Psi Chi Newsletter 2019

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The annual publication of the UW-Madison Chapter of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology
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Dear readers,

On behalf of the UW-Madison Chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology, I am honored and excited to share the sixth annual publication of our chapter’s newsletter. This newsletter is a product of months of hard work and dedication on the part of the committee members. Featured in this newsletter are interviews with faculty members, graduate students, and psychology professionals. These individuals provide valuable advice to undergraduate students and insight into the number of vocations available to psychology majors. Also included in the newsletter are articles written by the committee members about the various opportunities available to students and advice on how to take advantage of these opportunities. A large theme that runs through most of these works is that of advice. We want to provide a resource to psychology majors that touches on topics many students often wonder about and offer resources and insight, giving students the opportunity to make the most of their education.

On, Wisconsin!

Annika R. Hendrickson

Newsletter Chair of Psi Chi, UW-Madison Chapter

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Newsletter Committee Members who dedicated their time to contribute to this year’s publication. Your commitment to providing valuable advice and information to your fellow students, and your continuous engagement demonstrates your personal excellence. Special thanks to Professor Brad Postle, Professor James Li, and graduate student Desia Bacon for sharing your experiences and your contributions to the university. We would also like to thank psychology professional and UW-Madison alumna Amy Baker for sharing your wisdom and advice. Lastly, we would like to thank Valerie Johnson and Maria Hartwig for your unending support and guidance throughout the newsletter process.
Background Information:
I was born in Madison, WI, but when I was 4 years old, my family moved to New York so I grew up outside of Ithaca. I went to undergrad at Cornell University and majored in Government with a specialty in International Relations.

Where did you go to grad school?
I went to MIT for graduate school to pursue a Ph.D. in Neuroscience.

What experiences and interests led you to your current field of work?
I’d spent all of this time in college reading about macroeconomics and nations and states interacting, and I became increasingly convinced that it was the decisions of just one person or a small number of people that had a lot of influence on the history of international relations. Specifically, what makes the French person who’s in charge make the decisions that he/she does? That’s why I thought that I should take a cognitive psychology class in my spring semester of my senior year to give me some insight into that.

Is there anyone in your life who was particularly influential in leading you to your current field of work?
I had a really good friend after college who developed bipolar disorder and I watched it happen in real time. I would visit her in the locked ward of the psychiatric hospital, and this experience started raising some philosophical questions. If my friend had lost a foot in a lawn mowing accident, she’d still be the same person despite being angry that she’d lost a foot. However, here she had this really subtle, almost immeasurable change in something physical or chemical or electrical within her brain that basically changed who she was. If you lose a limb or a huge part of your body, you’re still the same person, but she was a different person. So that line of thought really had a big impact on what I found interesting and worth spending time on.
Can you describe your position at UW-Madison?
I’ve been a Psychology Professor since 2000. I chose to work at UW-Madison, because the people here and the resources and the quality of life were all superior to the other job opportunities that I had. UW-Madison was my first job as an independent scientist where it was my lab and I wasn’t training under someone else. This is the one job I’ve had, which I’d say is not the case for maybe 30-50% of my colleagues. In my field, it’s not at all uncommon to move around at some point, but that just hasn’t happened for me. I now also have a full academic appointment in the Department of Psychiatry, so a big part of my lab is physically based in that department.

What are your favorite parts about this position?
It’s working with these big ideas, it’s pursuing really exciting, truly cutting-edge ideas about how the brain works. I just had a colleague come in from across the hall, because I had asked her a statistical question and we ended up burning an hour talking about the next three or four experiments we could do based on this one thing we’re doing in my lab right now. That curiosity and excitement never goes away. Just today, we had our weekly lab meeting, which we run as a journal club where we talk about a paper in the field, and our post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, and undergrads all kick around ideas and argue about different points. My favorite part about my position is that intellectually intimate interaction with people at different stages of their educational and professional development: I find it really rewarding.

