Department of Psychological & Brain Science
University of California, Santa Barbara

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INSIDE PSYCHOLOGY

Rebuilding the PBS Community

"The pandemic and remote learning were such a jolt to academia that we will feel its effects for years to come."

"With all of the changes in the past few years and the shifts from in-person to online to in-person again, Psi Chi has worked to help build a psychology community amidst the uncertainty."

"It will take time to build back our PBS community; and we have a cohort of students who began their studies during remote learning who haven't had the chance to fully experience our vibrant PBS community."

As the above quotes from Student Affairs Manager Chris McFerron, Psi Chi Co-Presidents Olivia Olds and Oliva Mendoza, and Chair of Psychological & Brain Sciences (PBS) Shelly Gable indicate – and as all of us know well – the past few years of coping with COVID-19 and its disruptive effects – have been a challenge. But they have also been an opportunity for us as a department to take stock of our research, teaching, and service missions, and to identify, strengthen, and in some ways, rebuild the community of Psychological & Brain Sciences here at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Prof. Shelly Gable, chair of Psychological & Brain Sciences.

Psi Chi group members, 2022, with faculty advisor Prof. Nicole Alea Albada (bottom row, left).

As we look to the future of PBS, we checked in with the interconnected sectors of the department to offer some perspective. As Student Affairs Manager, Chris McFerron had a front row seat to how students and faculty were experiencing the return to in-person classes. "PBS was one of the first and only departments to return to in-person advising at the start of Winter 2022 to ensure that undergraduate and graduate students had a feeling of normalcy and a face to talk to." Chris himself would often station himself (along with his dog, Tucker) at a table outside the department so students and faculty could check in, ask questions, and see a friendly (and being outdoors, unmasked) face.

Chris noted that "The return to in-person learning posed just as many issues, if not more, as

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Chris McFerron and his dog Tucker greeted PBS students upon their return to campus with outdoor advising.

students and faculty had to reimagine what school might look like in a hybrid format. As we transitioned back, the Student Affairs staff helped faculty and students navigate new challenges such as in-person teaching with online exams, new accommodations for students with medical considerations, adjusted deadlines for academic issues, and hybrid-learning and work formats."

Faculty members strove to rebuild an atmosphere of support in their classes and through student organizations such as Psi Chi. Professor Nicole Alea Albada, the faculty advisor for Psi Chi, noted that "The officers this year did a remarkable job of bringing students into the Psi Chi Chapter, recruiting approximately 70 new members, and creating a space where students in our department can flourish and learn from one another. This international honors society in our department creates a community of individuals dedicated to the science and practice of psychology."

Two other student organizations have been integral to helping students navigate the pandemic, the Society of Undergraduate Psychologists at UCSB (SUP@UCSB) and ACCESS Grads. Faculty supervisor of both organizations, Professor Vanessa Woods, shared that "I have seen so many acts of service to the community and development of valuable mentored relationships. SUP is a place for all those interested in Psychology to find community and share knowledge and resources to effectively navigate the major. ACCESS Grads has provided mentorship specific to graduate school to over 200 students and has a focus on serving students who are historically marginalized in higher education settings. Both groups are integral to the development of a positive and supportive environment for our students."

With these organizations in place, the community helped each other not just survive, but in some cases, thrive as they confronted their academic and social challenges. As co-presidents Olds and Mendoza noted that "We heard that many students were struggling to make connections with other students and professors in their classes. To help with this, Psi Chi brought together members at, for example, graduate student panels to discuss the ins-and-outs of the graduate school process, alumni panels to talk about their experiences after graduation, and an honors thesis panel to encourage Psi Chi members to consider completing a thesis in PBS."

Reflecting on the past several years, and looking to the future of PBS, Chair of the Department Shelly Gable described the ongoing project of building community amidst our students, faculty, staff, and alumni, "PBS was able to pivot to remote activities such as recorded lectures and on-line research seminars. However, significant portions of learning and discovery occur in the moments between these structured times. These moments include the follow-up questions of an inspired student after a lecture, popping into a colleague's office to ask a question, and the hallway conversations between faculty and graduate students. The excitement of returning to in-person activities in the fall was palpable; and I think it was these in-between moments that we all missed. The common experiences, goals, and interactions – both large and small – make PBS a community."

Psychological & Brain Sciences
UC SANTA BARBARA

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PROBING A PARKINSON'S PARADOX

In one video, an elderly gentleman who normally can barely walk pedals a bike effortlessly down an Amsterdam street. In another video, a man who typically can't hold a mug without sloshing the water out of it catches a ball as he jogs across the room and tosses it back to the person who threw it (see photo on right). This phenomenon of swift, smooth movement in patients whose motor functions are impaired by Parkinson's disease remains a mystery to the scientists who study the disorder and the part of the brain it affects.

Parkinson's patient catching a ball as he jogs across the room.

"It's called paradoxical kinesia, which means paradoxical movement," said Psychological & Brain Sciences (PBS) Professor Scott Grafton, a neuroscientist who studies how people organize movement into goal-oriented action. "People with Parkinson's can be frozen most of the time, and then every once in a while whatever brakes are on in their motor system are released and they move normally."

The underlying problem with Parkinson's disease is that the circuit in the brain that governs movement is disrupted, Grafton explained. So where does the ability to ride a bike or catch and throw a ball while jogging come from?

Thanks to the Aligning Science Across Parkinson's (ASAP) initiative, Grafton and Regina Lapate, an Assistant Professor in PBS, will get us closer to finding out. The $12 million, three-year, multi-institution project led by the University of Pittsburgh allows scientists like Grafton, Lapate, and their colleagues at Pitt to explore and investigate brain circuits that are involved in Parkinson's disease and little-understood phenomena such as the placebo effect, and paradoxical kinesia, which have patients moving despite the degeneration of their motor circuits.

The presence of coordinated movement in Parkinson's patients, however limited, suggests that there is some integrity left in the basal ganglia, Grafton said. These structures are found deep in the brain and are associated with the initiation and execution of movements, orchestrating the multitude of signals that tell some muscles to move while inhibiting competing actions. In patients with Parkinson's, these nerve clusters are destroyed and stop producing the neurotransmitter dopamine. The result is a variety of physical symptoms, including tremors while standing still, poor balance and slowness or the cessation of movement.

"You get a lot of noise and bad rhythms in the motor circuit," Grafton explained. In treatments involving deep brain stimulation, pulses of electricity to a node in this network are able to clear the jam and restore some voluntary motor function in patients and improve responsiveness to dopamine replacement medicines.

Meanwhile, the placebo effect, reported often in clinical and surgical trials, is just as it suggests: Some patients who believe they had been treated by medication or a procedure are able to move, despite not actually having been treated. It's still unclear where the coordinated movement comes from, but the scientists have some ideas. "The way we're thinking about is there's this secret door or alternative channel that comes and influences all of this network," Grafton said. "And that's the one that is essential for both the placebo effect and paradoxical kinesia."

Prof. Scott Grafton (left) and Prof. Regina Lapate (right).

The scientists' efforts focus on two neuronal circuits: a closed loop that travels from the basal ganglia deep in the brain to the motor cortex in the frontal lobe and back; and an open loop that receives input from the amygdala — the circuit researchers suspect could hold the secret door.

The amygdala in particular captures the attention of Grafton and Lapate, who will focus on identifying and investigating the open loop circuit.

"The amygdala is often described as an early warning system," Grafton explained, adding that it detects threat and activates appropriate behaviors in response to dangerous stimuli, sometimes even before the person knows it.

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

"If you're running down a trail, and there's a wiggly, squiggly thing on it, it's going to make you jump over it before you even know it's a snake," he said. "So, it's a great system for the quick release of specific movements that are appropriate to whatever the threat is."

Part of this threat perception performed by the amygdala is the experience of heightened emotions such as fear, stress and anxiety — responses that fall within Lapate's area of expertise.

"In the intriguing phenomenology of paradoxical kinesia, Parkinson's patients' movement, normally impaired, is facilitated by surprising or emotionally evocative situations that require a fast response — for example, rescuing a child who is falling off a high chair," Lapate explained.

To understand this potential amygdala-dependent motor circuitry, she and Grafton have designed a series of tasks that employ emotionally evocative stimuli, and that require motor output at specific time windows while acquiring continuous measurements of the activity within the whole brain via functional MRI.

"This will allow us to probe whether amygdala function — its increased engagement, heart rate mobilization in emotionally evocative situations and its hypothesized emotion-dependent connectivity with alternative motor structures believed to be part of this circuitry — explains emotion-dependent gains in motor function," Lapate said.

The information gathered from these studies will contribute to an ever-growing body of knowledge about our brains and Parkinson's disease, and could also lead to better and new therapies for the millions of people worldwide who live with the disorder.

"We hope that by shedding new light into the function of this little-understood alternative motor circuitry in humans, our work may point to novel future targets for treatment to ameliorate motor dysfunction in Parkinson's disease," Lapate said.

