

# OAKLAND UNIVERSITY™



## Psi Chi

PsychMatters

May 2016



The Psi Chi Office is located in Pryale Hall

Psi Chi is the International Honors Society in Psychology here at Oakland University. The purpose of Psi Chi is to encourage, stimulate, and maintain excellence in scholarship of the individual members in all fields, particularly in psychology and to advance the science of psychology

### **Purpose**

Encourage, stimulate, and maintain excellence in scholarship of the individual member in all fields, particularly in psychology, and to advance the science of psychology.

### **Goals**

Provide academic recognition to its inductees. Augment and enhance the regular curriculum.

Inside This Issue

### **Psi Chi Goals**

Incoming Psi Chi President Aubrey Mercer discusses her goals for the upcoming school year.

### **OU ABA Autism Clinic**

Read about an opportunity for psychology students to pursue work in Applied Behavior Analysis at OU.

## End of the Year Thoughts

OU psychology students, it has been a pleasure to serve as the *PsychMatters* Editor for the past two years. As I prepare to graduate and pass the *PsychMatters* on to the new editor, Stephanie Allor, I want to take the time to offer a few words of wisdom to current and incoming psychology students who are still working towards their degrees.

Your professors cannot say this enough, but it is imperative to get involved early. Even if you are only a freshman, it is never too early to think about graduate school. As soon as you are able to, get into a lab. Most professors do not accept research assistants who have not taken PSY 250, so if you have not already taken this essential course, take it as soon as possible to increase your chances of gaining meaningful research experience. During my three years as a research assistant for Dr. Vonk, I learned valuable skills that I never would

have learned in class. Running participants, analyzing data, presenting at conferences, and even grant writing were some of the skills I gained as a research assistant. These types of skills are critical when applying to graduate school and most programs require at least some prior research experience.

In addition to research, there are other ways you can get involved in the department. Becoming involved in Psi Chi is one of the single most important things you can do to set yourself up for success in the field of psychology. During my time as an officer, I built many relationships with faculty members. These relationships helped me pursue numerous opportunities in and out of the department that helped set myself up for success, including a TA position and the opportunity to work in the autism clinic at OU. These experiences would never have been possible had I not become an officer in Psi Chi and built the connections with the professors.

them the opportunities within the psychology major that exist upon entering. Much of next year will focus on increasing the attendance at Psi Chi events.

### Mentoring Program

To help engage first year students in the psychology department from the beginning of their studies, Mercer suggested pairing first year students up with current Psi Chi members as mentors. Such a program would allow first years to learn from other students who are already actively involved in the psychology program.

### Clear Up Membership Process

Many students within the psychology program do not know

However, you do not need to be an officer to get to know your professors. Simply going to office hours is a great way to get to know them. In addition, you can be involved in Psi Chi simply by coming to events. You do not need to be a member.

However, if you do want to become more involved in Psi Chi, I strongly encourage you to begin talking to officers now. Becoming a class liaison is a great way to get your foot in the door, many of our former and current officers started out in this role. By speaking about Psi Chi events in class, you can also get to know your professor, who as I said before can help you find opportunities within the department.

As I close, I want to thank each and every one of you for allowing me to serve the department in this capacity. It is my hope that through these issues, you have been able to learn many of the opportunities that exist both within and outside of the Department of Psychology.

that official membership is not required to be involved in Psi Chi. Mercer wants to increase communication about what Psi Chi membership actually means and how students can become involved without being a member.

### More Philanthropy Events

Mercer wants to hold more philanthropy events to increase engagement of psychology majors within the community

### More Tabling Events

Tabling within the Oakland Center will not only allow for greater publicity of Psi Chi events, it will also enable officers to talk to students about the opportunities within the psychology department within a more informal setting.

## Psi Chi Goals for 2016-2017

During the Psi Chi induction ceremony on April 13, incoming president Aubrey Mercer discussed her goals for the upcoming school year. Mercer, who is a sophomore double major in Psychology and Spanish, noted the following in her presentation to the new members.

