

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY HAPPENINGS



Fall 2020

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Hello alumni and friends!

We hope that this newsletter finds you well and that you are staying safe during these very challenging times. The Department of Psychology has been especially busy these past few months preparing for and overseeing the safe return of students, faculty, researchers and staff. As we transition from face-to-face to an online format of teaching and collaborating, our department is discovering new ways to incorporate technology not only in the classroom but in our research labs as well. We are delighted to share our newsletter with you which highlights some of the exciting things that we have been doing.



Above: The Spring semester saw the beginning of classes and meetings taking place through online systems such as Zoom and Google Meet. Here you can see the Lab for Scalable Mental Health (Schleider Lab) participating in an online lab meeting.

Right: Research resumes on campus with extra precautions and modifications. In the lab of Dr. Brady Nelson, an electroencephalography (EEG) cap is applied in an investigation of the neural mechanisms of mental illness.



Our undergraduate office would love to hear from you about your latest achievements or any career-related opportunities for current undergraduates. If you have anything to share, please complete this form: <https://forms.gle/fH5RX5DfLNUuu9i6>

STUDENT NEWS

Congratulations to our most recent psychology graduates (May 2020, Summer 2020), including 400+ students receiving their BA or BS, 15 students receiving their MA, and 17 new PhD's!

The Psychology Department's **Peer Mentoring Program** which assists first year and transfer students in their transition to Stony Brook got off to a great start in its inaugural year. Now, one year later, our peer mentors continue to create new ways to assist students in order to ensure their success in the Psychology major. This year, our Peer Mentoring Program has plans to move these activities online, with workshops in resume preparation, graduate school planning, and job fair training.

PSYCHOLOGY IN THE NEWS

Ellora Vilkin (Clinical PhD student, Davila Lab) was interviewed by ABC Action News about the need for increased mental health support among LGBTQ* people during COVID-19, and the free support groups she is co-facilitating through the Krasner Psychological Center. The brief video segment is available to view at the following link:

<https://www.abcactionnews.com/rebound/challenges-for-lgbtq-community-can-intensify-during-pandemic>



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

COVID-19 Longitudinal Study

A group of faculty members from across three departmental areas (Clinical area: Daniel Klein, Brady Nelson, & Jessica Schleider, Social/Health: Sheri Levy & Bonita London, Cognitive Science: Lauren Richmond) are working together on a longitudinal study focused on the experiences of SBU community members during COVID-19. This study was launched shortly after the pandemic began and is currently in its third wave of data collection. The study focuses on the impacts of the pandemic for individuals from younger adulthood into old age and across a wide range of racial, economic, and regional geographic categories. This study is expected to provide critical insight into the wide-ranging and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our diverse campus community.



Using Twitter in COVID-19 Research

Another team of researchers at SBU, including our own Dr. Stacey Scott (Associate Professor), is using Twitter to measure and forecast changes in COVID-19 symptoms and mental health. Assistant Professor Andrew Schwartz (Computer Science), Stacey Scott (Psychology), and Sean Clouston (Public Health) have teamed up to employ a tracker of COVID-19 symptoms and mental health developed by Schwartz. This tracker will be used to assess community distress and the factors influencing it in ongoing longitudinal studies, particularly studies of older adults residing in highly-impacted regions such as Long Island and Bronx, NY.

<https://www.cs.stonybrook.edu/about-us/News/Stony-Brook-Led-Team-Using-Twitter-Measure-and-Forecast-Changes-COVID-19-Symptoms-and>

★ Psychology Department Awards & Recognitions ★ ★ ★



Daneele Thorpe (Clinical PhD student, Bernard Lab) was selected for an Honorable Mention for the 2020 APS RISE (Researching Injustice and Social Equality) Research Award for her project titled "Examining How Exposure to Neighborhood Crime Impacts the Effectiveness of Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up on Parent Sensitivity Towards Their Infants." The goal of the study was to investigate how individual level factors (e.g. single parent status, depression, early life stress) and external factors like neighborhood crime moderate the effectiveness of the Attachment Biobehavioral Catchup intervention on improving parents' sensitivity.



Tori Peña (Cognitive Science PhD student, Rajaram Lab) was selected to receive the prestigious National Science Foundation GRFP Fellowship! Tori's research examines how people use hints, or cues, to help their memory, particularly assessing the influences of social and nonsocial cues to improve memory performance. While ample research shows that cues have a complex relationship with human memory, people continue to believe that cues help more than hurt memory. The extent to which social and nonsocial cues help or hurt memory across the lifespan has wide implications for education and in aging to help improve cognitive performance.



Alan Gerber (Clinical PhD student, Lerner Lab) is the recipient of a Psi Chi 2019-20 Mamie Phipps Clark Diversity Research Grant which studies social isolation and loneliness in the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) population. Although individuals with ASD often experience social isolation and loneliness, little is known regarding how, when, and why it occurs. This project will be the first to use in-the-moment reporting of events (ecological momentary assessment; EMA) to provide a more accurate picture of social isolation and loneliness in the daily life of young adults with ASD, opening up new ways to study outcomes in individuals with ASD.

GIVING DAY - OCTOBER 8, 2020 Stony Brook University is launching its second annual 24-hour energized giving campaign! Mark your calendars for **Thursday, October 8** for this exciting giving event. Your generous contribution will allow us to continue with and spearhead numerous exciting endeavors that keep our department thriving including much needed undergraduate scholarships, graduate research stipends, a visiting expert colloquium series, travel funds for students to present their research findings at conferences, and ongoing research studies of the psychological impact of COVID-19 on members of the university community.

[Psychology Dept. Fund for Excellence](#)