

# Psychology Peer Mentor Newsletter

Editor: Alysia Chavez

**HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS**

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**Walk-Ins Welcome!**

## Happy December Students!

Welcome to this semester's last issue of the psychology peer mentor newsletter.

It's coming down to the last few weeks of the semester and finals are just around the corner...but so are the holidays!

We have some great tips and tricks in this issue.





# How To: Research Labs in Psychology

By: Andrea Dinh

**1. Go through the descriptions of faculty research projects currently available and decide which one you are most interested in.**

- You can access the research projects online by searching CSUF psychology department research summary.
- 2019-2020 research summary: <http://psychology.fullerton.edu/academics/Website%20Posting.pdf>

**2. Contact the faculty member whose research project you are interested in.**

- Be sure to introduce yourself.
- Describe why you are interested in their research project (e.g. how it pertains to your area of interest in psychology).
- Explain why you would be a qualified candidate for their research project.

**3. After you obtain the faculty member's permission to join their research project, fill out the Psych 499 Form**

- You can obtain the form from the Psychology Department Office; H-830M
- You must do this before the end of the second week of the semester to be able to register on time.
- The form requires signatures from both you and the faculty member.

**4. After everything is completed, you will be granted permission to enroll for Psych 499.**

Enrolling in a research opportunity will look great on your resume for grad school as well as give you experience in a professional lab setting!



# Tips For Applying to Grad School

By: Ha Nguyen, a fellow grad school applicant

## **Tip #1: Ask Yourself: "Do I want to go to grad school?"**

Nearly every psychology student asks themselves this question. Graduate school is a big commitment and it is a decision not to be taken lightly. There are several factors you would have to consider. Programs take years of commitment, time, and effort to respectfully earn a degree. It might require you to take out loans to support yourself and pay for tuition. It is best to research different types of programs and decide which ones you are interested in. There are also many resources on campus to help you throughout the process, so you are not alone (e.g. Career Center, academic/major advisement, faculty, staff).

## **Tip #2: Look into potential programs that may interest you; don't be afraid to apply out of state!**

Ideally, you would want to research potential graduate programs as soon as possible. While researching programs, consider both Ph.D. and master's programs to get as much information as you can. It would be a good idea too to look into the job outlook of your career to help you gauge whether jobs prefer a master's or a Ph.D. Some students may want to stay in California and only apply to schools in the state, but don't limit yourself! Schools enjoy having students apply out of state and your chances of getting in may be higher. There might be unique opportunities out of state as well.

## **Tip #3: Be aware of your options. Build a rapport with your professors.**

Don't be afraid to ask professors for help! Email them with any questions or drop by their office hours. Of course, be respectful of their time and come in prepared with questions. It also helps if you are currently in their class so they will remember you more (but even if you're not taking their class anymore doesn't mean you should stop talking to them)! By visiting professors, you build a unique relationship with them compared to students who only show up to class. They might give you some tips and tricks of their own since they were in our shoes before!

## **Tip #4: Check pre-requisites before applying; every program is different.**

EVERY PROGRAM HAS DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS! A very common issue I hear from other students who apply to graduate school is that they do not have the pre-requisites done for their program before graduating (often because we find out too late). Research programs early so you can avoid this problem! But even if you are about to graduate, you can always enroll in open university to fulfill those requirements.



## **Tip #5: Check for exams that may be required (e.g. GRE, Psych GRE, etc.)**

Most programs require a graduate exam as a requisite for applications. For many programs, the GRE is required. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is a standardized exam often required for admission to assess readiness for graduate level studies. Preparation for the GRE should be undertaken as it is very costly, and you would not want to score poorly if you are aiming for top schools. Definitely study for this! The GRE is also a test of endurance and stamina as it is a 4-hour long test with minimal breaks.



## Grad App Tips Cont.

**Tip #6: Look into application requirements (e.g. letters of rec., resume, C.V., etc.)**

Most programs often require extensive educational and academic background to assess your application. Letters of rec often must come from professors so if you have been building rapport with them, you can ask if they would be willing to write a letter for you. Be sure to prepare a set of materials to help your professors write the letter for you. The statement of purpose should be taken seriously as it is the only way of “speaking” to the admissions committee. You want to make sure you answer the prompt while also showing your competency as a potential grad student. Believe me, it is A LOT harder than you think it is!

**Tip #7: Continue to build rapport with professors! Consider joining a research lab or other ways of gaining experience.**

Remember, just because you don’t have class with a professor anymore doesn’t mean you have to stop talking to them! Continue dropping by their office hours or maybe consider asking if they are accepting any research assistants (if they have a lab). If doing research isn’t your thing, consider taking internships in areas that interest you. Yes, it can be difficult balancing a lab or internship as a full-time student, but the experience will be worth it.