Aligning Science Across Parkinson's is a coordinated research initiative to advance targeted basic research for Parkinson's disease. Its mission is to accelerate the pace of discovery and inform the path to a cure through collaboration, research-enabling and data sharing. The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's research is ASAP's implementation partner and issued the grant.

Article by Sonia Fernandez adapted from: https://www.news.ucsb.edu/2022/020583/probing-parkinson-s-paradox

FACULTY PRODUCTIVITY AND INFLUENCE RECOGNIZED

Research.com

Professor Richard E. Mayer ranked among top 100 psychology scientists, #83 globally, #52 nationally, based on publications and citations compiled by Research.com

ACADEMIC INFLUENCE

Distinguished Professor Leda Cosmides ranked #1 in top influential thinkers in Psychology over the last 30 years, according to an independent, machine-learning ranking of academic influence

Clarivate™

Professor Jonathan Schooler named in Clarivate Analytics' Highly Cited Researchers List for 2021

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE BEHIND PSEUDOSCIENCE

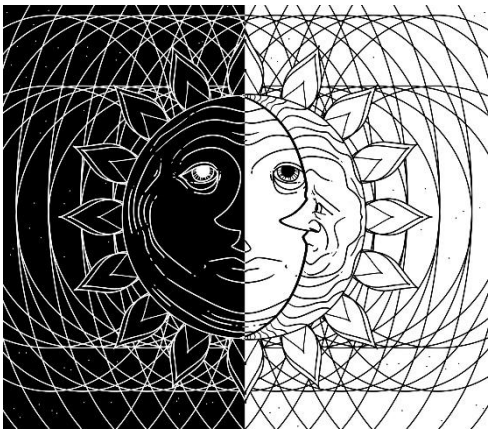
Dr. Spencer Mermelstein

Not everything humans believe is reflected in science. There is a whole other world beyond the sciences, populated by widespread ideas about religiosity, superstition, conspiracy theories and many others which — besides being unsupported by science — often exist in contradiction with science.

"The pervasiveness of pseudoscience is interesting to me, and the fact that some pseudosciences can be really dangerous and damaging," said Spencer Mermelstein, who earned his PhD in 2022 from Psychological & Brain Sciences.

How do these pseudoscientific beliefs spread and come to be accepted by many as fact? Prior research supports the idea that many pseudoscientific beliefs spread because of the mind's architecture and intuitions. If a belief runs in line with our inborn assumptions and manners of thinking, it will spread.

For instance, many of those who hold anti-vaccine beliefs, according to Mermelstein, do so because of human beings' innate aversion to putting foreign or unfamiliar things in their body. It stems, then, from an "overextension of the disgust response," the same intuitions which lead one to avoid things like rotting food. In a similar manner, those who believe the Earth is flat, as opposed to a sphere, have a belief that is grounded in a child's early-development understanding of the world based on what they observe in their everyday life, as opposed to what they know after receiving some form of education.



Art by Luca Disbrow for the Daily Nexus

Then, there are other, more profound pseudoscientific beliefs, such as those seen among many religious people. For example, intelligent design — the belief that life on Earth must have been conceived by a supernatural entity — is often grounded in the human tendency to find patterns and purpose in random noise. In fact, much research centered on pseudoscientific beliefs looks to developmental psychology to explain some of these phenomena.

"So, if you asked kids like, 'Hey, why are there mountains over there?' they'll say, 'Well, it's for the animals to scratch their backs.' They see something complex, and they intuit that there must be a purpose to it," Mermelstein said. "And so that's kind of a predisposition that makes something like intelligent design appealing. So those are a set of pseudoscientific beliefs that have their basis on these reliably developing cognitive predispositions, or intuitions."

However, there are some popular beliefs that don't quite fit that mold. Mermelstein has sought to understand why this is and how these beliefs spread.

"What we point out is that there are certain pseudosciences out there that contain these very counterintuitive elements. [These] kind of challenge the idea that pseudosciences are popular because they kind of latch on to existing ways of thinking," Mermelstein said.

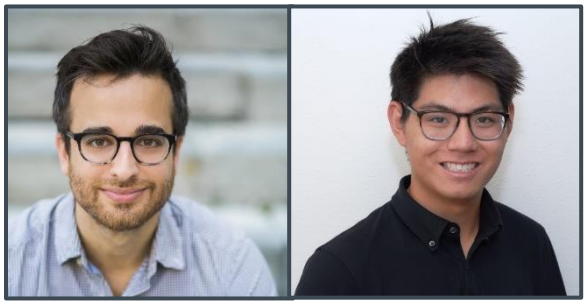
Specifically, Mermelstein points to astrology and parapsychology — the study of concepts like clairvoyance, telepathy and telekinesis — as two relatively widespread beliefs which, as he describes, aren't really compatible with our assumptions and inferences about the world around us. Mermelstein argues that the reason these beliefs and other similar ones exist is because of a few things in particular. One, the degree to which they are inconsistent with our intuitions serves to make them striking and memorable. Two, because of this distinctiveness, people are more drawn to have discussions about these counterintuitive beliefs in an attempt to reconcile them with their existing knowledge and in turn, spread them around through conversation. Mermelstein adds, "People might come to endorse counterintuitive beliefs if they are espoused by authoritative or prestigious figures, or from the sense of certainly or anxiety-reduction brought about by belief in astrology for instance." In addition, unlike beliefs like vaccine hesitancy, there may be some sort of barrier between endorsing a counterintuitive belief like astrology and actually letting one's belief affect their behavior in a meaningful way.

As Mermelstein puts it, "That might be something unique to these sorts of counterintuitive concepts. We can say we believe in them, but do they actually impact our everyday life?"

Article by Sean Crommelin adapted from: https://dailynexus.com/2021-10-08/the-psychological-science-behind-pseudoscience/

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

HELPING REVIVE VISION FOR THOSE WITH PROGRESSIVE BLINDING DISORDERS



Prof. Michael Goard (left) and Kevin Sit (right).

Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley and the University of California, Santa Barbara, have found that a drug once widely used to wean alcoholics off of drinking helps to improve sight in mice with retinal degeneration. The drug may revive sight in humans with the inherited disease retinitis pigmentosa (RP), and perhaps in other vision disorders, including age-related macular degeneration.

A group of scientists led by Richard Kramer, UC Berkeley professor of molecular and cell biology, had previously shown that a chemical — retinoic acid — is produced when light-sensing cells in the retina, called rods and cones, gradually die off. This chemical causes hyperactivity in retinal ganglion cells, which ordinarily send visual information to the brain. The hyperactivity interferes with their encoding and transfer of information, obscuring vision.

He realized, however, that the drug disulfiram — also called Antabuse — inhibits not only enzymes involved in the body's ability to degrade alcohol, but also enzymes that make retinoic acid. In new experiments, Kramer and collaborator UCSB Michael Goard, Assistant Professor in Psychological & Brain Sciences (PBS), discovered that treatment with disulfiram decreased the production of retinoic acid and made nearly-blind mice much better at detecting images displayed on a computer screen.

Michael Goard joined the project after a conversation following Kramer's seminar at UCSB. "The initial findings from the Kramer lab showed that these compounds can reduce the hyperactivity in retinal ganglion cells," Goard said, "but it was not known how much this would affect higher level visual perception. We really wanted to go beyond simple tests of light sensitivity and see if this affected the ability of the visual system to respond to more complex visual sciences."

To test this, the Goard lab used a laser scanning microscope and a fluorescent protein indicator to measure the responses of neurons in the visual cortex of transgenic mice with retinal degeneration. During the measurements, the researchers presented the mice with complex visual stimuli. For example, one stimulus was a film clip from the 1958 Orson Welles' film noir *Touch of Evil* that was replayed many times (see photo on right). Individual neurons of vision-impaired mice treated with disulfiram or BMS 493 responded preferentially to particular frames in the movie, and the responses were much stronger and more reliable than those of mice that had not been treated. In fact, the researchers could accurately estimate which part of the clip the mouse was viewing just from the neural activity in the treated mice, but the estimate was much more inaccurate in the untreated mice. "These experiments, along with the behavioral findings, showed that the treatments don't just increase light sensitivity, but are actually improving the visual capabilities of the treated mice," Goard said.

Screenshot from Touch of Evil *used as stimuli.*

"Treated mice really see better than mice without the drugs. These particular mice could barely detect images at all at this late stage of degeneration. I think that that's quite dramatic," Kramer said.

Kevin Sit, a PhD candidate working with Professor Goard also highlighted the importance of this research. He says, "I really liked our project because I think it's a particularly thorough study on this specific problem. Age related macular degeneration affects nearly 200 million people worldwide and has been resistant to treatments because of the lack of knowledge of its mechanisms. We wanted to further understand this disease by thoroughly studying the mechanism of the disease… Together, these results suggest that the treated mice have truly improved visual capabilities across multiple scales. We think that the results of this study are an important step forward for understanding photoreceptor degenerating diseases, and may enable future treatments to improve quality of life."