What are you currently researching? Why did you choose to pursue this field of research?
We’re interested in working memory, which is the information you hold in mind to help guide your behavior in the here and now. It’s different from long-term memory in the sense that, if I gave you a phone number and you went into the stairwell to call, those seven digits that you’re remembering from here to there are probably never going to be relevant to you again, but in order to be successful in life, you have to successfully remember little snippets of information hundreds of times every day. Also, how you perform on simple tasks of working memory will predict really important outcome measures for how successful you are in life. It predicts how you’ll do on standardized tests, what your lifetime earning potential is, personality traits, things like that. On the other hand, it’s associated with what it feels like to be a conscious, sentient human, because while you’re walking out into the hallway to dial that phone number, what are the contents of your consciousness? So, it’s a way of studying something that’s both very practical and very deep.
and fundamental to the human condition. Generally, we’re trying to understand how the brain represents, transforms, retrieves and forgets information based on the circumstances you’re in. Also, we’re looking at the human brain, so we like to say we’re studying the awake, behaving college student, because we do brain imaging and brain stimulation studies in neurologically healthy young adults.

**What are your plans for the future with regards to this research?**

To keep on keeping on! I find it exciting that I don’t know what I’ll be doing next year. My graduate mentor once said that a research grant is not a contract. What she meant by that is that you write a proposal, and a jury of your peers evaluates it and decides if the ideas are interesting and significant and accomplishable, but neither you nor that jury can know what discoveries are going to be made in the next 5 years. So, if two years down the road it turns out there’s something completely unexpected that you or somebody else discovered, that means that going in a different route is actually the most interesting and potentially productive route to go in. You shouldn’t feel tied to the fact that back when I wrote this grant I said I would do X, Y, Z, because now X, Y, Z might be less important. That’s part of what gets me out of bed every morning. It’s something new every day.

**Do you have any advice for undergraduates?**

Don’t take no reply as an answer. Professors are busy just like you are, always rebalancing and taking on new challenges and commitments, so don’t let the fact that the person you think you want to work with is busy discourage you. And if you genuinely can’t get in to their lab because there’s no room, then think about other people in their department. Madison is such a rich environment. For example, my Ph.D. is in neuroscience, so I’m really more of a neuroscientist than a psychologist. There’s over 100 neuroscientists all over campus, some in psychiatry, some in the Department of Neuroscience, some in integrated biology. So, the resources are practically unlimited for any one individual. Therefore, if you can’t work with Professor X, chances are about 3 or 4 other individuals are doing something similar. Sometimes, you have to take no for an answer, but don’t take no reply as an answer.
An Interview with Professor James Li

By Lauren Silber

James Li’s Educational Background:
I’m originally from Los Angeles, California and went to Johns Hopkins for my undergrad, and there I studied Psychology and Brain Sciences and minored in Entrepreneurship. Next, I went to UCLA to pursue my PhD in Clinical Psychology. I also specialized in Quantitative Psychology.

What non-psychology courses during college did you find helpful later in life?
During my undergrad, I took courses toward my minor in entrepreneurship, and I find those business courses to be extremely helpful in running a lab, because I’m essentially a business owner -- I have budgets, projections, and a staff of 10-15 undergrads and a full-time staff member. When you become a professor there is no training in how to manage a lab. Nobody teaches you! What if I became a therapist and went into private practice -- how would I know how to run that business?

Additionally, I took a criminal justice class that had an internship component. I’d sit in on court cases in Baltimore, taking notes on random cases. Most cases involved African American youth, and I saw a startling pattern: the children on trial almost always had mental health problems. I realized how common mental health problems were among this population and how they longitudinally impacted the child and their family. I wanted to help these children and their families, so I began working with Dr. Robert Gray, coding his case files of kids with learning disabilities and behavioral problems using SPSS. Eventually, I went on to present on the gender differences in neuropsychological profiles for kids with ADHD at various conferences. Then, I ended up working on my honors thesis with Dr. Mark Mahone’s lab that studied neurological processing speed for kids with ADHD. I discovered that participants with ADHD had a more variable processing speed than those without ADHD, and I went on to write about this experience for my grad school application!