**Tip #8: Visit the career center and utilize other resources to help revise your application (e.g. family, friends, professors, etc.)**

Ever since I started applying for graduate school, I learned to appreciate all of the academic resources and workshops offered on campus. I got stuck so many times working on my application (e.g. how to edit my statement, should I include this sentence, does this sound okay?!), and without the help of faculty and staff, I most likely would not have continued applying. Staff members will read your statements, revise your resume/CV, and provide you valuable feedback. You are not alone and getting your social support system involved will help them understand your struggles more.

**Tip #9: Consider taking a gap year if you don’t feel ready.**

A gap year is when many students take a year-long break before applying to graduate school or other opportunities. During this time, students may choose to partake in research opportunities or internships to enhance their educational background. Many may believe it is a waste of time, but it can actually help you decide whether graduate school is right for you or not. This is a great option for those who may not feel confident in applying or enrolling in graduate school this year and would like to try next year. It’s ok to take time for yourself!

**Tip #10: Don’t be discouraged, stay motivated!**

Applying to graduate school is no joke. Not only is it difficult to get in, it can be mentally draining just preparing for graduate school. Yes, graduate school is very competitive, and we want to do everything in our power to get in, but don’t let the process consume you and ALWAYS take care of your mental health. There is always next year if you don’t get in this time around. If you feel like one part of your application is weak, you can always try to improve that area, make other parts of your app stronger, or consider a gap year. There are many opportunities out there and who knows, things may change!



## Alumni Highlight: Nicholas Jones

By: Vanessa Garcia

Talks of Grad School, the GRE, and the vast array of career choices, are not unfamiliar topics to college students. These topics can be stress inducing, especially to those of us who are unaware of what our options may be. A good way to find these answers is by reaching out to those who have been in the same position and have progressed towards their goals.

One notable alumni of the CSUF Psychology Department is Nicholas Jones. Nicholas is someone that students can look up to as an example of what opportunities the Psychology program at CSUF provides. Nicholas transferred to CSUF from Santiago Canyon College; while here he (and as so many others put it) “didn’t know what the hell he was doing.” One thing he did do while here was get involved with research. By being accepted into a lab, Nicholas was able to join a community that helped to develop his relationships with faculty that later helped his endeavors.

The reality of not having the most competitive application deterred him from going straight into a grad program. Upon the completion of his bachelor's degree, Nicholas stayed at CSUF in order to receive more training which eventually led him to an acceptance into the Masters of Arts program at CSUF. His extensive training in research methodology and statistics shaped Nicholas into a competitive candidate and he was later accepted into the PhD program at the University of California, Irvine.

When I asked Nicholas if he felt like the coursework prepared him, he said that because of the statistics emphasis here at Fullerton, he felt like he “hit the ground running” when he entered his program, while others had to relearn statistics. So don’t worry, that stats class you’re struggling with is worth it (maybe). Nicholas now works as a Post-Doctoral Research Associate at Princeton University’s Psychology department. He hopes to eventually work as a Professor, where he would be able to train graduate students and to be a part of a campus community.





## Professor Highlight: Dr. Ella Ben Hagai

By: Lisa Nguyen

Dr. Ella Ben Hagai is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at California State University, Fullerton. Her ambitions and future prospects for CSUF students are for them to carry their knowledge into their life experiences to give themselves a better understanding of the world, people, and themselves. She intellectually challenges her students in order to give them the ability of seeing reality by using different perspectives. Dr. Ben Hagai currently teaches social psychology, critical multicultural psychology, as well as intergroup conflict and reconciliation.

Originating in Israel, Dr. Ben Hagai studied psychology in America. Her interest in psychology began as a fascination with how culture shapes psychology. How do people from different cultures think and feel about the world in a different ways? Why do people from different cultures (like Israel and Palestine) see the conflict between them in such different terms? What happens to immigrants' (like Dr. Ben Hagai) psychology when they move from one culture to the other? Throughout her studies of these issues, her parents encouraged her to pursue an education in psychology because of its important implications to the lives of many people. Her parents support, back home, allowed her to continue her studies and she had many successes in her educational career.

Dr. Ben Hagai began her studies at Santa Monica Community College and transferred to University of California, Berkeley in psychology. She then went to London School of Economics to earn her Masters in Anthropology. Due to missing her life in California as well as her friends, she moved back to Northern California. Eventually, she continued her education at University of California, Santa Cruz and received her Ph.D. in Psychology.



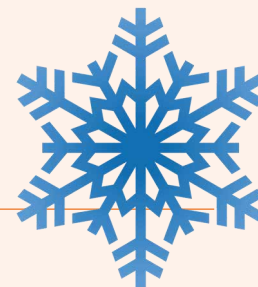
## Dr. Ella Ben Hagai Cont.

Not only does Dr. Ben Hagai teach, she also participates in research that focuses on individuals who are members of different social groups and how they may develop a shared political consciousness that supports coexistence and peace. The processes that she studies are in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as conflict over socio-economic inequalities in different parts of the globe. Her theoretical work examines the intersections between trans and queer theory along with recent psychological research on gender and sexuality.

