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Rihana S. Williams)

Overall 2nd place: Melissa Nikolic and Lisa Wiggins, *Auditory sensory abnormalities and language ability in young children with autism spectrum disorder.* (Faculty sponsor: Dr. Diana Robins)

Overall 3rd place: Michael Williams, *Expression of ErbB Receptors after organophosphate exposure in rats.* (Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Byron Ford)

Best Cognitive Behavioral Neuroscience poster - Bethany Bagley & Amy Ross, *Effects of feeding adolescent rats a high fructose diet on learning and memory.* (Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Marise Parent)

Best Diversity poster - Leon Silvers & Caroline Lippy, *The association between anti-gay experiences and cigarette smoking among gay men: A*

queer theory interpretation. (Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Julia Perilla)



Interview with Dr. McClure Tone

Claire Lisco

Erin B. McClure Tone is a researcher and professor here at Georgia State. Her current research interests include social cue processing and its role in the emergence and maintenance of child/ adolescent anxiety disorders. Tone's clinical interests are in line with her research interests – she treats children and adolescents with anxiety and mood disorders.

Dr. Tone's career path took many directions before she found her calling. Her first job was through Teach for America, where she taught high school drama and speech. It was during her time as a high school teacher that she discovered her passion for working with children.

She then went back to school to get her masters in School Psychology at Emory, and began working in a children's psychiatric hospital. This is where she learned of her love of research. It was after this experience that Dr. Tone went back to Emory to earn her doctorate in Clinical Psychology.

Dr. Tone's story is relevant for undergraduates at Georgia State. It may take a while to know exactly where your passion lies in the field of psychology, but through many different learning experiences one can follow the path to discovering where true interests lie.



Practicum Fair

Emily Andrews

Are you curious about the research process? Are you thinking about working in a mental health setting? Are you considering applying to graduate school in psychology? Do you want to become more involved in the psychology department and get to know faculty and graduate students? If your answers were "yes" to any of these questions, then you should consider getting involved in a practicum.

One helpful source of information for students who want to get involved in research or applied work is the Practicum Fair. This year's Practicum Fair was held on October 24, 2008 in the lobby of the Urban Life Building.

A wide variety of practica were represented at this years fair. There were representatives present from both applied and research practica sites, including organizations not affiliated with the university, such as the

Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault (GNESA) and Emory’s Faculty Staff Assistant Program (FSAP).

If you did not make it to the Practicum Fair, there are other methods for gathering information about the available practicum programs. Information regarding research and applied practica for the spring semester can be found on the psychology department website.

<http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwpsy/undergrad/PracticumGeneralInfo.htm>



To Practicum or Not to Practicum

Renee Burgess

I am an undergraduate psychology student here at Georgia State University, and like most students in their first couple of years I was kind of aimless, until I took my first psychology course. One of the requirements in psychology 1101 is to be a research participant for research projects in the psychology department’s labs. Taking this introductory course and participating in the research led me to decide to change my major to Psychology.

Once I decided to become a psychology major, I began to investigate career options in the field. I soon discovered that with just a bachelor’s degree, there were not many options that

interested me, so I started to look into graduate schools and what I had to do to obtain a graduate degree. I found out that in addition to having a strong GPA and good recommendations, one of the requisites for most graduate schools was participation in research. My first thought was, “What do they mean by ‘research’ and ‘participation’?” My second thought was, “How does an undergraduate student with no research experience, except the 9 hours I completed for psychology 1101, accomplish this daunting task?” The answer was participation in a practicum.

A practicum allows one to become involved in a research lab or in an applied setting with the option of earning 1-3 hours of course credit. Each credit hour consists of 30 hours of participation during a 16-week semester. There are two kinds of practicum, Research and Applied. The Research Practicum gives the students an opportunity to get involved with ongoing research here at Georgia State. This experience is especially useful if you are planning on going to graduate school. An Applied Practicum gives students hands-on experience in the field of applied psychology. Students are able to work with children, courts, advocacy groups, faculty projects or community-based projects. Students will gain an idea of how services are rendered and how agencies work.

There are requirements that must be fulfilled before you can apply for a position to either practicum. You must be a psychology major, at least

sophomore standing, have a minimum GPA of 2.5, and a minimum 3.0 psychology GPA. For an Applied Practicum you should have completed PSYC 3110 (Interpersonal Behavior) with a C or above. If you have met all these requirements, you can go to the psychology department website and check out the available practicum sites. Then make an appointment with the psychology advisor on the 11th floor of the Urban Life building. During your appointment, your advisor will instruct you on how to gain an interview and then finally obtain a position.



The “Decision Path” to a Career in Psychology

Claire Lisco

The question of many undergraduate students at Georgia State surrounds the thought, “What am I going to do when I graduate? What graduate school program is best for me? What is my focus going to be? Can I find a job immediately after my undergraduate education?” In an interview, Dr. Tone gave advice for discovering one’s interests by following a decision path.

