



Gray Matters

Georgia State
Undergraduate Psychology Newsletter

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Greetings to GSU Psychology Majors!

I have had the pleasure of serving as Psi Chi Faculty Advisor since I came to the department in the Fall of 2005. Getting to know so many of you and working with you on the various Psi Chi projects we sponsor throughout the school year has been a great experience. I am constantly impressed with the dedication and energy of our students who juggle so many demands and still make time to be involved in department and Psi Chi activities. Although membership in Psi Chi, as psychology's national honor society, demonstrates interest and commitment and is viewed very positively by graduate schools, it is clear that the major motivation of most of our members is a real interest in our programs and a willingness to work hard for our organization. Thanks to all of you who have contributed to our success. Although the application deadline has passed for spring induction, we hope that those of you who are not currently members will join up in the fall. Feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions you may have.

Good luck with the rest of the semester!

Dr. Deborah Garfin

Psi Chi Faculty Advisor
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Psychology Practicum Program

Robin Lasseter

As a psychology major, you should seriously consider registering for a research (PSYC 4760) or applied (PSYC 4770) practicum in psychology next semester. It's a way to get experience that looks great on graduate school applications, to network with professionals and peers who share your interests, and have fun at the same time. The only prerequisites are:

- Declared Psychology major and sophomore standing
- Completion of Psyc 3110 (Interpersonal Behavior, Applied sites only)
- Minimum (overall) GPA of 2.5 and a minimum Psychology GPA of 3.0
- Make sure to make an appointment to have advising and authorization by the department

Students will receive training in psychological research or treatment based in the community (Psyc 4770) or through experimental research (Psyc 4760). Taking a practicum is worth 1-3 credit hours. If this sounds like just the opportunity you've been looking for, make an appointment to discuss possible practicums and procedures with the Psychology advisement center, located on the 11th floor of Urban Life.

New Practica for Fall 07:

Research - Children's Health Care of Atlanta: students will work with Clinical Research Coordinators, Research Nurses and Principal Investigators from varying specialties

See the website for more opportunities:

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

My Applied Practicum Experience

Angela Hughes

The statement, "Hello, I am Angela and I have just come to the realization that I am utterly clueless about the field of psychology," expresses how I felt after about a month into my applied practicum experience. That is, during my practicum experience with the Georgia Center for Children (a non-profit organization for sexually abused children) I recognized that I was, in a sense, ignorant to the field of psychology despite the many psychology courses that I had taken.

My feelings of incompetence, however, slowly diminished as my days at the center grew. At GCC I was able to actually work with and seek mentorship from practicing psychologists. This alone proved to be a valuable asset because every time I had a crisis about my pursuit of a career in psychology they were there to coach me through it and provide me with their own testimonials to use as references. In addition to this mentorship, I was allowed to sit in on forensic interviews and actually watch a psychologist at work. This allowed me to see how psychologists interact with their patients and gave me a window into the various techniques that psychologists employ while working with patients. I was also permitted to sit in on multidisciplinary team meetings with the various agencies that partnered with the center such as law enforcement, the department of child and family services, and the county district attorney. While attending these

meetings I was able to see the different professionals who collaborate with psychologists in order to make their services more effective.

Finally, my applied practicum experience was absolutely INSPIRING. I have gained so much insight and appreciation for the field. This experience has reinforced my desire to pursue a career in psychology and has provided me with some valuable resources and contacts for my pursuit. I can sincerely say that I learned more in one year at my practicum site than I did in three years of reading psychology textbooks. This was a fabulous experience and I would *highly* recommend it...practicum anyone???

My Research Practicum Experience

Sandy Cohen

This semester I finally got involved in a research practicum, but I can already tell that I am learning a lot, and not just out of a textbook: I get the opportunity to actually put what I've learned into action and actually *see* how it works. I am now working on the Gambling Research Project, for which Dr. Emshoff is the principal investigator. This project is seeking data on the gambling practices of Georgia residents, particularly the rates of compulsive gambling, and the different forms of treatment available for individuals with gambling problems.

After a few weeks of being involved in my practicum work, I am very excited about being a part of innovative research that can make an important contribution to the advancement of knowledge and treatment in the field of pathological gambling. As part of the Gambling Project, I have been given the

opportunity to get valuable exposure to SPSS, conduct telephone interviews for data collection, and get involved with the literature review that the graduate students are performing.