Article by Robert Sanders adapted from: https://news.berkeley.edu/2022/03/18/antabuse-may-help-revive-vision-in-people-with-progressive-blinding-disorders/

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

UNITING GENERATIONS WITH VIRTUAL REALITY

COVID life has taken a toll on us all, but it's hit older adults particularly hard. Separated from family and friends, and less able to travel than before, many seniors have become lonely and depressed.

Prof. Nancy Collins

The pandemic struck just as UCSB professors Nancy Collins and Tamara Afifi were conducting a pilot study to determine whether virtual reality (VR) experiences could improve quality of life for seniors and their adult children. After conducting a phase I pilot study at Maravilla, a senior living community in Santa Barbara, the team has now received $2 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to begin a two-year clinical trial. Afifi and Collins conducted a small study in 2020 with 21 pairs of Maravilla residents and remote family members, usually adult children. "The goal of the project is to test the impact of VR technology on social connection and quality of life for older adults in senior living communities as well as out-of-town family members," said Collins, a professor in PBS. "The long-term goal is to find ways to use innovative technologies to reduce social isolation, strengthen family bonds and improve quality of life for older adults with varying levels of cognitive impairment."

The results showed that joint VR sessions reduced the older adults' loneliness, while improving both their mood and their overall quality of life, the researchers said. On the family members' side, the activity enhanced mood and also reduced caregiver guilt.

"A family is a system," Afifi said, "so when you help one person, you're helping the whole family." This is especially true for caregivers, who can bear a particularly heavy burden in terms of stress and guilt.

In the pilot study, the researchers recorded seniors using the VR, capturing their body movements and expressions. They used these data — classified and annotated by humans and algorithms— in an effort to see how different stages of memory decline correlated with people's engagement when they were using the VR. They found that older adults with mild cognitive impairment were more kinesthetically engaged in the experience and moved their bodies more. However, participants with mild to moderate dementia self-reported being more immersed in the experience.

Based on the pilot study's success, the NIH granted the team funding for a two-year clinical trial. The goal is to rigorously test the social and psychological benefits of VR activities compared with standard video communication to determine if the shared, immersive experiences provide added benefits for older adults and their family members, Collins explained. The trial will include 200 pairs across 12 senior living communities, six in and around Santa Barbara and six in Boston, where their VR partner, Rendever, is located. The company's CEO, Kyle Rand, is the project's third principal investigator.

Each pair of participants will be given a baseline survey and then randomly assigned to either a number of video calls or a series of shared VR experiences once a week for one month. The VR experiences will be similar to those in the pilot study. For instance, one session will involve reminiscence therapy. The participant will use the VR to revisit their favorite places from the past — like childhood neighborhoods or holiday spots — alongside their out-of-town family member. The researchers will conduct follow-up interviews with participants first after one month and again after three months.

Photo credit: RENDEVER

The pandemic has only highlighted the importance of interpersonal connections to mental health, the researchers noted. "Even before the pandemic, loneliness and social isolation among older adults had been a national crisis," Collins said. Conditions over the past year and a half have amplified this crisis and broadened the issue to people of all ages and backgrounds. Collins hopes the increased exposure and urgency created by the pandemic will compel further research and action on this issue. "Now, more than ever, we need to develop creative solutions — through technology as well as other pathways — to foster social connection even when families and friends must be apart," she said.

Article by Harrison Tasoff adapted from: https://www.news.ucsb.edu/2021/020413/uniting-generations

CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHT

SEARCHING FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Part of Zine by undergraduate artist Madeleine Galas distributed at conference.

Addressing the climate crisis and mitigating its effects will be a team effort. Scientists, policy makers and the general public will have to do their parts. But what will that look like? The UCSB Conference on Social Science and Climate Solutions sought to explore how researchers and community members engage in efforts to save the planet from catastrophe. The conference occurred on October 11, 2021 at Bren Hall and was supported by the College of Letters and Science, the Center for Social Solutions to Environmental Problems at University of California Santa Barbara, and the Center for Creative Climate Communication and Behavior Change.

Combating climate change is often seen as a technical challenge for engineers and researchers in the biological and physical sciences. But David Sherman, a professor in Psychological & Brain Sciences (PBS), said the social sciences play a vital role as well. Indeed, scientists have long identified causes and solutions to address climate change, said Sherman, one of three conference co-organizers, but implementing them is an inherently social problem involving collective and individual actions.

He said, "The social sciences can address how cultural, political and economic systems influence why individuals and collectives fail to act to address climate change. As social and psychological factors are barriers to change, how can research in the social sciences identify means to surmount these barriers? "Moreover," Sherman continued, "how are the impacts of climate change felt differently for communities that vary in resources and history — and how can the society promote greater fairness in devising and implementing strategies to adapt to climate change and prevent environmental damage? And when scientists discover important levers to promote, for example, reduction of carbon emissions, how can researchers interface with industry to magnify beneficial impacts?"

The event featured the work of creative artists to help understand the impact of climate change by communicating what society has done, where we are and where we may be going. Participating artists included Madeleine Galas, a College of Creative Studies and senior art honors student, Amrah Salomón, an Assistant Professor of English, and David Starkey, former poet laureate of Santa Barbara, who presented poems. The reception featured music by UCSB Psychology alumna Lucy LaForge.

Speakers at the Conference (left to right): Leaf Van Boven, Sarah Anderson, David Pellow, Shaz Attari, & Heejung Kim.

Sherman noted that many of the conference organizers and speakers (see photos on the right) began working together in an interdisciplinary way in the 2013-14 academic year with support from the UCSB Crossroads Program, which led to the creation of a course on Psychology, Environment, and Public Policy co-led by Sherman and PBS Professor Heejung Kim, who also presented her research at the conference. The two other organizers for the UC Santa Barbara Conference on Social Science and Climate Solutions were Sarah Anderson, a professor in the Bren School and the director of the Center for Social Solutions to Environmental Problems (CSSEP), and Leaf Van Boven, a professor in Colorado's Department of Psychology and Neuroscience and co-director of the Center for Creative Climate Communication and Behavior Change (C3BC) at the University of Colorado Boulder. "So often, we have technological and policy solutions available to solve environmental problems, but we lack the political and societal will to implement those solutions," Anderson said. "This conference brings together social scientists from a variety of disciplines — political science, psychology, sociology — to help understand the human dimensions of solving environmental problems.

Article by Jim Logan adapted from: https://www.news.ucsb.edu/2021/020418/searching-solutions

FACULTY TRIBUTE

BRENDA MAJOR

Distinguished Professor of Social Psychology, Brenda Major, PhD., formally retires in 2022 after 27 years of excellence in research, teaching, and service at both the departmental and the UCSB levels.

Professor Brenda Major received her B.A. from The College of Wooster in 1972 and her M.A. in Psychology from Miami University in 1975. She then completed her PhD at Purdue University in 1978 and joined State University of New York at Buffalo, where she was the head of the social psychology program from 1992 to 1995. She moved to UCSB and has stayed ever since, becoming a distinguished professor in 2009. Professor Major's career was celebrated at a departmental reception on June 4, 2022.

Professor Major has distinguished herself as not only the top researcher in her area of self, identity, and intergroup relations, particularly regarding social stigma and resilience in face of adversity, but also in the field of social psychology as a whole. She has made revolutionary contributions, such as her paper with Kay Deaux that challenged assumptions about gender and how gender-related behaviors are more situational and context dependent than dispositional, and her work on stigmatized groups, including her paper with Jennifer Crocker on social stigma and self-esteem and when stigmatized groups can have high self-esteem. Her program of research intricately and critically examines the effects and mechanisms of stigma, and she has repeatedly published these studies in prestigious journals such as *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, and *Psychological Science*, as well as summarizing her findings in many book chapters. She has also earned multiple grants for her research from organizations such as NSF, NIH, and NIMH, as well as awards and other recognition for her work, such as the Distinguished Publication Award (1985) from the Association of Women in Psychology, the Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize for three papers (1986, 1988, 2014) by the Society of Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), the Scientific Impact Prize (2014) from the Society for Experimental Social Psychology (SESP), the Kurt Lewin Award (2012) from SPSSI, Donald T. Campbell Award in Social Psychology (2015) by the Society of Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), the Distinguished Lifetime Career Award (2020) by the International Society for Self and Identity (ISSI), and the Scientific Impact Prize (2014) the Distinguished Scientist Award (2020) by SESP. Professor Major has also been elected as a Fellow for multiple societies, including for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2019), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (2017), and the American Psychological Association (1986).