First, students may want to decide if they want to go to graduate school. If a student decides to become a psychologist they will need to pick an area of focus such as: School, Industrial Organizational, Educational, Clinical, Developmental, Social, Counseling, Community, or Cognitive Psychology.

The important thing for students to recognize when choosing their degree program is the amount of time invested in getting a higher degree in psychology. Masters programs generally take around two years to complete, while Doctoral programs take around five to seven years to finish. Entry level Bachelor degrees offer limited job flexibility and growth.

In addition to graduate school, students who want to practice in the field of psychology must take a year of clinical internship, then a year of supervised work, and then pass a licensure exam. Entry level Bachelor degrees do not allow students job flexibility or much growth- most students end up doing hands on care for patients.

Two fields of psychology that students generally need help distinguishing between are counseling and clinical psychology. Both fields include practice of psychotherapy and require a Ph.D. Counseling psychology trains and prepares students for working with diverse populations with an emphasis on vocational guidance. Clinical psychologists are trained to work with patients with more severe psychological disorders, such as schizophrenia and autism. On the other hand, counseling

psychologists see patients with less severe mental illness.

Another distinction is the difference between a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) and a Psy.D. (Doctor of Psychology). Ph.D. programs have a research focus, the program length is five to seven years, class size is small, mentorship is involved, assistantships and stipends are almost always offered and competitiveness is high.

Psy.D. programs do not have a research focus, the program length is four to six years, class size ranges from small to large, mentorship is not involved, assistantships and stipends are rarely available, and competitiveness is moderate. Dr. Tone suggests the following tips to students considering pursuing a Psy.D.:

1. Look at the class sizes at the university you are interested in
2. Look at the program description (costs, etc.)
3. Ask questions - Where do people go after graduating from the program? Can they get internships/jobs?
4. Are you interested in conducting research?

Dr. Tone mentioned that students with a psychology Bachelor's degree might pursue a career in social work. Many positions require a 2-year master's degree, either an MSW (master's degree in social work), which must be supervised, or LCSW (licensed clinical social work) which one can practice independently, followed by an internship.

Dr. Tone also described the path to becoming a psychiatrist.

One must earn a Bachelor's degree, attend four years of medical school, complete a one-year internship, and pass a state licensing exam. Then, one must complete a three-year residency program in psychiatry as well as pass exams, in order to become board certified.



Preparation for Graduate School: The Hard Facts

Claire Lisco

Graduate programs are highly competitive. Acceptance rates for masters programs are 30%-50%, while acceptance rates for Ph.D. programs are 5%. Schools consider students with GRE scores between 500-700 and GPAs from 3.2.

Dr. Tone explained that if you have low GRE scores, then it is important for you to have great recommendations from teachers. One can obtain recommendations by working in a lab and getting to know professors. Dr. Tone's final advice includes a few steps for students to prepare themselves for the challenge of gaining admission to a graduate program:

1. Get involved in research as early as possible.
Make sure your professor

is “really invested in you as a person.” Also, don’t be afraid to contact professors to meet with them.

2. Research the various degree programs offered and the potential job opportunities available in psychology.
3. Prepare for the GRE as early as possible.

Following these steps will aide in the application process and increase your chances of being accepted into the school of your choice.



Poster Making Session

Glenna Read

Psi Chi sponsored a poster making session this October. Dr. Owren presented a slide show about how to make a good poster for PURC or other research conferences. Dr. Owren’s information on making a good poster is essential for anyone considering presenting in PURC or other research conferences. A brief summary of Dr. Owren’s tips for creating a research poster is included below:

1. The poster should be made as a slide in PowerPoint. The size should be 44”wide and

Resources for Prospective Graduate Students

Glenna Read

Considering applying to graduate school in psychology? If so, the APA publishes many books that prospective graduate students may find helpful.

Applying to Graduate School in Psychology: Advice from Successful Students and Prominent Psychologists (2008) offers insider information from graduate students and professional psychologists. Readers will gain perspective regarding the differences and commonalities between diverse programs and universities. Psychologists contribute essays describing their experiences from academia to career development. This book is an invaluable resource for prospective students seeking information about graduate school from knowledgeable insiders. Another useful resource for anyone considering a career in psychology is **Career Paths in Psychology: Where Your Degree Can Take You, Second Edition** (2006). In *Career Paths in Psychology*, academia, clinical and counseling psychology, public service, and school and health psychology are some of the career paths that are discussed. The advantages and disadvantages of each career are examined, along with how to prepare for entry into a certain career path, ranges of financial compensation, typical activities, and options for employment. **Getting In: A Step-by-Step Plan for Gaining Admission to Graduate School in Psychology, Second Edition** (2007) is a book that is essential for anyone considering applying to graduate school in psychology. This book outlines the application process and provides timetables for prospective students. Chapters are divided into easy-to-follow sections, including improving your chances for acceptance, choosing which programs to apply to, applying to graduate school, and what to do after you have applied. Reading *Getting In* will explain the application process and requirements that will make the reader a more desirable candidate for graduate school. **Graduate School in Psychology, 2009 Edition** provides a comprehensive review of colleges and universities with psychology programs. Chapters are divided by state, and subdivided by school. Each subdivision provides the University’s contact information, programs and degrees offered, APA accreditation, student admissions, admission requirements, student characteristics, financial information and assistance, and more. Prospective students will find this book a valuable resource when deciding what schools to apply to.