What is your favorite part of your role as a researcher/professor?
Intellectual freedom to explore my interests. By nature, most of us professors are not rule followers. We tend to be people who want to create the rules. The point of science is discovery. Whatever current laws, theories, or rules are out there -- our objectives are to prove or disprove them. Right now, we don’t have many theories on what causes child psychopathology so that’s my interest. We have laws of gravity but not laws of ADHD. You can’t simply study causes, you need to look into nature and nurture and study...
people as they develop rather than studying adults in hindsight.

**Social and Behavioral Development Lab**

We study the longitudinal trajectories of 5-year-olds just as they start school and are first exposed to environments and peers outside the home. Now that our participants from 2016 are 8-years-old, we’re interested in why some kids don’t grow out of behavioral problems, while most kids do -- what’s the underlying difference between groups?

I’m also very interested in the nature of comorbidity. Perhaps, it’s not simply a flaw in the criteria of the DSM-5, but rather a normal phenomenon. For example, people who are depressed may struggle with anxiety or insomnia, too. Additionally, we look at molecules, behavior, and other units of analysis in a genome-wide study to fully understand the scope of a mental illnesses like ADHD.

**Do you have any advice for undergraduates interested in clinical psychology?**

Get involved in research! The more you appreciate the scientific process, the better you’ll be as a clinician. Clinical psychology is beyond working with people: it’s also understanding them, and for you to be able to do that, you need a scientific mind. Also, take more statistics classes, because it’s the language of the future, and we need people to analyze that data!

**What’s the future of the field of psychology in your opinion?**

The “big data revolution” is the future. Amazon, Google, Apple, and Netflix collect data on users, but “big data” goes far beyond marketing. We can now be confident that our findings are true because we have access to a sample so large that it includes 5 million Americans!

Also, genetics are the present and future. The National Institute of Health wants to systematically acquire everyone’s DNA swabs. Rather than giving your DNA to ancestry.com, the government can use it for research and send you a report for free. In fact, researchers may even pay you for your DNA. In psychology, you rarely have measures like this that have no error, so it’s critical that we use this methodology.

**How can taking Child Psychopathology 510 help students prepare for their future endeavors outside the classroom?**

You don’t have to be interested in child psychopathology to get something out of my class. You’ll learn critical thinking skills and how to appreciate multiple perspectives when evaluating a new concept. For example, you’ll learn to look at the details of the research rather than glance at a headline. After all, the fake part of fake news resides in its headlines. Students can universally apply what they learn in this class, and I assure you that what I taught my students in 2015 is different than what I will teach you in 2019, because the field changes every year! I like to keep education contemporary, and if you took my class already, it’s now on you to follow up with the latest research findings: learning should not stop at the end of a semester.
Where are you from? Where did you go to undergrad and what did you get a degree in?

I am from Callahan, Florida. It’s a really tiny town and it’s close to the Florida-Georgia border. The closest city anyone would know would be Jacksonville.

I did my undergrad at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida. I got my B.S. in Psychology and I minored in Cognitive Science and Leadership Studies.

Why did you choose UW-Madison for graduate school?

When you’re looking for graduate schools, it’s really important to make sure you feel comfortable and supported wherever you go because you’re going to be spending a lot of time there. You don’t want it to just be your job, you want to feel like you can have a sense of community. Of all the places I applied to and got interviews at, UW-Madison felt like the best fit. I really liked the people. The other graduate students seemed like they were happy and enjoyed their work here. I was excited to work with Jenny Saffran, and I really loved the work that she’d been producing since she was a graduate student.

What was the hardest part of transitioning from undergrad to graduate school?

For me the hardest part was moving so far away from my family. I grew up in Florida, I did my undergrad just a few hours away from home, and then I moved to the sunny Midwest for graduate school. So that was probably the hardest part, moving away from that little community that I had cultivated for so many years, and starting over in a new place. That’s why it’s so important when you’re interviewing to make sure that you can find and build that sense of community. Because if I didn’t have that, I probably wouldn’t have stuck it out.

Can you describe your current research interests?

I’m particularly interested in how people acquire language and what can help or hinder that language acquisition. I’m also really interested in social knowledge, so how people learn about social categories and how they use that social knowledge. I’m working on a study that’s almost complete that is looking at whether or not infants use a speaker voice as a cue. So if they hear a man or woman’s voice, will they look towards a gendered object before they hear that object being asked for, simply because the speaker is male or female. Funnily enough, we know that adults use these sorts of cues when they’re communicating with other people, so I wanted to know if infants were using it that early on in their development of language and category knowledge. And these are...
22-24 month olds, so it’s pretty early on. We’re excited to see what we find!