Professor Major has also given back to the psychology community at many levels and in many domains. She has served as an Associate Editor for Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin and Group Processes and Intergroup Relations, as well as an editorial board member and reviewer for many more journals and foundations, including NIH and NIMH. She was also the President for SESP and SPSP, which are two of the most prominent professional societies for personality and social psychology. Outside of her academic duties, Professor Major also engaged in many other professional services, including chairing the American Psychological Association Task Force on the Mental Health Consequences of Abortion (2006 to 2009) and serving as the Lead Scientist on Brief of Social Psychologists as Amicus Curiae in Support of the Plaintiffs-Appellants in *NAACP v. Horne* on appeal in the US Court of Appeals (2014).

Prof. Major (center) with previous students and post-docs.

FACULTY TRIBUTE

Professor Brenda's leadership, commitment to high quality research, and sincerity is also recognized by her peers. Professor Nancy Collins says, "As much as Brenda has meant to our department as a scholar, teacher, and colleague, she has meant even more to me as a friend. Brenda first hired me as an Assistant Professor at SUNY Buffalo and was then instrumental to bringing me here to UCSB shortly after. She took me under her wing and has been a mentor, advocate, and cherished friend for almost 30 years; it's difficult for me to imagine my career without her. Her passion for science, incredible intellect, and sense of humor made my career more meaningful and a lot more fun. We shared a tendency to arrive late to meetings, receive parking tickets, and procrastinate. She supported me through good times and difficult times. She gave me caring but candid advice that always had my best interests at heart. I am not ready for Brenda to retire, but I have no doubt that she will continue to tackle the most important social issues of our day with her signature intellectual and scientific rigor. I look forward to the next chapter of her career, to spending more time together walking on the beach or discussing research (and the latest gossip!) over wine and cheese on her beautiful balcony overlooking the ocean."

Professor Major's care and enthusiasm for teaching and guiding young scholars has been demonstrated by her mentoring of more than 25 successful graduate students and post-docs, as well as numerous undergraduate students she taught in the classroom or mentored for their honors thesis projects. Her graduate students have also highlighted her zeal for research and how this carries over to caring for her students. Elizabeth Quinn-Jensen, one of Professor Major's newest PhD students, remarks on the strides she has made and an inspiration she was in the field, "There is no doubt of Brenda's contributions to the field of social psychology. This is evident in her many publications and numerous awards and accolades, as well as through the contributions that her former students have made to the field as well. It's also worth noting that Brenda was a prominent figure in making psychology more accessible for women." Another PhD student, Sierra Feasel, commented, "I've learned so much just from talking through ideas with her and listening to how she thinks. Brenda is always so warm and caring – even when she's giving you criticism. She's been an integral part in developing my identity as a researcher and I'm so grateful to have her as a mentor. With her immense love for research, I know retirement doesn't mean the end of her presence in the department but nonetheless, happy retirement, Brenda!" Rammy Salem, another one of Professor Major's PhD students, also remarks on her ability to teach, "Despite being such an influential figure in the field of social psychology, Brenda has always struck me for being so approachable and down-to-earth. While I am very happy for her to enjoy the pastures of retirement, I am saddened that the upcoming generations of psychology students will be missing out on the vast wealth of knowledge and anecdotes she used to bring social psychological concepts to life, and I will try to channel Brenda whenever I teach social psychology in the future."

Payton Small, who is graduating with his PhD at the end of the 2022 school year, reminisces about one story in particular, "In one of my first meetings with Brenda, she emailed me to let me know she was running late. In addition to informing me she would be late, she attached two articles she thought would be relevant for a study we were designing and told me to read them over and be ready to discuss. When she arrived for the meeting she sat down, took out a notepad and excitedly asked, "What did you glean from the articles?" I admitted to her I only had enough time to skim the abstracts of each. I prepared for the disappointment in her eyes. Instead, she went on to talk for about 30 minutes in detail about each paper and developed like 3 interesting follow-up ideas. I was amazed. In the moment, I realized that she wasn't upset with me for not reading the papers nor was it a test of my prowess as a graduate student; she was just SO excited to talk with me about the research. I enjoyed being one of Brenda's 'intellectual playmates' and will always be grateful for the knowledge she imparted on me. I've never met anybody who is so genuinely in love with their profession as Brenda and I can only hope that when I'm at the end of my career I'm as passionate about the field of social and personality psychology as she still is. Have a wonderful retirement Brenda and thank you!"

Payton Small (left) and Prof. Brenda Major (right)

Truly there is not enough words that would be sufficient in describing Professor Major's legacy and the contributions she has made to both UCSB's Psychological & Brain Sciences department and the field of social psychology. While we know Professor Major will be around and will still be thinking about new research ideas, we all wish her a very well-deserved and happy retirement!

FACULTY TRIBUTE

GREG ASHBY

Distinguished Professor of Psychological and Brain Sciences, F. Gregory Ashby, PhD., formally retired in 2021 after 35 years of excellence in research, teaching, and service within the department and at the campus.

Professor Gregory Ashby received a B.S. in Mathematics and Psychology from the University of Puget Sound, and an M.S. and a PhD. in Mathematical Psychology from Purdue University. After a Postdoctoral Fellowship at Harvard and an Assistant Professorship at Ohio State, he joined the faculty at UCSB. Professor Ashby made extraordinary theoretical and empirical contributions to experimental psychology. His work highlighted the importance of mathematical approaches to understanding cognitive processes. In his early career, he developed a multidimensional version of signal detection theory and applied it to identification, categorization, and similarity. During the next 20 years, he focused on neuroscience and became one of the first computational cognitive neuroscientists. During this time, he proposed an influential theory that humans have multiple category-learning systems, and he was the first to propose that many of the cognitive benefits of positive mood are mediated by increased brain dopamine levels. His work is known worldwide for setting the bar on rigorous mathematical approaches to studying the mind and brain and has been influential in the fields of cognitive psychology and neuroscience.

His scholarly achievements have resulted in many honors and awards. He is a Fellow of the Society for Experimental Psychology and won the 2017 Howard Crosby Warren Medal (the oldest award in Psychology). He served as President of the Society for Mathematical Psychology and Chair of the NIH Cognition and Perception grant-review panel. He has brought national and international recognition to Psychological & Bran Sciences and to UC Santa Barbara.

Professor Ashby was also committed to university service. He was Chair of the Department from 2009-2012, and he played lead roles in creating the PhD. Emphasis in QMSS and the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Dynamical Neuroscience (DYNS), and he served as the first Chair of DYNS.

When thinking back on his contributions to UCSB, Professor Ashby reflects, “I'm most proud of the two main theories I developed and tested – COVIS (multiple learning systems) and general recognition theory (multidimensional signal detection theory) plus all the great students that I mentored!”

Indeed, during his 35 years at UCSB, he mentored 23 graduate students and seven postdocs who went on to successful academic and non-academic careers. Professor Ashby has always been a dedicated, supportive, and inspiring mentor, and known for his love for the outdoors and rock climbing. Most of the graduate students in his lab would end up climbing one way or another! His former graduate students reminisced on their time as graduate students at UCSB.

Professor Vincent Filoteo, now an adjunct Professor of Neurosciences at UCSB stated, “Greg has always been a great source of mentorship and inspiration, professionally, but most importantly personally.”

Dr. Vivian Valentin, Director of Kind Mind told us: “Greg inspired me to be an innovative scientist, and also an adventure-loving, caring human. Whether at a lab meeting, a conference, or a rock wall, I treasure our stimulating conversations about theories, adventures, and family life.”

Dr. Mike Casale, Vice President of Analytics and Behavioral Science at Penumbra, commented, “Greg was a great role model. He taught me that a big part of being a scientist is being a well-rounded, curious, and thoughtful human being”. Dr. Casale later added, “Working with Greg gave me the opportunity for climbing adventures, I wouldn't have experienced what turned out to be a few of the more interesting experiences in my life if it wasn't for Greg, including a climbing expedition in the Sierras.

Professor Ashby’s most recent graduate student, Paul Kovacs, who is graduating with his PhD in 2022, reflected, "I have been very lucky to work with someone as smart and competent as Greg Ashby. Everyone in the lab looks up to him. Professionally and personally, Greg is the kind of guy that you want to be more like. He sets a good example for the rest of us to follow."

FACULTY TRIBUTE

Fellow faculty colleagues at the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences recognized his stature in the field of mathematical psychology and computational neuroscience, his tremendous intellectual contributions to the department, his leadership in quantitative training of hundreds of graduate students, and his immense generosity with colleagues and students alike.

Professor Barry Giesbrecht said, "Professor Ashby is an exceptionally rigorous scholar, a fabulous mentor, a generous colleague, and a true citizen of the Department and UCSB campus. Personally, I have been fortunate to benefit from Professor Ashby's advice from the start of my career until now, and I know that I am not the only one."

Former Dept. Chair and current Dean of Undergraduate Studies Professor Mike Miller commented on the high respect with which Professor Ashby is regarded across the country. He said, "One of the smartest people I know is George Wolford, one of my mentors at Dartmouth. When I told him I was going to UCSB, he said Greg Ashby was the smartest person he knew."

