



# Psychology Peer Mentors



## Inside this issue:

Graduate School Tips	1–2
Studying Tips for Finals	2
How to Find a Research Lab	2
Featured Professor	3
High School Shadowing	3
Community College Outreach	4
High School Outreach	5
Fall 2012 Peer Mentors Acknowledgements	5
Peer Mentors Office Hours	6

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## Featured Article: Graduation Tips

By: Masako Ura and Jose Quiroz

Applying for graduate school can be one of the most stressful things to do as an undergraduate student. Though graduate school is a worthwhile experience, it will undoubtedly test one's dedication and intellect.

Students must consider what type of program to enroll and what degrees they will receive (e.g., Ph.D., Psy.D., Master's). It is important for a student to research the type of program he or she wants to apply. Students must research each program before applying. Graduate programs tend to look at overall Grade Point Average (GPA), Psychology GPA, research experience, and prerequisite courses.

Once students have decided on which program(s) they want to apply to, they must thoroughly research the application process. Different programs have different application deadline dates. Most graduate programs only accept Fall applications, which means

that most of the applications must be turned in 5+ months in advance. What students tend not to know is that they must apply both to the University they want to attend AND the actual graduate program itself. Generally, most Ph. D. programs have a December deadline and many Master's programs have an early Spring deadline.

Applying to the university tends to be rather simple. Most applications ask for basic information (address, academic background, financial history). However applying to the actual graduate program is much more demanding. Each program requires students to submit different materials. Generally, most graduate programs require students to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Some programs also require that students take the GRE Subject Test in Psychology, which is only offered on select dates each calendar year (October, November, and April). If students miss the deadline, some programs may allow them to

take the Subject Test later.

Graduate programs also require that an applicant provide one or more letters of recommendation (most programs require 3). Normally professors write these letters. However, anyone (e.g., employers, internship supervisors, etc.) can write you the letter. It is important to double check since some programs specify who may or may not write a letter of recommendation on behalf of the applicant. In general, it is advised that an applicant select faculty members with whom has strong academic relationship.

Graduate programs require applicants to submit multiple academic transcripts, which must be order in advanced from all academic institutions one has attended. Costs and deliver vary from school to school, so it is important for an applicant to order these as early as possible.

(Continue to Page 2)

## Graduate School Tips Overview:

- Students must know what program they want to apply
- Students should know the college application deadline
- Students must have research or internship experience
- Students is require to write a statement of purpose and three letters of recommendation.

## Graduation Tips (Cont.)

In addition, most programs require that students write a statement of purpose. Some programs are very specific as to what must be included whereas others are very generic. Most prompts ask the applicant multiple questions; therefore, it is important for one to answer ALL questions. It is also advised that students should revise

their personal statement multiple times from various different people. The statement of purpose allows the applicant to stand out and highlight why he or she wants to apply to said program.

Lastly, some graduate programs like to conduct interviews before making

their final selection. Depending on the school, these interviews can either take place in person or over the telephone. When going on these interviews, it would play to the applicants favor to know about the campus, the program, and the type of research he or she wants to pursue. Best of luck!

## Studying Tips for Finals

By: Brian Dizon

Studying for finals is stressful to many students. Here are some useful tips to study for the finals. These tips can reduce stress!

1. **Know the examination dates.** This gives you an idea on how many days you have left before taking the exam. It gives you a sense on where you are and it will give you time to formulate a study plan.
2. **If a study guide is provided, work on it ASAP!** There is a high chance you will reach a question you cannot answer and you will need more time to find the correct answer. Not only do you have to look it, you have to study it as well.
3. **If possible, study with a group.**

If you are studying with a group, there is a good chance your study buddies can answer the questions you cannot answer and you can answer the questions they cannot answer. This strategy can save you plenty of time.