**What are your plans for your future in developmental psychology?**

First, I need to dissertate, and get my PhD. In an ideal world, I will become a professor. I really love the work that I do, and I really like teaching other people about it. So that would be the ideal situation for me.

**Do you have any advice for undergrads applying to graduate school?**

Start early and get organized. There are a lot of deadlines when applying to graduate school and they can creep up on you. I recommend not waiting until you’re a senior to study and take the GRE. That’s going to be a lot of stress on top of trying to get together all of your application materials, asking professors for letters of recommendation, and filling out the applications for all the different schools. I really recommend, if you’re about to go into your junior year, read academic articles and read the Wall Street Journal. They use a lot of words that you’re going to see on the GRE. And take it early, so that if you don’t like your score, you have time to go back and take it again.

As far as staying organized, figure out where you’re interested in and figure out who you’re interested in working with. That’s the big thing about psychology programs – you’re not just going to be at that school for their program, you’re going to work with a specific advisor in their lab. So you want to be familiar with their work.

I recommend making an excel document that lists out your schools, the due dates of the materials, whether or not they require you to submit your GRE scores, how many letters of recommendation they require, if their application has extra supplemental materials you need to submit. All of that good stuff. It never hurts to reach out to faculty you’re interested in working with ahead of time, just to see if they’re even accepting students. You don’t want to apply to a school if there’s one specific person you want to work with and it turns out they’re going to be on sabbatical that year.

**Do you have any advice for undergrads interested in your field of study?**

Talk to people. There are lots of labs here at the university that you can get involved in. You want to make sure that you’re planning a semester ahead of time, reaching out to the lab manager, seeing if they’re going to have positions available, and what you need to do to submit that application. The interviews are going to happen the semester before you begin working in the lab, so if you wait until the semester of, you might be applying too late.

There are also opportunities at other institutions. There are summer research opportunities that you can get involved in. If you Google “summer research psychology” a bunch will come up. Talk to your advisor, talk to the professors that you have. They have colleagues all over that are always looking for summer research assistants. And most of these are paid opportunities to go live in another place over the summer and do research and get that experience.
Research Opportunities in Psychology

By Carlie Servais

Figuring out how to get involved in research at the undergraduate level can be a daunting task. When should you start? Where should you look? How do you figure out what kind of research you want to be involved in? It can seem a bit overwhelming, but there are plenty of people in the same position as you. My advice is to start exploring which kind of research you’re interested in as early as possible. It’s good to have a starting point for your search, and what better starting point than the actual subject matter you’re interested in?

Psychology is such a huge field, it seems almost impossible to narrow it down in order to find a research lab you want to get involved in. Lucky for you, there’s the internet. Take a day or two and look up different research fields in psychology, see if any of them interest you, and then go over to UW-Madison’s Department of Psychology page and see if any of the research fields our professors focus on match what you’re interested in. If you click on the dropdown arrow it will show you a list of the “big picture” fields professors and researchers are focusing on. If you click on one of these field headings, it will bring you to an overview as well as a list of those professors and researchers in the specific field. Each individual has a brief description of what their lab does and a link attached to their name which usually brings you to their website. Once you’re here you can typically find their email or contact information on who you should get in touch with in order to express interest in joining their lab. Always make sure that you’re emailing the correct person and that you’re using the correct titles.

Additionally, it’s probably a good idea to make a list of the labs or professors you want to work in/with. There are a lot of undergraduates going for a few spots, so you might not get into the exact lab you want. It looks really good to professors and researchers if you’ve read up on their current and past research. Just Google their name and get to reading!