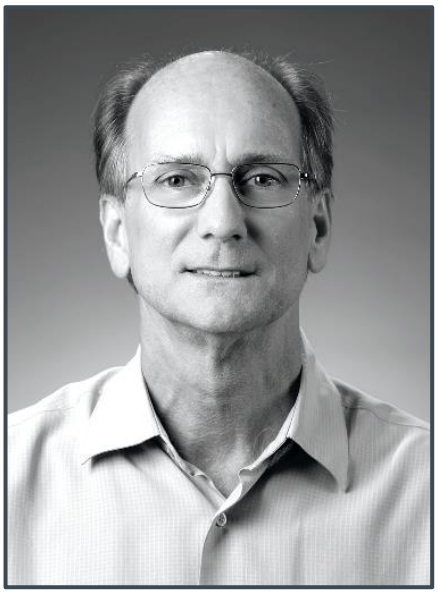
Professor Eckstein added, "When I first arrived at UCSB, I was somewhat intimidated by Professor Ashby's intellectual stature and somewhat reserved demeanor. Rock climbing and his favorite Thai food restaurant in Vegas always worked well as icebreakers in those early days. It has been inspiring to see him lead not just one, but two subfields: mathematical cognitive psychology and computational neuroscience. He has been a role model in how to lead effectively and fairly."

When asked about how he would spend his new free time, Professor Ashby gave his usual straight-to-the-point answer, and as expected, it involved the outdoors: "I will have extra free time for writing, traveling, cycling, and climbing."

Professor Ashby will be greatly missed in our Department! Psychological & Brain Sciences congratulated Professor Ashby at a reception on June 4, 2022, where his career was celebrated.

COMING SOON

We congratulate Distinguished Professor Diane Mackie and Professor Ben Reese on their retirements! Look out for their tributes in future editions of the *Inside Psychology* newsletter.



NEW FACULTY PROFILE

MICHAEL BEYELER

Michael Beyeler is a new Assistant Professor in Psychological & Brain Sciences and has an appointment as well in Computer Science. He received a PhD in Computer Science from UC Irvine as well as a BS in Electrical Engineering and a MS in Biomedical Engineering from ETH Zurich, Switzerland. *Inside Psychology* was excited to learn more about Michael and his research.

Prof. Michael Beyeler

***Inside Psychology* (IS): Michael, tell us about yourself. Where were you born, educated, and what is a key moment or moments that led you to become a computer scientist who studies vision?**

Michael Beyeler (MB): I was born and raised in Switzerland, and only came to the US 12 years ago (has it really been that long?) to complete my Master's Thesis at UCI. I was on a path to becoming an electrical engineer, but everything changed when I took a course in computational neuroscience taught by Rodney Douglas and Kevan Martin at ETH Zurich. I suddenly realized that I could use my technical skills (signal processing, Fourier analysis, ODEs) to try and understand how the brain computes, and I have been fascinated with that ever since.

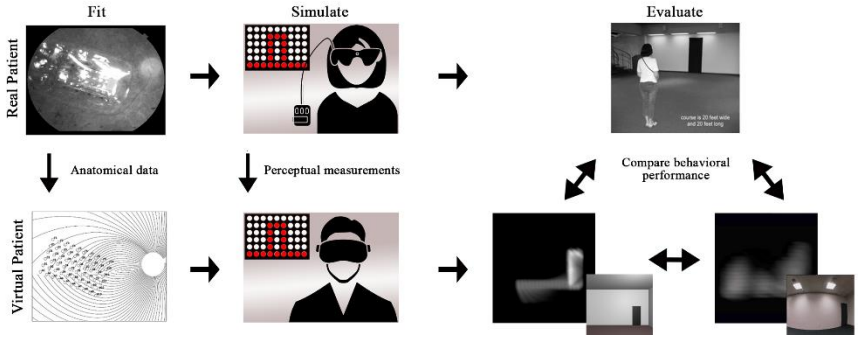
During my PhD, I focused on developing self-guided robots using models of visual motion perception that were inspired by the computational principles of cortical circuits. By investigating the link between neural circuitry and the behavior of these robots on specific tasks, I could gain insight into the guiding computational principles that made these motion networks so powerful. My main contribution was to show that prominent neuronal responses traditionally attributed to specialized self-motion "templates" in brain area MST might instead be a by-product of neurons performing dimensionality reduction on their inputs. It was fascinating to me to show how the brain might implement such a fundamental mathematical transform, and how it might adapt its organization to the statistics of its sensory inputs.

Then I saw a job ad for a postdoctoral position on retinal implants, solicited by Drs. Ione Fine and (UCSB alum) Geoffrey Boynton at the University of Washington, and I was reminded of my early engineering days when I was fascinated with brain implants. These "brain-computer interfaces" can be used both for treating neurological and mental disorders as well as for understanding brain function, and now engineers have developed ways to manipulate neural circuits with electrical currents, light, ultrasound, and magnetic fields. Remarkably, we can make a finger, arm, or even a leg move just by activating the right neurons in the motor cortex. Similarly, we can activate neurons in the visual cortex to make people see flashes of light. The former allows us to treat neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease and epilepsy, whereas the latter should eventually allow us to restore vision to people who are blind.

IS: Tell us about your research. What is one project or set of findings that you have worked on thus far that exemplifies your approach to science and the questions you ask. And what's one goal you have for your research here at UCSB?

MB: The goal of my research is to elucidate the science behind bionic eye technologies that may one day restore useful vision to people living with incurable blindness. It is an ambitious and inherently interdisciplinary goal that requires the ability to collect meaningful perceptual and behavioral data with existing bionic eye recipients, a deep understanding of the neural code of vision, and the engineering skills to develop a wearable medical device.

Similar to a cochlear implant, a retinal implant consists of an electrode array that electrically stimulates neurons in the retina or the visual cortex a blind person to evoke visual percepts ("phosphenes"). A common misconception is that the eye works like a camera, and that each electrode in the array can be thought of as a "pixel" in an im-age; to generate a complex visual experience, one then simply needs to turn on the right combination of pixels. In contrast, a lot of my work focuses on documenting through computational and behavioral work that the artificial vision provided by current devices is highly



Real patients (top row) and virtual patients (bottom row) of bionic vision.

distorted. Understanding the causes of these distortions and finding ways to alleviate them (e.g., through machine learning) will be critically important to the success of bionic eye technologies. To this end, we build computational models of what bionic eye users might "see" when they use their devices and implement them in virtual reality to let anyone "see" through the eyes of the patient (see figure on left).

IS: Your Bionic Vision Lab is a collaboration between Computer Science and PBS. Tell us about how being in two departments shapes your research and the bridges you are building between the two?

MB: Being part of two departments (and two colleges!) has allowed me to recruit stellar students from a variety of backgrounds. All our team members are computationally minded and have a keen interest in vision and medical applications. But as part of an interdisciplinary group, my students understand that we can't all possibly know everything—but that everyone provides a specific piece to the puzzle. It has kept us all humble and eager to keep growing/learning new things. Being an interdisciplinary researcher is not always easy, since you run the risk of never quite fitting in (and yes, you have to go to twice the faculty meetings), but that is a small price to pay in order to be able to tackle some of science's most interesting challenges.

IS: You have won the prestigious NIH K99/R00 Pathway to Independence Award. Can you describe what that award means and what it was awarded to help you study?

MB: The K99/R00 is a 5-year career development award to support your transition from a postdoc to running your own lab. I got it to study the perceptual experience of retinal implant users; to document the limitations of current technologies, and to devise neuroscientifically inspired strategies to improve upon them. Receiving this award made all the difference to me (I remember my wife and I jumping up and down with joy, before being reminded that this is a Wendy's), as being a postdoc also comes with a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety about your immediate academic future. There are not a lot of funding opportunities for international scholars, and as a first-generation student I am grateful to my PhD and postdoc advisors, Jeffrey Krichmar and Ione Fine, for teaching me the funding landscape and the unspoken rules of academia. My goal is to build on these early successes and develop an ambitious and successful research program.

IS: What experiences outside of academic research have shaped your research most and how?

MB: One of the most impressive experiences has been to work with the Lighthouse Foundation for the Blind in Seattle, a not-for-profit social enterprise that provides employment, support, and training for people who are blind, deafblind, and blind with other disabilities. As a sighted person, it is easy to fall victim to the "savior complex" and to suggest visual accessibility aids and related technology that seems reasonable to you but may appear gimmicky to the affected person. Working with the Lighthouse did not just help me better understand the needs and challenges of people who are blind, but it also constantly reminds me that there is a difference between a "cool idea" that might get you into a prestigious academic venue and a genuine technology that may make a difference in the life of a real person.

IS: What are some of your non-academic hobbies, interests, or pursuits?