Her advice to all students regarding their academic career, and beyond, is to form and maintain relationships with other people; this includes making connections with professors. Even if the professors end up as a memory of helping enroll into graduate school, they will remain impactful to the students' life in some way.

Besides being a professor and researcher at CSUF, Dr. Ben Hagai loves to swim as a hobby; it brings her peace and happiness. This summer, she went swimming in the Mediterranean Sea in Greece and Israel, and in lakes in Vermont and Tahoe. Aside from this, she is an art and theater enthusiast. She enjoys supporting her friends involvement in the theaters and enjoys going to different art museums.





## Sleep To Succeed

By: Wendy Chuandra

Often, we forget how important sleep is in order to function each day. Lack of sleep increases stress and negative moods; it can also impair our memory and ability to learn. With all the stress and anxiety that comes hand-in-hand with finals week, students neglect to get an adequate amount of sleep, and it hinders their ability to perform well at such a critical time. During finals week, taking care of your body is crucial. Here are some tips on how to get a good night's rest so you can succeed!

- ◇ It's not uncommon for a person to use electronic devices right before their bedtime. However, the blue light that electronics emit delays the release of melatonin, which makes it harder to fall asleep. To avoid this, the National Sleep Foundation suggests that you set aside your electronics an hour or two before you have to sleep.
- ◇ If you are having trouble falling asleep, drinking a warm cup of non-caffeinated tea such as chamomile two hours before bed can facilitate sleep. Some other varieties of tea that promote sleep include lavender, valerian, lemon balm, and passionflower.
- ◇ Frequently, people experience trouble falling asleep because they feel anxious and have a million thoughts in their mind. To combat this, setting aside some time to journal can help you relax, and reduce your worries.



- ◇ Listening to music during bedtime can facilitate deeper and more restful sleep, so put on some soothing music and give it a try!
- ◇ Lastly, time management is vital. It is important to set a sleep schedule and abide by it. This can make it easier to wake up and fall asleep when you need to. Remember to set aside enough time to study during the day and get at least seven hours of sleep each night!





## Club Highlight

Article by: Derek Cook

### The International Honor Society in Psychology

#### Psi Chi



Join Psi Chi and become a member for life!

#### Requirements:

- ◇ Be a psychology major or minor
- ◇ Have completed 9+ units of psychology coursework at CSUF
- ◇ Be a 2nd semester sophomore or higher
- ◇ Have an overall GPA of 3.2+
- ◇ Have a psychology GPA of 3.5+
- ◇ For lifetime membership one time fee of 75\$

### Psychology Department Student Association

#### PDSA



- ◇ Fee per semester: varies
- ◇ Explore a wide range of interesting psychology topics
- ◇ Get graduate school advice
- ◇ Participate in fun social events and academic workshops
- ◇ Sashes and cords offered to members who meet attendance requirements

 @CSUFPDSA

### Latin Student Psychological Association

#### LSPA



- ◇ Focus on finding helpful resources, promoting higher education, creating networking opportunities, and providing community service opportunities for students
- ◇ Membership fee: 25\$ includes club shirt
- ◇ Sashes and cords offered to members who meet attendance requirements

 @LSPA\_CSUF

## Suicide Prevention

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

**1-800-273-8255**



### Things to remember

1. Don't discount their feelings
2. Look at suicide as a cry for help
3. Be a good listener
4. Encourage them to get help for their depression
5. Don't be afraid to ask about their suicidal feelings
6. If they are in danger, don't leave them alone
7. Encourage them to see a mental health professional

### Know The Signs

Prevention also involves being able to recognize the signs:

- Talking about death or suicide
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Saying that they are a burden
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Losing interest in activities
- Extreme mood swings
- Giving away possessions
- Saying goodbye to family and friends



## Peer Mentor's Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8am-9am		Katarina A.		Barbara G. (8:30 AM) / Claudia B.	
9am-10am	Wendy C.	N/A	Katarina A. (9:30 AM)	Ha N. / Claudia B. / Barbara G. (til 9:30 AM)	
10am-11am		Ha N. / Alysia C.	Katarina A.	Derek C.	
11am-12pm	Vanessa G.	Ha N. / Alysia C (til 11:15 AM)	Ha N.	Derek C. / Vanessa G. (11:30 AM)	
12pm-1pm		Ha N. / Derek C.	Ha N. (til 12:30 PM)	Vanessa G. / Courtney S.	
1pm-2pm	Jessica A.	Andrea D.		Andrea D.	
2pm-3pm	Wendy C.	Andrea D. / Lisa N. (2:30 PM)	Lisa N. (2:30 PM)	Lisa N. (2:30 PM)	
3pm-4pm		Lisa N. (til 3:30 PM)	Lisa N. (til 3:30 PM)	Andrea D. / Lisa N. (til 3:30 PM)	
4pm-5pm				Andrea D. (til 4:30 PM)	



Thank you for a wonderful semester and we hope you enjoyed these newsletters in all aspects. See you in the spring CSUF!