### Increasing Involvement

Throughout her presentation, Mercer stressed the importance of being involved within the psychology program. With so many students not becoming involved until junior or senior year, Mercer wants to target first and second year psychology students to show

## OU ABA Autism Clinic



In July 2015, Oakland University opened the doors to its autism clinic. Partially funded by a grant from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the clinic currently serves nine preschool-aged children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder to provide early intervention services in applied behavior analysis.

In addition to providing services to the autism community, a major focus of the clinic is to increase the amount of registered behavior technicians (RBTs) and board certified behavior analysts (BCBAs) who can provide services to individuals on the autism spectrum. Dr. Jessica Korneder, Director of the OU ABA Autism Clinic invites interested psychology students to participate in the clinic as practicum students

## About the Practicum

Current psychology students work in the clinic for ten hours per week, implementing one-on-one behavior interventions. Additional

### Dr. Jessica Korneder OU ABA Autism Clinic Director

Dr. Korneder first became involved in the field of applied behavior analysis while obtaining her undergraduate degree in psychology at Western Michigan University. She completed a practicum at their autism clinic, in which she was able to work with a six-year old boy. After obtaining her Master's degree in ABA, she worked with in-home care in California before returning to Western Michigan to obtain a Ph.D, which she received in 2014.

Upon being hired as an assistant professor in the Department of Human Development and Child Studies at Oakland University, Korneder was asked to start an autism clinic at the university. The university received a \$500,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to help start the clinic. Korneder chose to model the clinic after the autism clinic at Western Michigan in which she had completed much of her training.

For undergraduates, Korneder notes that there are many benefits to working in the clinic. In addition to potentially obtaining a position with the completion of a BA in psychology, the clinic also helps students explore their interests.

### components of the program include:

- Weekly reflection papers
- Monthly discussions on relevant literature
- Online training modules to fulfill RBT certification requirements

While some students have chosen to further pursue ABA, other students have discovered other interests based on their experience in the clinic.

### Liz Elias Case Coordinator

Liz Elias is an M.Ed. student who is obtaining a master's degree in special education with a concentration in ABA. As part of her graduate training, she serves as a case coordinator in the OU ABA Autism Clinic. Her role involves writing reports for each of her three cases, finding intervention programs, and supervising the undergraduate students who work with her assigned cases.

After graduating with her B.A. in Psychology from Albion College, Elias found a job as a behavior technician at the Judson Center, where she first became exposed to applied behavior analysis techniques. After three years, Elias decided to pursue the Board Certified Behavior Analysis Credential. She notes that much of her motivation to pursue a graduate education in ABA was after seeing how much it changed the lives of the kids and families with whom she worked.

Social work students may also participate in the program as a yearlong internship. For more information about the program, contact Dr. Jessica Korneder, [korneder@oakland.edu](mailto:korneder@oakland.edu).

# Making the Most out of Your Psychology Classes

An important part of the psychology major is the courses that one takes. The following are some suggestions to get the most out of the courses you take:

## **Choose courses you are interested in**

The psychology major gives students the flexibility to choose different courses to fulfill the requirements, allowing students to explore their interests.

## **Focus on application**

Most psychology tests emphasize the application of concepts to the

real world. As you read the book and listen to lecture, think about ways in which you can apply the material to your own life.

## **Challenge yourself with more difficult courses**

This is especially important for students looking to go to graduate school as a good grade in classes such as cognitive or biological psychology tend to be looked at more favorably than students who do not take such courses.

## **Don't overspecialize**

Although it may be tempting, taking too many undergraduate courses in one area of psychology can be detrimental. Graduate schools prefer an applicant with a wide-range of courses in psychology.

## **Get involved in research**

Research methods and statistics are required for all students, but actually doing research helps students learn more about these topics than just being in PSY 250 and 251.

## **Get to know your professors**

Your professors can be an excellent resource in not only coursework, but also to discuss career directions or your interests in psychology. Contributing in class or going to office hours is a great way to build relationships with professors.

## **Utilize your TA or other resources**

Some courses have teaching assistants or tutors who can assist with course material. These students have taken the course before and can share many tips for success.

## Psi Chi Officers

Congratulations to our new officers for 2016- 2017

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