MB: I wish I had a long list of hobbies that would deepen the mystique of my persona, but things have changed a lot since we have had our baby son. He has now grown into a curious and opinionated preschooler, so I enjoy spending my spare time with him and my wife. When I do have some time to myself, I like to play the piano or escape to the many beaches and hiking trails that Santa Barbara has to offer.

STAFF PROFILE: THE FINANCIAL TEAM

The day-to-day functioning of Psychological & Brain Sciences would not be possible without the contributions of our financial team. *Inside Psychology* is delighted to get to know this group, consisting of Kallie Hill, Michelle Tibbitts, and Stevie Bullock better. Their supervisor and Academic Business Officer for PBS, Christine Griffin, described what it is the financial team does: "The Financial Unit within PBS is an integral part of the department. Kallie, Michelle, and Stevie are often the thread that weaves all the other units in PBS together. Whether it's student services, personnel/payroll, operations, contracts and grants, or one of our research centers, the finance team is involved behind the scenes ensuring smooth operation of all of our departmental programs. Over the last 10 years, UCSB has worked on upgrading components of its financial systems. Our finance team has demonstrated terrific agility supporting these many changes and being flexible and resilient. They continue to energize others using the new systems and support the department through each new upgrade, which is not an easy task. They stay committed to working through each new challenge and supporting everyone in the department."

Stevie Bullock

***Inside Psychology* (IS): Describe what you do in your capacity as Subject Pool Coordinator.**

SB: As Subject Pool Coordinator, I set up accounts for researchers and participants, approve studies to be run in Sona, set Sona up at the beginning of each quarter, make any purchases for Human Subject Payment, and take care of any issues that arise in Sona. I also help out with purchasing in Gateway, reimbursements, and play back up for Michelle if/when she is out.

IS: How long have you been at UCSB?

SB: I have been at UCSB since January 2020, so almost two and a half years.

IS: What are your hobbies or favorite things to do?

SB: I enjoy reading, working out, being outdoors, and spending time with my significant other and three children.

Michelle Tibbitts

IS: Describe what you do in your capacity as Purchasing Coordinator/Financial Analyst.

MT: I manage and coordinate all purchasing functions using Gateway and other systems on multiple departmental accounts. I work with faculty, staff, students, researchers, vendors, purchasing and other offices to resolve issues related to purchasing. I also prepare/review/analyze/post numerous financial documents including travel/entertainment vouchers, general reimbursements, transfers of expense, vendor blankets, recharges and on-campus billing. I provide information and guidance to department personnel to ensure all campus, UC, Federal policies, and audit requirements are met regarding expenditures. I give training and guidance to new users on Gateway and Concur and provide solutions and problem solving on complex matters to departmental personnel. Finally, I utilize the GUS database system for posting expenditures, downloading gateway purchase orders and monthly reconciliations with the campus ledger.

From left to right: Stevie Bullock, Michelle Tibbitts, and Kallie Hill.

IS: How long have you been at UCSB?

MT: I graduated from UCSB in 2008 with my B.A. in English and have worked for the university for almost 9 years.

IS: What are your hobbies or favorite things to do?

MT: I am an animal lover and have been pet sitting in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties for the last 13 years. I enjoy spending time with my family and taking care of my 2-year-old niece. I am also very excited for my second niece to be born this month! In my spare time, I love traveling, hiking, running, cooking, reading, and writing poetry.

Kallie Hill

IS: Describe what you do in your capacity as Financial Coordinator.

KH: My main duties include reconciling payroll and general ledgers, creating budgets and spending plans for faculty, reviewing and approving CONCUR reimbursements, and assisting faculty however necessary with contracts and grants proposals. I'm also responsible for award set up and closing procedures, linking accounts and reviewing balances to avoid overdrafts.

IS: How long have you been at UCSB?

KH: I was an undergrad here at UCSB and was fortunate enough to work in the PBS department as a SAGE employee. I started work in 2011 and transitioned over to the ECE department after graduation in 2014. After about four years at engineering, I transferred back to PBS to work for this amazing community again!

IS: What are your hobbies or favorite things to do?

KH: My hobbies include kayaking, weight lifting, boxing, arts and crafts and playing with my pup, Atticus. I especially love to travel and see different cultures and communities, and on weekends you're likely to bump into me downtown enjoying a cup of coffee!

TEACHING IT FORWARD:
DISCUSSING TEACHING JOBS WITH PBS ALUMNI

Many students entering a PhD program believe that the ideal goal is to obtain a tenure-track position at an R1 university, but this is not necessarily the default path. As PhD candidates learn about more job opportunities and other ways of utilizing and applying their research skills, a wider variety of jobs are becoming more appealing. The PBS department recognized this growing interest for different job opportunities and have responded by providing resources for PhD students to learn more the variety of careers that PhD graduates can pursue. For example, in the 2020-2021 school year, Dr. Roxie Chuang, who graduated in 2021, and Professor Heejung Kim organized a *Non-Academic Careers Speaker Series* and invited PBS alumni currently in industry to speak about and discuss their experiences transitioning from academia to industry, how PhD students can best work towards industry jobs, etc.

This year, PhD candidate Delancey Wu and Professor Kim continued this series with teaching careers in the *Teaching Careers Speaker Series*, where they also invited PBS alumni in a range of teaching positions, from community colleges to liberal arts schools and even R1 universities. The rest of this article features these alumni speakers and the wisdom they shared about their teaching jobs and advice on how to increase one's success searching for a teaching-focused career.

Screenshot from Prof. Celeste Pilegard's talk.

Fall quarter. The first PBS alum to kick off the series was Professor Celeste Pilegard. Professor Pilegard is an Assistant Teaching Professor in Psychology at UCSD. She graduated from UCSB in 2016 and worked with Professor Rich Mayer. She discussed what her job application process was like and painted a realistic depiction of the job market, and how best to find an ideal job for one's preferences, goals, and pragmatic expectations.

Winter quarter. Professor Debra Cozzoli is an Instructor of Psychology at Portland Community College. She graduated in 2011 from UCSB and worked with Professor Karen Szumlinski. She highlighted the responsibilities she has as an instructor, particularly for community colleges. She also emphasized that it is okay to have multiple positions to figure out what one wants before settling into a more permanent position and how working in certain cities, such as Portland, can lend itself to unique opportunities of working in more than one institution.

Professor Diana Leonard is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Lewis & Clark, a liberal arts college. She graduated from UCSB in 2012 and worked with Professor Diane Mackie. She elaborated on why she picked a liberal arts college specifically and how she cares not only about building her identity as a teacher and scholar but also about nurturing a community of undergraduate students and assisting with their growth. She also discussed adjusting from UCSB to a liberal arts college and how her approach to teaching changed to fit the liberal arts atmosphere and the tips she had to assist with this transition. She says, "Participating in [this] series gave me a welcome opportunity to reflect on my own journey in the liberal arts while also meeting the wonderful PhD candidates who are curious about the teacher-scholar side of things."

Screenshot from Prof. Diana Leonard's talk.

TEACHING IT FORWARD

Spring quarter. Professor Jeff Niehaus is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Christopher Newport University, a public university with a focus on liberal arts, in Virginia. He graduated in 2009 from UCSB and worked with Professor Tamsin German. Professor Niehaus describes what PhD candidates should emphasize in their job applications and teaching portfolios, according to what hiring committees look for in potential hires. After giving his talk, Dr. Niehaus said, "It was a real treat to reconnect with the graduate students… For those who end up emphasizing their skills as instructors, I think it's important to let them know that it can be an incredibly satisfying and respectable career."

Professor Jeff Bowen is a Senior Lecturer in Psychological and Brain Sciences at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland. He graduated from UCSB in 2017 and worked with Professor Nancy Collins. His talk covered focused ways PhD candidates can construct their applications, including how teaching research methodology and statistics are the foundation of the undergraduate curriculum in psychology. He emphasized how important it was for him to have experience teaching these subjects and how valued this experience is in the teaching job market and can help build a standout teaching portfolio.

The final speaker of the year was Professor Smaranda Lawrie, who is an Assistant Professor in Psychology at Providence College in Rhode Island. She graduated from UCSB in 2021 and worked with Professor Heejung Kim. Professor Lawrie described her teaching position as an "art of juggling." While her job comes with its own set of challenges, she finds the liberal arts environment to be very rewarding and enjoys spending time with the students she teaches and mentors. Having recently finished her first year of teaching, Professor Lawrie was able to detail in her talk the recent experience on the job market and what her daily life has been like during her first year.

Current PBS PhD student and series co-organizer, Delancey Wu, summed up the year of talks on teaching positions, "It has been great reconnecting with PBS alumni and hearing what they have been up to. I've heard from both current PhD students as well as the speakers themselves that they're glad that this is available as a resource now and wished these talks were available back when they were applying for jobs. I'm glad that we have the opportunity to provide these kinds of resources that can make a difference as we take the next step in our careers, no matter what we decide to do."