All of this exposure has helped me to better understand what research in psychology is really like, and how to apply everything I learned in Research Methods. I truly believe that this opportunity has been a great head start to the research training that I will be receiving over the next few years in graduate school, and will enable me to move forward with more confidence and less confusion.

All in all, my practicum work has proved to be an important experience in better comprehending how psychological research works. I would recommend that any psychology major take a look into this awesome opportunity and try something a little different, because first-hand experience can't be taught in a classroom.

New Features to Undergraduate Psychology Advisement

Have you ever wanted to know what it takes to get into graduate school? What you can do with a psychology degree if you *don't want* to go to graduate school? Or just what other opportunities there are in the psychology department? If you answered yes to any of these questions, plan to attend a group advising session!

The Department of Psychology is working on new methods of providing vital information to psychology majors. Currently, advisement is utilized primarily to monitor class scheduling

and ensure a timely graduation, and although this aspect of advising is essential, additional information beneficial to all current and future psychology majors is available. In an effort to make such information widely known and accessible, the psychology advisement department is working in multiple directions to better inform our students. A revamped WebCT page with user-friendly links, , and workshops covering topics such as *Making the Most of your Major*, *Thinking About/Applying to Graduate School*, and *Careers for Psychology Majors* are currently in the works.

In addition, expect the announcement of the scheduled premiers for the two remaining workshops in the very near future. These workshops will be routinely presented twice each semester beginning in Fall 2007.

The *Making the Most of your Major* workshop will introduce various programs available for psychology majors and emphasize the benefits of getting involved outside the classroom. The *Thinking About/Applying to Graduate School* workshop will highlight things to think about when deciding to go to graduate school, discuss various graduate programs offered, and outline the step-by-step process of submitting a competitive graduate school application. .

These group sessions will not replace individual advisement. Advisors will still be available, and upper level students are encouraged to make an appointment to review academic evaluations (PACE forms) and plan for upcoming semesters.

Being a busy student, it is sometimes difficult to know where to seek the answers to all your questions regarding your academic career. Sometimes, it is even harder to know what questions to ask if you are unaware of all the opportunities available to you. Therefore, the undergraduate advisors will be working to make sure that the information students need gets to them. It is our ultimate goal to ensure that students experiences at Georgia State and thereafter reach their full potential.

The advisement revamping project, supporting retention, progression and graduation, is being supported by a grant from the Provost's Office. Dr. Sarah Cook, director of undergraduate studies, is heading up the project with the support of Dr. Leslie Jackson, director of the undergraduate practicum program, Tenagne Mulugeta, undergraduate advisor, and graduate students Chantal Poister, Beth Anthony and Leslie Riddick.

College of Education Psychology and Psychology-Related Programs

Brittany VanValkenburgh

If you have declared a Psychology Major, especially if you plan on pursuing graduate school and your primary interest may not be conducting research, you need to know that the Georgia State College of Education offers several psychology graduate degree programs as well as a few psychology-related undergraduate degree programs. They offer a M.Ed. (Master of Education) in areas such as Behavioral and Learning Disabilities, School Counseling, and School Psychology. They also offer MS

(Master of Science) in the following: Educational Psychology, Professional Counseling, and Rehabilitation Counseling. Ph.D Programs include: Counseling Psychology, Education of Students with Exceptionalities, Educational Psychology, and School Psychology. In addition, they offer a Master and Bachelor's degree in Social Work.

More information can be found on the web: <http://education.gsu.edu>

What is a Psy.D, and how does it differ from a Ph.D?

Brittany VanValkenburgh

If you are thinking about graduate school in psychology, we want you to know about all of your options! Over the past several decades, the Psy.D, or Doctor of Psychology has become an increasingly popular and practical higher degree in the field of Psychology. The major difference between the Psy.D and the Ph.D is that the Psy.D focuses more on the practical, clinical work and the Ph.D focuses more on research. Both programs are highly competitive, involve a rigorous admission process, and take about 4-7 years of full-time study to complete. Some caveats of the Psy.D include:

1. You must be sure to find out if the program is accredited by the American Psychological Association, and
2. The kind of money offered by Psy.D programs through stipends and tuition waivers is, on average, less than that offered by Ph.D programs because often the students' work is not directly connected to a faculty member's ongoing research. However, it is

also important to note that this is not a rule, and Psy.D programs are trying to make up for this by offering funding through other means.