Also, be sure to email early, well before the semester starts; aim for March/April for fall semester positions and October/November for spring positions. These people have a lot going on, they likely won’t consider you if you’re emailing at the last second. Don’t get discouraged if you feel as though you’re emailing countless professors and no one is
getting back to you, again, they’re typically very busy, and normally they’ll just forward you off to hiring staff or lab managers. Just be patient and expect to go pretty far down your list before getting a response. Express interest in a specific aspect of what their research is about and explain very briefly why that aspect is of interest to you. They don’t want to be reading narratives, but most of the time they want to know that you have some sort of connection to and investment in the research. Once the whole emailing debacle is over, expect to go in for some sort of interview. Practice with a family member or friend and don’t over think it! Remember, they’re just people, and most of the time the interview is just to get a sense of who you are and what you’re about. Be yourself, but still be professional, this is technically a job.

Another way to find interesting research opportunities is right in front of you, literally. It’s your professors and TA’s! If you have a class with someone you really love and you want to know more about what they do, ask them about it after class. Most of the time professors love when students want to know more about their personal research. And, if you go to office hours you have an even greater chance of getting your foot in the door of their lab. Once you build up a bond with them, or even if you don’t, go ahead and ask them if there’s any application you need to fill out in order to be a part of their research team. Even if they say no, you still have them as a connection and a resource to ask about alternative research opportunities.

One thing to keep in mind is whether or not you want to stay with a certain lab for multiple years or just for the (typically) required two semesters. I’ve heard opinions on both, some say that graduate schools like to see consistency and the ability to stay with one group for a long period of time. But then again, I’ve also heard that graduate schools may see switching labs as an opportunity to gain new and different research experience. Ultimately, it’s up to you whether or not you want to stay with the lab you start out with. If you’re truly concerned about it, I would speak to your lab manager or to an advisor about what they think with regards to continuing education. Most lab managers will tell you to stick with the lab you’re in as it allows you to gain more experience and move up in the ranks, which looks very good on a resume.

Finally, don’t get discouraged if you get rejected or if you don’t get a response. There are a ton of students all applying for the same position. Just remember to email early, get your name out there, and express your interest. Additionally, when you do get asked to come in for an interview, remember to be professional. Keep in mind you may also have to agree to working some not-so-great hours to start off, but don’t worry, once you’ve been working with the lab for a while, they typically let you switch up your hours. All in all, email often, be patient, and get excited! Research at UW-Madison is such an exciting opportunity, so get your name out there and get ready to start gaining absolutely invaluable experience.
Students from abroad
Many international students come to UW-Madison to study. In the Department of Psychology alone, there are 111 undergraduate international students carrying F-1 visas, they account for about 10 percent of the undergraduate population here in the department. About 70 percent of them are from China. The next largest groups are from Malaysia and Korea respectively. Given the large presence of international students in the psychology department, it is essential to address the special needs of these students and ease transition for them.

Breaking the isolation barrier:
Leaving home and traveling halfway across the world to attend college in an unfamiliar culture can be an uncomfortable and nerve-racking experience. According to a report from the Journal of International Studies, most international students said that cultural adjustment, language proficiency and managing expectations from their families and others in their home countries are the most challenging aspects of being an international student.

Because culture adjustment can be one of the major obstacles that international students face when arriving in the U.S., it is essential to establish a sense of community by joining academic clubs, overcoming language barrier, and attending events to make the transition easier.

Being involved in the community by joining student organizations is another great way for international students to get through the culture shock and prepare for cultural adjustment. In addition to Psychology Club and Psi Chi which students are encouraged to join, there are other learning organizations specific to international students. A group of Chinese psychology students started an academic club called Chinese Psychologos last year, aiming to provide opportunities for Mandarin speaking students to connect with a network of students and professionals with a diverse cultural background. They hosted a variety of successful events including a guest lecture last fall with Professor Karl Rosengren. They also organized a graduate panel, where students were able to connect with individuals currently working in areas that could potentially be future career paths for current undergraduates. Further, they translated lab resource
information to mandarin to better inform research opportunities to Chinese students. Joining one or more clubs could help you make friends and create a social network, which can alleviate stress, ease homesickness, and allow for balance in your life.