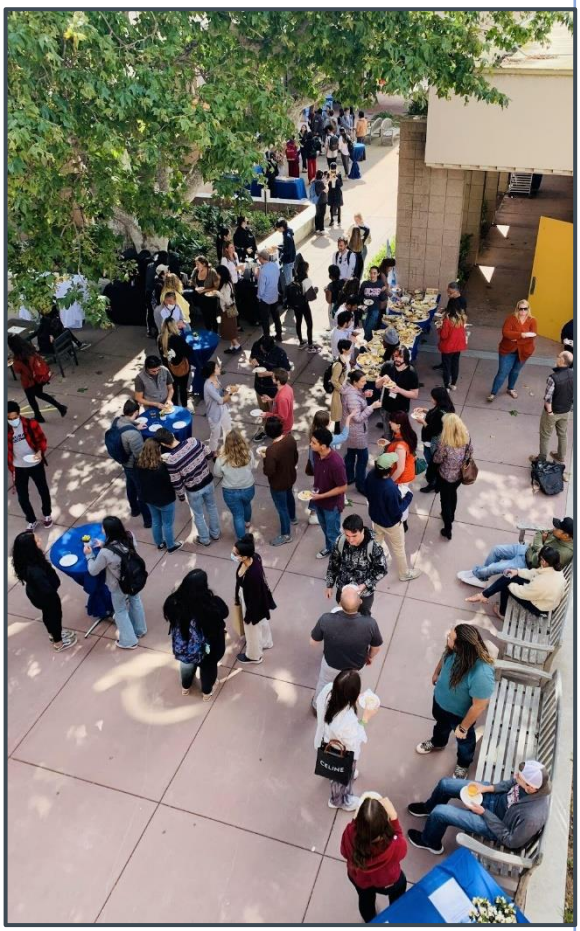
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY PHD PROGRAM RANKED #9 IN THE US

The Psychological and Brain Sciences department received national recognition when the 2023 US News and World Report list of "Best Graduate Schools" ranked the Social Psychology program #9 in the nation. In response to the ranking, PBS Department Chair Shelly Gable said "It is a great honor that our graduate program in Social Psychology has been named as a top ten program. Training graduate students in cutting-edge theory and research in social psychology is our top priority and we are excited to be recognized in this way."

ENGAGE! GIVE DAY! ENDOWMENT FUND!
AND OTHER NEWS FROM ALUMNI RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT

The alumni, faculty, students and staff have come together to foster connections and create opportunities in 2021-2022. Some of the major highlights include:

- The PBS Alumni Council, started in 2019, added two new members, Suzanne Perkin and Wendy Berry Mendes, and launched a new initiative, the Friends of the Alumni Council. See the following pages for profiles of all of the new PBS Alumni Council members.
- In 2020, with generous gifts from an alumnus and a faculty emeritus, the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences launched the *Endowment for Psychological & Brain Sciences Fund*. The purpose of this fundraising initiative is to promote the long-term excellence of the department in its teaching, research, and service missions. In 2022, the fund exceeded $100,000 total in donations.
- In Fall 2021, led by Faculty advisor, Professor Vanessa Woods, the Alumni Council organized mock interviews for senior undergraduate students, where alumni met virtually with students, conducted a practice interview, and gave valuable tips on interviewing and securing jobs.
- Spring 2022 then saw the return to the first in person ENGAGE event since 2019! 13 Alumni came back to speak on three different alumni panels, and well more than 130 undergraduates participated in the panels. As Professor Vanessa Woods, the faculty organizer of ENGAGE put it, "It is always a pleasure to witness the alumni's mentoring towards our current undergraduate students. PBS alumni have a commitment to pay it forward, and you can see this in their actions in the Fall mock interviews with seniors where they give advice and help the students hone their interviewing skills." The alumni foster a sense of community with the undergraduates at the Fall ENGAGE event speaking to students about their journey and giving them valuable career advice (photo below). The event concluded with a wonderful reception, featuring wine, locally brewed beer, and cheese (photo on upper right).

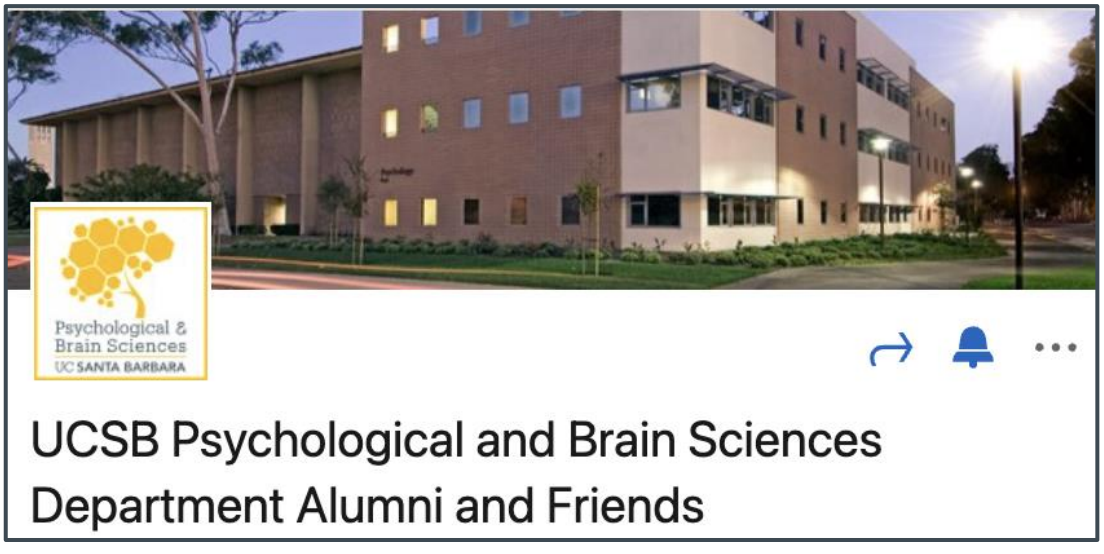


ALUMNI NEWS

- 2022 saw the release of an Alumni Council video that highlights the work of the Alumni Council. As Lisa Alumni Council member and UCSB Director of Admissions, Lisa Przekop '89 (pictured right) said in the video, "A student at UCSB is inquisitive, incredibly friendly, and incredibly engaged in community service – I really see that in the Psychological & Brain Sciences students I have seen over the years." The video captures that engagement through interviews with alumni, faculty, and current UCSB students.

- UCSB Give Day was 4-7-2022 and PBS received the greatest number of donations among all the departments in MLPS (Mathematics, Life, and Physical Sciences)! The Alumni Council led the way with over $21,000 in donations.

- The PBS Department Alumni & Friends LinkedIn page has over 350 members and has been a source of professional connection and support for students, faculty, alumni, and staff.



MEET THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE ALUMNI COUNCIL

SUZANNE PERKIN

In 2019, the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences launched the PBS Alumni Council to engage students and connect with alumni. The mission of the Psychological & Brain Sciences Alumni Council is to develop a larger community of former and current students that transcends the time of their UCSB experience, that connects people, expands perspectives, leverages resources, and creates networks and pathways for career and intellectual growth. In 2021-2022, Suzanne Perkin and Wendy Berry Mendes joined the Alumni Council, and on the following pages, *Inside Psychology* features them as part of our alumni interview series.

Suzanne Perkin

***Inside Psychology* (IS): How did you come to study biopsychology? What drove you to the topic of biopsychology and to UCSB to study it?**

Suzanne Perkin (SP): As a kid, science was always one of my favorite subjects, particularly biology. But when I took psychology in high school, I really fell in love with the subject. Regardless, I came to UCSB undeclared but started with the chemistry and calculus series to keep my options open. I didn't even know that there was a biopsychology major until one day freshman year when I was flipping through the catalog. Reading the courses I would be able to take got me very excited, and I never looked back. I loved studying the brain and physiology, but I was also really interested in behavior. Thankfully, the major was broad enough to allow me to do both, and when it came time to pick a senior thesis advisor, I decided to branch out to social psych. I loved that year and being a part of Dr. Major's lab. It stretched me in ways that I would not have been stretched if I had chosen a thesis advisor in biopsych.

IS: Are there any classes or professors in particular from Psych that you remember, and why?

SP: Definitely! The perception series was great. I recall taking visual neuroscience with Dr. Brainard and I really loved that class. Any class with Dr. Ettenberg was a sure bet. He even wrote me a letter of recommendation for graduate school! But I also enjoyed Psychology of the Self with Dr. Major and Abnormal Psych with Dr. Kopeikin. One thing that was universally true about the Psych department was that all of the professors were amazing and super supportive. I never took a psych or biopsych class I didn't like.

IS: Tell us about your work as the Associate Dean in Student Life at UCSB. What are the major issues you are working on right now, and can you trace the trajectory from UCSB… back to UCSB?