4. **Do not cram for the exam!** Cramming is not helpful for studying. Although it have worked in some "easy" classes, cramming will not work in more difficult classes. It is too difficult to absorb massive information in a short time.
5. **Test yourself.** Testing yourself can increase your retention of the material you learned. Instead of just reading material, create the

question and answer it. The stuff you learned from testing yourself goes to your long-term memory. If you just read the notes over and over (rote learning), there is a high chance you will forget information while taking the exam.

6. **Sleep early and eat a meal before the exam.** Sleep is important. If your mind (or the brain) is tired, it is difficult to focus. There are cases where students actually fall asleep while taking the exam. In addition, eat breakfast or lunch before the exam because hunger can distract you.

I hope these tips help you. I wish you the best of luck in your finals!

## How to Find a Research Lab

By: Daniela Barragan

Here are some steps on how to look for a research lab and do research with a professor.

1. Visit the CSUF psychology website [hss.fullerton.edu/psychology/research.asp](http://hss.fullerton.edu/psychology/research.asp) or the Psychology Department Office (H-830M)
2. Determine which professors you are interested in doing research with
3. E-mail the professor(s) or visit them in their office hours.
4. Once approved complete the Application For Psychology 498 Directed Empirical Re-

search to be able to enroll in PSYC 498. - You may choose 1, 2, or 3 units generally 1-3 hours of work is required per unit.

## Featured Professor of the Month: Dr. David Gerkens

By: Brian Dizon

Dr. David Gerkens has been teaching in CSUF since 2005. He had one-year assistant professorship at Mississippi State in 2004 – 2005. He currently has nine peer-reviewed publications in the areas of memory and creativity. He promotes student research and has twenty-one poster presentations with student coauthors since joining CSUF. He attended Cal State Chico for his undergraduate degree and Texas A&M for his doctorate degree. When he was an undergraduate student, his psychology professor got him interested in memory and cognition. During his graduate school years, he taught six classes and several labs.



Memory, creativity, and positive psychology are Dr. Gerkens' research interests in Psychology. In regards to research, Dr. Gerkens believes that student-faculty collaborative research is important. It gives students a chance to gain research experience.

When he was asked what he likes about teaching, he said: "I like seeing students being engaged in the topic and understand the concepts that we discussed in class." In research, he gets excited when he empirically tests research questions. "When I get data, it feels like it is Christmas morning," Dr. Gerkens said with enthusiasm. Dr. Gerkens has an active research lab and presents re-

search at the annual Western Psychological Association (WPA) Conference with students as co-authors every spring.

This semester, Dr. Gerkens is teaching Cognitive Processes (Psych 415) and Cognitive Psychology Lab (Psych 305L). For Spring '13, he will be teaching Graduate Research Design (Psych 510) and Cognitive Psychology (Psych 305).

In his spare time, Dr. Gerkens plays soccer. Arsenal is his favorite soccer team. In addition, he enjoys doing fun activities with his family and taking his dog to the dog park. Here is one fun fact about Dr. Gerkens that you may not expect: he was a music buyer for Tower Records.

## High School Shadowing

By: Melanie Gonzalez

Miranda, a high school student from Kennedy High School, shadowed me for 3 days.

On the first day, I took Miranda on a tour of California State University of Fullerton (CSUF). She accompanied me in my office hour as a Psychology Peer Mentor and I explained to her the services we offer students studying psychology. She had the opportunity to meet Brian, another Peer Mentor and learn about graduate school at CSUF. She then observed a 400-level psychology class (PSY461 Psychological Testing).

The following day Miranda observed my internship site and my working experience. The facility is called WISEPlace and it is a homeless shelter for single women. She had the opportunity to meet a few of the residents and helped in setting up (as well as closure) of WISEMart. WISEMart is a reward system (token economy system) utilized at WISEPlace to help motivate positive behavioral practices by residents. She also learned about the theoretical orientation of the site (Cognitive Behavioral Theory). She learned how the site operates and how a non-profit organization sustains funding. The last day of observation,

Miranda returned to WISEPlace and had the opportunity to meet a few of the case managers on site as well as the director of the program. She conducted an interview with me on this day.