Strong English skills are crucial for academic success in the U.S. Practicing conversational English through the Conversational English (CE) program held by Greater University Tutoring Services is great way for international students to brush up on their language skills. CE program matches international students and affiliates eager to improve their English skills with volunteer students for conversation-based tutoring. Students meet in teams on a weekly basis and practice conversational English with peers. Receiving advice on writing assignments through the Writing Center or attending their workshop could also be a good way to strengthen academic writing. Check the following pathway to get more information about their resources:

http://www.guts.wisc.edu/conversationalenglish.html; https://writing.wisc.edu/workshops/undergraduates/

For a smooth transition, upcoming and transfer international students are always welcome to attend events held by International Students Services (ISS), Transfer Transition Program and Department of Psychology. Throughout the semester, they plan events to adjust to academic, social and cultural life at UW-Madison. More information about their events can be found here: https://iss.wisc.edu/events/; https://transfer.wisc.edu/home/enrolled-students/#transfer-events; https://psych.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/events/

The learning style of an American college course is often unfamiliar to international students. Luckily, UW-Madison provides a variety of advising resources for students with learning difficulties. It is a great opportunity for international students to improve their study skills and work with American peers to get a better grade. All majors are welcome: https://advising.wisc.edu/learning-resources-list

**U.S. Jobs for International Students**

Studying psychology opens up a whole world of career options. Career Exploration Center (CEC) has amazing advising service, career assessment tools, and career exploration workshops to discuss strategies and help international students to familiarize themselves with the U.S. labor system. It is a good starting point for career exploration in
the U.S. and you can get more information about them here: [https://cec.ccas.wisc.edu/career-library/](https://cec.ccas.wisc.edu/career-library/)

As an international student, you may have unique concerns when it comes to internship or job searches in the U.S. Therefore, it is beneficial for international students to reach out to career services early in their academic careers in the U.S. to better prepare for employment in the United States. Students from the College of L&S could go to SucessWorks for career advice. SuccessWorks organizes their career advisors by industry such that undergraduate psychology students could choose different careers in different areas and meet with advisors that could help them recognize their unique potential and pursue careers that fit their interests. Career advisors can help international students write US style resume and get prepared for US style interviews. Use the following pathway to get more information about SuccessWorks: [https://careers.ls.wisc.edu/international-students/](https://careers.ls.wisc.edu/international-students/)

**Walkout the visa maze**

International students need an accurate and complete understanding of visa regulations, work authorization options, and paperwork deadlines in order to facilitate an effective exploration of career possibilities and set realistic career goals. ISS fully appreciate the systemic obstacles that international students face along their career development paths, and, therefore, offers them online and in-person workshops about Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT). More information about employment for F-1 students can be found here: [https://iss.wisc.edu/employment/f1-employment/](https://iss.wisc.edu/employment/f1-employment/)

Living and learning in a foreign culture can seem daunting. However, being proactive in thinking about what’s to come and using the resources available to you will help make your chosen college feel like home and turn study abroad into your greatest asset in your life. Best of luck in your degree journey!
Why should I consider studying abroad?

Studying abroad is a unique opportunity to learn while exploring a new country. It challenges you to leave your comfort zone and apply what you are learning in the classroom in new contexts. It is also a fun way to explore new interests you may not have the opportunity to pursue in Madison.

Will I be behind in my classes if I go abroad?

If you plan ahead, it is easy to take classes that count toward your major and help you make progress toward your degree! Most study abroad programs offered at UW-Madison offer the opportunity to take classes abroad for UW credit instead of only receiving transfer credit.

Each program on the study abroad website (studyabroad.wisc.edu) lists which UW courses the program offers. Most programs offer some psychology classes. All programs offer classes that can be counted toward Letters and Science breadth requirements. Students have the most success if they plan ahead and save courses that they know they are able to take abroad. Keep in mind that it is okay to take classes that are interesting but do not count towards your major such as a cooking or service learning course!

What campus resources are there to reference?