- 34”high, giving the poster a ratio of 1.33.
- 2. Your poster should be attractive and draw people in. Some ways to do this include: using color and logos, presenting minimum information without leaving an abundance of white space, and including relevant figures, tables, or photos.
- 3. Keep your poster simple and information brief. Include only essential information in well-organized panels.
- 4. Make sure that your poster is readable from six feet away. Text should be no smaller than 18-point font. The title should be 72 point font or larger. Headings should be in 48 point font or larger.
- 5. At the conference the poster is mounted on a 48”wide by 36”high board with pushpins.

The poster should include several different sections. The components are as follows:

- 1. **Title** (Should be concise and prominently displayed.)
- 2. **Authors, Affiliations, and relevant Logos** (Include PURC, Georgia State, or other logos.)
- 3. **Abstract** (Include only if there is room; 120 words or less.)
- 4. **Introduction** (Should begin broad and end with specific information.)

- 5. **Method** (Should be brief.)
- 6. **Results** (Should be prominently displayed; include relevant figures and tables.)
- 7. **Discussion/Conclusion** (Should mirror the introduction; begin specific and end broad.)
- 8. **References** (Include 4 or 5 references; not required.)
- 9. **Acknowledgments** (May be in a small font at the end of the poster; not required.)

Presenting a poster in a research conference may be a daunting idea to psychology undergraduate students. However, attending a poster making session will make the process easy and will help you make a winning poster.



Diversity Committee

Emily Andrews

“We have become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.”

This was said by the 39th President, and fellow Georgian, Jimmy Carter. Diversity is a word which is given much esteem, but what exactly is meant by diversity and why is it regarded as an ideal? Typically, this word is used to refer to

cultural or racial/ethnic diversity. Yet diversity simply means something which consists of unlike elements. A population can be diverse in many noncultural characteristics. As mentioned in the above quote, diversity can occur in more abstract constructs, such as beliefs and dreams.

A great strength of our university is the incredibly diverse student body. It enriches the learning environment at Georgia State, as well as providing opportunities for interactions with many different types of people, increasing both tolerance and appreciation for our differences.

The diversity of the student body also provides opportunities for researchers, giving them access to a more representative pool of participants, as well as the chance to conduct research on minority populations that may be underrepresented in the psychology literature.

The Diversity Committee helps to promote diversity throughout the psychology department. One goal is to increase the demographic diversity of the department, which includes supporting policies that promote this outcome. They seek to educate faculty and students about the impact that culture and one’s worldview can have on every step of the research process, from forming a hypothesis to the interpretation of results. They also wish to raise awareness about social contextual details, such as racism and sexism, and how they may

affect research, theory and practice in psychology. All of these objectives support the goal of increasing the multicultural competence among faculty and students.

The committee is chaired by Dr. Page Anderson. It includes representatives from each program within the psychology department, as well as a graduate and undergraduate representative. The current committee members include: Dr. Chris Henrich (developmental), Dr. Aki Masuda (clinical), Dr. Julia Perilla (community), Dr. David Washburn (chair of the department and representative of cognitive and neurobehavioral science), Sharlet Anderson (graduate representative), and Psi Chi's own Sara Gorvy (undergraduate representative).

The Diversity Committee would like to inform undergraduate students about paid summer research opportunities. The National Institute on Drug Abuse sponsors a summer program designed to introduce underrepresented minority undergraduate students to drug abuse research via working in labs with distinguished scientists throughout the country. More information about this program can be found at the front desk on the 11th floor of the Urban Life building.

The Diversity Committee hopes to increase involvement from and service to undergraduate students. Next semester, the committee will sponsor a meeting for undergraduate

psychology students with an interest in diversity. If you have any questions or input for the Diversity Committee, please contact Dr. Anderson at panderson@gsu.edu or Sara Gorvy at sgorvy1@student.gsu.edu



Research Opportunities for Psychology Majors

Jennifer Natbony

The Psychology Department at Georgia State University has many opportunities for students to learn about the research process. Research opportunities include collecting data, working in a lab, and running analyses, all of which are important aspects of research. GSU is unique in its research opportunities. One such opportunity is participating in the annual Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference that takes place each fall semester.