This experience has given her an idea of what she can expect to experience in pursuit of her undergraduate degree as well as how a non-profit organization operates.

It went really well and she seemed very interested in everything that I was involved in and in this university.

# Fall 2012 Community College and High School Outreach

By: Brian Dizon

Psychology Peer Mentors provided outreach services to community colleges and high schools. This semester, Psychology Peer Mentors visited numerous campuses, which is a new milestone. Peer Mentors visited two community colleges and three high schools.

Each assigned Peer Mentor visited classrooms and presented students valuable information about majoring or minoring in Psychology and what CSUF can offer. They spent many hours scheduling classroom visits and preparing innovative presentations. Our work has

reached many students and it gave them an idea of the possible career paths they can choose in Psychology. In this article, each Peer Mentor shares their contributions and the success of the outreach program.

## Community College Outreach

### Cypress College

By: Edwin Ocampo and Allina Babur

On November 14, 2012, Allina Babur and Edwin Ocampo visited Cypress College. They presented their outreach to the Cypress College Psychology Club. Special thanks for Melanie Gonzalez for arranging this event. Here are their experiences:

Allina: "The crowd was warm and receptive and they had great ques-

tions for us. They seemed genuinely interested in the presentation. After we were done, one of the advisers asked me if we would be around next semester and available to come back and give another presentation, so all in all, I think it was a success! It was a great experience and I'd be happy to do it again."

Edwin: "Despite that we were not able to use the PowerPoint for the presentation, we presented an adequate amount of facts and our personal experiences. Students were very welcoming and they seemed to enjoy the presentation. They commented that our presentation was informative."

### Irvine Community College

By: Masako Ura, Zahra Ahmady, and Stacy Rusu

On October 23, 2012, Masako Ura, Zahra Ahmady, and Stacy Rusu presented their outreach in the IVC Transfer Day at Irvine Community College. They set up a table and provided informative handouts to students. Students who were planning to transfer to CSUF were well informed. Masako, Zahra, and Stacey shared their experiences:

Masako: "The outreach was a great experience. We had students who asked about our Peer Mentors pro-

gram. I think that students were surprised that the Psychology program at CSUF has its own Peer Mentors Program. Even though some students are not psychology majors, they showed their interests and took our cards."

Zahra: "We had a great turn out in our outreach. I am glad we were able to be resourceful to all students with various career and educational interest. They found our information useful."

Stacey: "We had a great experience having a table set-up. We had many students stop by our table asking us who we are. They did not expect there were Peer Mentors in the CSUF Department of Psychology. We got students to be interested in the Psychology Program at CSUF and they grabbed our Peer Mentor handouts. In addition, there were numerous students who were interested in transferring to CSUF."

## High School Outreach

### Baldwin High School

By: Janelle Saenz and Maria Lemus

On October 19, 2012, Janelle Saenz and Maria Lemus presented their outreach in Baldwin Park High School. They shared their information to Peer PALS, an organization in Baldwin Park High School. They prepared a very informative presentation that engaged students to asked questions. Janelle shares her experience:

Janelle: "Maria and I presented to the Peer Pals of Baldwin Park High School. At first, they were quiet but once they got comfortable to our presence, they began to ask questions. A few students pointed out that they were planning to major in psychology. In addition, they frequently asked questions about

CSUF. Specifically, they wanted to know what our campus was like. Teachers also asked questions and were interested on hearing our experiences in CSUF. It was great visiting my old high school and being able to provide students with valuable information."

### Magnolia High School

By: Jose Quiroz and Brian Dizon

On November 27, 2012, Jose Quiroz and Brian Dizon presented their outreach in Anne Fummel's Psychology Class in Magnolia High School. They prepared a PowerPoint presentation. Brian and Jose shared their outreach experience:

Jose: "Our presentation covered the college acceptance process, programs offered at CSUF, financial aid, clubs, graduate school, and career option. Students and the teacher found our information useful. In addition, there were students who are planning to CSUF for Fall '13 and we may see

them."