A great place to start is the study abroad website (studyabroad.wisc.edu). This lists programs and details finances, language requirements, timelines, and course offerings. Once you have an idea of which program(s) you are most interested in, you can book an appointment with the Study Abroad Resource Center in the Red Gym. The advisors there can help you plan specific details of your specific experience. Your academic advisor and the Financial Aid Office are also both great resources.
Annika Hendrickson

Year: Junior  
Major/Certificate: Majoring in Psychology & Certificate in Art History  
Lab Affiliation: Infant Learning Lab  
Career Goals: I plan to go to graduate school for Developmental Psychology and hope to one day work at a university pursuing research and teaching.  
Favorite thing about Psi Chi: I enjoy the leadership opportunities Psi Chi has given me. If you are looking for an opportunity to strengthen your leadership skills, I encourage you to apply for the Executive Board!  
Advice for undergrads: Explore your interests beyond Psychology. Some of the most intriguing and thought-provoking courses I’ve taken during undergrad have been on topics other than Psychology. Take control and have fun with your education!

Rosemary Rogers

Year: Senior  
Majors: Genetics and Psychology  
Lab Affiliation: Grinbalt Lab (Studying neurogenetics in zebrafish)  
Career Goals: Genetic Counseling  
Favorite Thing about Psi Chi: Meeting new people with similar interests to me!  
Advice for Undergrads: Plan your classes out ahead and meet with your advisor at least once a semester. Take time to enjoy yourself and explore your interests.
Carlie Servais

**Year:** Junior  
**Majors:** Psychology and Neurobiology  
**Lab affiliation:** Kalin lab on the Know Your Emotions and ABLE studies & Mendota Mental Health Institute in the Sexually Violent Persons research unit  
**Career goals:** I hope to one day become a neuropsychologist and focus on finding alternative treatment methods for mental illness. Specifically, I would like to work in prison systems and with populations like the one at MMHI.  
**Favorite thing about Psi Chi:** My favorite thing is the ability to meet faculty and students within the psychology department.  
**Advice for undergrads:** Get involved in research as early as possible, and don’t be afraid to talk to professors in person, they love to talk about their research with interested, motivated students.

Lauren Silber

**Year:** Senior  
**Majors:** Psychology and Human Development & Family Studies  
**Lab affiliation:** Infant Learning Lab  
**Career Goals:** Aspiring School Psychologist  
**Favorite thing about Psi Chi:** Brown Bags  
**Advice for undergrads:** Find a cause you care about – be it violence-prevention, advocating for children with disabilities or creating public health breakthroughs – and run with it. You’re here on this campus for 4 years and there’s so many resources, research grants, and great minds you can bring together and create change. This is the best time (when you have university affiliation and inspiring professors and professionals available to help you) for you to follow your passions and make a difference in society! That’s the Wisconsin Idea.

Xinjie Lu

**Year:** Senior  
**Majors:** Psychology and Economics  
**Lab Affiliation:** Culture and Cognition Lab, Child Emotion Lab  
**Career goals:** Become a consultant  
**Favorite thing about Psi Chi and UW-Madison:** Psi Chi has offered an opportunity to network with other international students and learn new perspectives. Tremendous undergraduate research opportunities allowed me to explore my interests and learn from fantastic scholars.  
**Advice for undergrads:** Explore the field of research you are really interested in and talk with your professor about any questions or ideas you have about it.
Why did you choose to attend UW-Madison for your undergraduate studies?
I chose UW-Madison because as early as a junior in high school, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in psychology. At the time, I was not sure what exactly I wanted to do with psychology, but I knew that UW-Madison has many opportunities for students to participate in research and learn about the field. I am also originally from Wisconsin, so I wanted to stay close to home while also having the opportunity to go to a large school.

What was your undergraduate major and what led to your interest in that topic?
My undergraduate major was in Psychology. I declared my major during my second semester at UW-Madison. What sparked my initial interest in psychology was taking AP psychology in high school. I found every unit so interesting, and looked forward to class every day. In addition, I remember one of the school counselors came to speak to my health class about her work in a prison as a counselor. I was always a quiet student, but I remember on that day I spoke up several times to ask her questions about her work. Both of these events helped me realize that psychology was an area I wanted to explore in undergrad.

You were a member of Psi Chi during undergrad. Do you have any tips/advice for undergrads currently in Psi Chi?
I have very fond memories of Psi Chi, because I met many psychology majors as a member. I think my best advice would be to take advantage of all of its great opportunities. I would recommend going to as many brown bags as you can. I remember one of the brown bags I attended was on school psychology which I found
very helpful. I would also recommend applying for a leadership position. At the time I did not apply, but I do regret having the opportunity.