PURC is a wonderful opportunity to figure out if conducting research is something you would like to pursue. After attending several of these undergraduate research conferences, and presenting at two, I have come to appreciate the opportunities that these events have to offer. Some of the benefits of presenting research at PURC are the creative ideas and

new directions that become sparked from discussing one's research. Every time I present at an undergraduate research conference, I am amazed by the topics that derive from my conversations with other presenters about my research. Through explaining my research to others, and theorizing with them about the results, I am always left with new ideas and directions that I would like to explore for my next poster presentation. I love this aspect of the conferences. After every conference, I also feel more passionate about my decision to go to graduate school. PURC is a wonderful opportunity for students to discover research opportunities and solidify their decision to go to graduate school.



Psi Chi Grants and Scholarships

Renee Burgess

As many of you, I am always on the lookout for ways to fund graduate school, research projects, and really life in general. I had no idea as to the extent of funding possibilities provided by Psi Chi. There are many opportunities for grants and scholarships for a wide variety of research projects. There are so many different awards that it would take this whole newsletter to describe them all.

Go to http://www.psichi.org/awards/data_sheet.asp for more information. This website at www.psichi.org also explains all about Psi Chi and the unique opportunities that are open to its members.



Psychology Department Group Advising: The Honors Program in Psychology

Dr. Deborah Garfin

Find out about the honors program in psychology involving both coursework and research opportunities – whether or not you are in the honors program. This group advising session will take place Monday, December 1 from 12:00-1:00 in the Lanier Suite of the Student Center. Free Food Provided! Two \$25 gift cards redeemable at the GSU Bookstore will be raffled off!



Psi Chi Fall Induction

Emily Andrews

Psi Chi held its fall induction on Wednesday, November 19, 2008. The event was incredibly successful with 55 people in attendance. Panther Catering provided the food for the induction. Dr. Rihana Williams shared the evolution of her career goals from childhood to graduate school. The induction concluded with a raffle of two Psi Chi coffee mugs, the winners were John Garretson and Ashley Simpson. Welcome new Psi Chi members!

Ijeoma A. Agurd

Chizara U. Ahuama-Jones

Rebecca M. Bosch

Lauren R. Bush

Matt D. Colsia

Amber L. Crawford

Matthew N. D'Ambrosio

Andrea Flandry

Juakena S. Fortson

John T. Garretson

Gerry D. Gilmore

Shelley N. Hinkle

Claire J. Kirkland

Brittney D. Lowe

Laura A. Martin

Tiffany N. McGregor

Kelly A. Minor

Shanna R. Mitchell

Fana S. Moseley

Jennifer Natbony

Lindsey C. Paino

Jennifer E. Popelka

Cheryl D. Presswood

Karan C. Raghavan

Tiara Ramos

Shantiany Rodriguez

Niquita A. Sanders

Emily D. Shaver

Ashley N. Simpson

Erica A. Small

Jennifer A. Smith

Analia R. Stormo

Tiffany N. Thomas

Ajori N. Tobias

Gina F. Vanegas

Stefanie C. Wellons

Crystal J. Westmoreland

Rashida L. Whitley

Krystyna W. Wilson

Helpful Websites

Claire Lisco

Dr. Tone provided many helpful and useful websites for students to use to research careers, degrees, and other relevant information

- **Salaries:** <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos056.htm>
- **Mental health counselor, social worker, marriage & family counselor, etc.:**
<http://www.cacrep.org/relatedorgs.html>
- **Finding jobs with a psych B.A.:**
<http://psych.hanover.edu/handbook/bachpsy2.html>
- **Child-related careers:**
<http://www.khake.com/page15.html>
- **Child policy careers:** <http://cfp.igpa.uiuc.edu/default.htm>
- **Juvenile justice:**
<http://cdc.richmond.edu/multimedia/careerminute/juvenilejustice.html>
- **School psychology:**
http://www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/whatisa.html
- **Social work:**
<http://www.naswdc.org/profession/overview.asp>
- **Special education teachers:**
<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos070.htm>
- **Link for more salaries including Psychiatry:**
<http://www.psych.org>

Georgia State University Research Conference – GSURC

Dr. Deborah Garfin

The 3rd annual Georgia State University Research Conference (GSURC) will take place Friday, March 13, 2009, at the Student Center. Plan to present your research as either a poster or oral presentation. Proposal submission deadline is January 29, 2009. For details, go to: www.gsu.edu/gsurc. You may submit a proposal for work previously presented at PURC.

For information on Psi Chi and how to join visit
<http://www2.gsu.edu/%7Ewwpsy/undergrad/PsiChi.htm>

To access previous editions of Gray Matters visit
<http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwpsy/Newsletters.htm>