Brian: "Our presentation focused on what students will expect when they graduate from high school. In addition, there were students applied to CSUF. They mentioned that our presentation was extremely informative and helpful."

### Loara High School

By: Brian Dizon

On December 7, 2012, Brian Dizon presented the final outreach in Nick Pastis's AP Psychology class in Loara High School. Unlike the other outreach presentations, Brian added an experiment to his presentation. Here is his experience:

Brian: "I did my high school outreach in Mr. Pastis's AP Psychology class in Loara High School. My interest in Psychology was born in Mr. Pastis's class.

To show my appreciation, I created an innovative PowerPoint presentation. My presentation covered information about financial aid, what courses to take during the freshmen year to their senior year, career opportunities in Psychology, and many more. As an added bonus, I added a class activity. I demonstrated the False Memory Experiment. Students participated and most of them recalled the 'critical lure'. I explained to them the nature

and the common findings of the experiment. Many students found my presentation very informative and entertaining. In addition, they were surprised when I showed them a picture of me and Philip Zimbardo (from WPA) and I shared my conversations with him. Students find me an interesting speaker. Students enjoyed my presentation, especially my experiment. I presented in two different AP Psychology classes, 50 minutes each."

## Fall 2012 Peer Mentors Acknowledgments

By: Brian Dizon

Through hard work, determination, and confidence, Psychology Peer Mentors expanded. Each Peer Mentor made a contribution to improve this program. Psychology Peer Mentors now has an official logo and functional website that is user friendly. In addition,

numerous students have used our services. There were Peer Mentors who were able to help students in statistics, research methods, computer applications, undergraduate and graduate school requirements, and many more. One of the biggest accomplish-

ments of the program was the revival of the Peer Mentors Newsletter that was discontinued approximately 2-4 years ago. Psychology Peer Mentors will continue to grow and next semester, expect an improved service!

## On-Campus Resource

Career Center  
Location: LH 208  
[www.fullerton.edu/career/](http://www.fullerton.edu/career/)

University Learning Center  
Location: Pollack Library 2nd floor  
[www.fullerton.edu/ulc/](http://www.fullerton.edu/ulc/)

Academic Advisement Center  
Location: UH 123B  
[www.fullerton.edu/aac/](http://www.fullerton.edu/aac/)

Writing Center  
Location: UH 123B  
[www.fullerton.edu/engl](http://www.fullerton.edu/engl)

Testing Center  
Location: UH 229  
[www.fullerton.edu/testing](http://www.fullerton.edu/testing)

Health Center  
Location: Health Center  
<http://www.fullerton.edu/shcc/>



### Where am I?

Psychology Peer Mentors Office .....	H-525B
Psychology Department Office .....	H-830M
Advisement Office .....	H-830J
Psychology Lounge .....	H-525B
Psychology Computer Lab .....	H-607

## Peer Mentors Office Hours

Email: [psycmentors@fullerton.com](mailto:psycmentors@fullerton.com)

Web: <http://psych.fullerton.edu/pm12/>

Phone: (657) 278-7538

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00-9:30			Melanie		
9:30-10:00			Melanie		
10:00-10:30		Janelle		Allina	
10:30-11:00		Janelle		Allina	
11:00-11:30		Tina/Brian	Jose	Brian/Zahra	
11:30-12:00	Maria	Tina/Brian	Jose/Maria	Brian/Zahra	
12:00-12:30	Maria	Brian	Maria	Zahra	
12:30-1:00		Brian		Zahra	
1:00-1:30		Brian			
1:30-2:00		Brian			
2:00-2:30		Jose			
2:30-3:00	Edwin	Jose/Stacy	Edwin	Stacy	
3:00-3:30	Edwin	Jose/Stacy	Edwin	Stacy	
3:30-4:00	Edwin	Jose/Stacy	Edwin	Masako	
4:00-4:30	Edwin	Stacy	Edwin	Masako	
4:30-5:00	Daniela			Masako	
5:00-5:30	Daniela			Masako	

**Closed on Finals Week! Come See Us Next Semester.**