PURC 2007

Sandy Cohen

Ever find yourself wondering how it is that psychologists perform groundbreaking research that can truly change lives and shape policy? Heads Up! To all those students studying (or just interested in) the field of psychology: PURC, the *now bi-annual* Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference at Georgia State University, hosted by our chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honors Society in Psychology, provides you with an excellent opportunity to exhibit your efforts in and contributions to developing a new wave of research.

This spring's conference, "Exploring the Developing Mind," was held on Friday, March 30th, at the Rialto Center for the Performing Arts. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Ralph Radach from Florida State University, who gave us a fascinating presentation on links his research has found between visual perception, attention, and eye movement control (for more information on Dr. Radach, you may visit <http://www.psy.fsu.edu/faculty/radach.d.p.html>). Presenters enjoyed a lovely catered lunch, made even more delicious by the fact that it was free! Everyone (including myself) had a great time learning about the fascinating research being undertaken by our peers, and enjoyed participating in the recognition

of and appreciation for the efforts of such bright young scientists.

On top of being an extremely informative event full of fellowship and food, PURC is an academic and professional event with several missions:

1. To provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of original research conducted by undergraduates
2. To introduce undergraduates to the wide range of professional opportunities and resources available to someone with one or more degrees in psychology
3. To familiarize undergraduates with the graduate school application process and give them insight into the graduate school experience, and
4. To connect undergraduates with psychology professionals and aid them in the development of their professional and academic networks.

With all of the great resources available at PURC from which you can learn, including the experiences and advice of numerous psychology professionals and the opportunity to network with faculty and students from our own psychology department, it's a great time to come and interact with and become involved in the GSU psychology community. PURC serves as a great forum for asking some of the questions that are surely swimming around in the minds of budding psychology students about career positions, graduate school, and how to best prepare oneself for what lies ahead. Of course, we can't forget that PURC gives students and faculty the opportunity to learn about the

fascinating research projects on which your fellow students are working. This event is truly an invaluable fountain of knowledge and experience. Did I mention it's free?

So please join us in the Fall 2007 semester for another truly unique learning experience (that is actually fun), as we celebrate the research accomplishments of undergraduates from all across the Atlanta area. Who knows, maybe PURC will inspire you get involved in your future by taking an active role now, and next year you will be the presenter that blows us all away. Come and take advantage of this special opportunity, because you can only come away wiser and better prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. Feel free to encourage your classmates and friends to join you, as attendance is open to the general public, and maybe make a party out of it. Keep a watch out for the online registration and project proposal forms, and we'll see you in the fall.

Continuous Recruitment for the National Honors Society in Psychology

Jarrod Peterson

The Georgia State chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honors Society in Psychology, is looking for new members interested in advancing their knowledge in the field of psychology and ready to make connections for future success. If you're a psychology major interested in joining Psi Chi, check to make sure you meet the following requirements:

1. Completion of 3 semesters or 5 quarters of college courses

2. Completion of 9 semester hours or 14 quarter hours of psychology courses
3. Ranking in the top 35% of your class in general scholarship
4. Minimum GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in psychology and general courses

Benefits of membership in Psi Chi are numerous and far-reaching. These include:

- Membership certificate and membership card.
- Valuable references for your résumé.
- The experience gained by working with Psi Chi is excellent for building up your curriculum vitae.
- Psi Chi is a springboard for professional networking and advancement. Opportunities are made available to the members for promoting their research, for national and international recognition, for contacts and interaction with the leaders in their field, and to meet Psi Chi members of other chapters who will also be future leaders.

In addition, the United States government recognizes membership in Psi Chi as meeting one of the requirements for entrance at the GS-7 level in Federal service.

If you meet these requirements and are interested in obtaining some of the benefits involved with membership in Psi Chi, stop by the front desk on the 11th Floor of the Urban Life Building to pick up an application today.

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Psi Chi
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