Where did you attend graduate school, and why?
I attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin – Stout in Menomonie, WI. At first, it was a huge adjustment for me as UW-Stout is a much smaller school. I chose UW-Stout because I wanted to pursue an educational specialist (Ed.S.) degree in school psychology and at the time, UW-Madison did not offer that specific program. In addition, I felt very comfortable and welcomed at UW-Stout. The graduate students and professors were helpful in answering my questions and they seemed to be a close-knit group. UW-Stout also has an emphasis on experiential learning, and throughout my graduate career, I have had ample opportunities to apply my acquired skills hands-on. Lastly, the location was another important factor for me. I wanted to be close to Minneapolis for my practicum and internship placements, so I felt that UW-Stout was the perfect fit for me.

How did you decide on a career in School Psychology?
I knew I wanted to work with children, and I was also interested in working in the schools. For a while, I went back and forth between pursuing a career in school counseling versus school psychology. I think what finally settled my decision was the idea that I could work with children in special education. Since early high school, I have been involved in Special Olympics as a swim coach. Working with individuals with disabilities has always been a passion of mine, so the idea that I could work closely with supporting these students in the schools only confirmed my decision.

Advice for undergrads thinking about going into School Psychology?
My advice for those who are interested in school psychology is to make connections. I highly recommend shadowing a School Psychologist, reaching out to graduate programs and students in those programs, and connecting with your peers who are also interested in school psychology. I would also recommend taking Rehab Psych 300. This class opened my eyes to special education and I really enjoyed the service component of the class. Lastly, I would recommend getting involved with volunteer opportunities and work experiences that include working with children. I volunteered in the schools through Badger Volunteers and worked in a childcare setting during undergrad. I remember at each of my graduate school interviews they would ask about experiences working with children and individuals with disabilities, so I would highly recommend continuing to build your experience in these areas. Plus, they are so fun!
Please describe your current position as a School Psychology intern.
I am currently in my internship year, which is the third year of my graduate program. As an intern I work full time as a School Psychologist within a large school district in Minnesota. This is also a paid position. I currently work four days a week at a middle school, and one day a week at a high school. At both of these sites, I am primarily involved in special education evaluations, but I also am involved in consultation and collaboration with staff and parents, counseling, and behavior and academic intervention implementation. I am part of teams within my buildings that problem-solve and support students who are struggling both academically and behaviorally. I am also part of an emergency team that involves response to crises. I think it is important to highlight that the role of a School Psychologist can look very different based on the state and/or district but we all serve to support students and teachers.

What are your plans for your future in School Psychology?
My plan is to hopefully continue working in the district I am in now. I hope to also continue to seek professional development opportunities. As I have more years under my belt, I want to continue to stay involved with my graduate program and eventually supervise graduate students. I also hope to someday work in an elementary school, but I am also happy with the population of students that I am working with right now.

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About Psi Chi

Psi Chi is the International Honor Society in Psychology, founded in 1929 for the purpose of encouraging, stimulating, and maintaining excellence in scholarship, and advancing the science of psychology. The mission of Psi Chi is to produce a well-educated, ethical, and socially responsible member committed to contributing to the science and profession of psychology and to society in general.

The UW-Madison Chapter offers practical experience to members through events designed to enhance the regular curriculum. At monthly member meetings, we discuss chapter affairs and service opportunities, and hear from guest speakers in the field.

What to Expect as a Psi Chi Member:

- Opportunities to network with faculty and other students interested in psychology during monthly brown bag meetings each semester
- Inclusion into a close-knit group of students who all share common interests
- International recognition for academic excellence in psychology
- Access to numerous scholarship opportunities
- Ability to gain leadership skills as a Psi Chi Board Member

PSI CHI ACCEPTS APPLICATIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS BIANNUALLY IN THE FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS. MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO STUDENTS THAT MEET THE QUALIFICATIONS AND ARE MAKING THE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGY ONE OF THEIR MAJOR INTERESTS. PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS: HTTP://PSYCH.WISC.EDU > UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM > INVOLVEMENT > STUDENT ORGS > PSI CHI

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