SP: Working in higher education is fascinating if you are interested in human behavior and development. A lot of my work centers around students who, unfortunately, are not making good decisions either individually or as a collective, but I also get to work on student engagement outside of the classroom. While I try to figure out why students do what they do, there is also a lot of science that applies to me personally. How do I make decisions? What are my biases and how I can unlearn them? That was one of the strengths that I gained from psychology, appreciating looking at problems and issues from many different angles and realizing that the best answer will take all perspectives into account.

IS: What do you think is most important for PBS students and alumni to learn about student leadership, accountability, and civic engagement from your perspective as Associate Dean?

SP: I think it is to be open minded and think critically. Listen to different perspectives and use the scientific method you learned so much about. Question your own thoughts and beliefs. What we know from psychology is that our minds play a lot of tricks on us, so considering we may be wrong is an important part of leadership, accountability, and civic engagement. There are also parallels with motivation and reward. I often think about how my background helps me with the problems I have to tackle with college students.

IS: What are your goals in joining the PBS Alumni Council? What do you see as the role that alumni can play in the department, and with students?

SP: I think alumni can help current students see what is possible and understand the value and breadth of their degree. I was excited to be invited to the PBS Alumni Council and hope that my experience can show students a science degree doesn't have to land you in a science field. If you are interested and willing to put in the work, do it! It will benefit you in countless ways, no matter what field you choose.

Suzanne graduating.

IS: Any advice for Gaucho psych majors and recent graduates?

SP: For current students, get to know your professors! Your classes will be more interesting and fulfilling if you do. Jump on a research team. You will learn more about psychology by participating in a study that you ever will from a book. For alumni, there isn't a career out there that wouldn't be enhanced by the skills and knowledge you've gained pursuing this degree at UCSB. It's not what you memorized that is important. It's the thinking behind it, and that can and will apply to anything you choose to pursue.

WENDY BERRY MENDES

IS: How did you come to be a UCSB PhD in Psychology? What drove you to the topic of social psychology, and to UCSB to study it?

Prof. Wendy Berry Mendes

Wendy Berry Mendes (WBM): I like telling the candid story of how I ended up at UCSB because so many students assume that professors don't have their own rocky roads when they applied to graduate school, but I most certainly did. So here is the story, warts and all.

I had a masters degree in quantitative psychology and was working as a project statistician at UCSF when I knew I wanted to get a doctorate – I couldn't imagine spending my career analyzing other people's ideas. I applied to social psychology programs and was admitted into a few, but I was waitlisted at UCSB. Stan Klein, who called me for the initial interview, suggested that I still come down for prospective students' weekend, even though I was waitlisted. It seemed odd to come down as a waitlisted student, but I thought Santa Barbara would be a nice place to visit for a day, so I drove down from San Francisco. Consistent with my concerns, it was an awkward visit – I wasn't invited to all the events and not all the faculty met with me. I did meet with a few faculty, though: Jim Blascovich, Brenda Major, Stan Klein, and Diane Mackie, and they were terrific.

I drove home that day feeling better about my other choices and was happy to commit to one of the programs that admitted me. A few days later, I received a follow-up call from UCSB offering me admissions, but I had already moved on mentally and said that. At that point, several faculty called me, most notably Jim Blascovich, and suggested that we meet later that week when he was up in the Bay Area for a conference. I met with Jim and Diane at WPA, and I planned to decline the offer, but Jim and Diane were persuasive and told me all the reasons why UCSB was the perfect fit. Needless to say, I ended up at UCSB.

There was no question that UCSB was the right choice. I was interested in stress and coping and person perception – my masters thesis examined LAPD police officers' attributions about criminals and how chronic stress influenced perceptions about criminal behavior. Working with Jim was the perfect foundation for training in stress and coping, psychophysiology, and attributions about others.

IS: Are there any classes or professors in particular from Psych that you remember, and why?

WBM: Brenda Major was, and is, a tremendous influence on my training and career. Brenda is a brilliant theoretician and backs that strong philosophical approach with serious empirical skills. Being in a class, brown bag (informal seminar), or colloquium (formal seminar) with Brenda was being in the presence of a genius. She taught us how to think about ideas (if you don't have a model in mind, you aren't doing social psychology right), ask questions, and help others. She is generous with her feedback and you can't help but "catch" her love of science.

IS: Tell us about your work in the Emotion, Health and Psychophysiology Lab. What are the questions you are working on right now, and can you trace the trajectory from UCSB to UCSF?

WBM: My lab has several ongoing research programs but they have a common theme, which is how to leverage changes in the body to understand the mind and behavior. Some of the current work includes:

Affect Contagion

For over a decade, my lab has been studying how stress and emotion experienced by one person influences affective states of those around them (i.e., physiologic-synchrony). This research area has grown to include family members, strangers of different social identities, and field studies with group therapy sessions, surgical teams, and work groups. We are interested in identifying the mechanisms by which affect is "caught" and the boundaries of this effect. For example, we have shown that mothers and their babies show physiologic synchrony following acute maternal stress, but that touch is a critical ingredient for the transmission of stress from mothers to babies.

I was at UCSB when I ran my first "dyad" study, recruiting two people who didn't know each other and having them interact while measuring their physiology.

The study was a complete Flop! However, I consider this first study the most important pilot study I conducted because, though I made mistakes, I learned a great deal. Over the years, we have improved the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological approach to studying how dyads and teams interact and how physiological synchrony can be measured and understood.

Vagus Nerve as a Pathway to Emotion Regulation

As a social-psychophysiologist, I have been interested in how affective states influence physiologic responses with the assumed directionality from affective states to physiologic changes. However, there are key physiologic systems that can alter affective states such as the vagus nerve—the largest nerve in the human body. This nerve ties directly to social-affective experiences. We have published dozens of studies showing links between positive emotions, emotion regulation, and social connection with cardiac vagal nerve activation. Recently, we started using transcutaneous vagal nerve stimulation (tVNS) to examine bottom-up processes associated with activating the vagus nerve. This work has tremendous potential in development of theoretical models associated with psychophysiology, as well as applied value to the extent that tVNS might be effective at reducing anxiety and depressive symptoms.

At UCSB when I arrived the social psychology program was just starting to include more personality or individual difference perspectives. In some psychology departments, social and personality psychology are part of the same area, whereas in other departments you might find them separate or just one and not the other. When I was a graduate student, UCSB hired Nancy Collins who provided a great model of how to think of personality and social psychology as two fields that can draw from each other and improve the understanding of human behavior.

IS: What do you think is most important for PBS students and alumni to learn about the role of emotions and emotion research in promoting better health?

WBM: Let's start with the most basic point – everything your parents told you growing up about good health is right: eat your vegetables, exercise, and get good sleep. Those are your building blocks. What we have learned from emotion and health research is about the value of emotional wellbeing and good emotion regulation skills. When we look at the data from tens of thousands of people and we are examining influences of emotional wellbeing like optimism, life-satisfaction, and positive emotion, we see wide-ranging health outcomes like better sleep, lower blood pressure, and better coping skills. In terms of emotion regulation, people who are less likely to suppress negative emotions, and are more likely to reappraise a negative situation (think about the potential benefits when something goes wrong) have better overall health. Critically, these skills can be learned, so even people who don't spontaneously engage in adaptive emotion regulation skills can learn to do so over time.

Prof. Wendy Berry Mendes (second to the right) and Jim Blascovich's graduate students ~1998.

IS: What are your goals in joining the PBS Alumni Council? What do you see as the role that alumni can play in the department, and with students?

WBM: I hope that I can help PBS with thinking about all the opportunities graduates have and the ever evolving skills that will help with their next steps. For example, living in the Bay Area I am surrounded by tech companies who are very interested in hiring graduates with psychology degrees especially those with strong data analytic skills. The stronger you are in stats and data management skills the better off you will be in both job searches and/or applying to graduate school.

IS: Any advice for Gaucho psych majors and recent graduates?

WBM: If you want to go to graduate school in psychology – clinical- or research-track – you likely will benefit from a year or two working in a clinic or a lab. Getting additional clinic/research experience helps define what you would like to do in psychology and also give you access to people in the field who can help with that next step. Also, don't worry too much if the work experience is a bit different than what you would like to study – a research position is open in a sleep lab, but you aren't interested in sleep. It is the more general approach and experience that you learn rather than the very narrow question that the lab might be exploring.

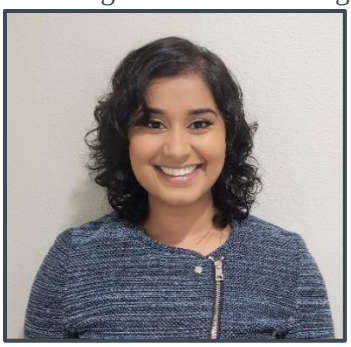
MEET THE FRIENDS OF THE ALUMNI COUNCIL

In 2022, Psychological & Brain Sciences launched Friends of the Alumni Council. Friends of the Alumni Council are invited to join the Alumni Council based on their contributions to the department through participation in events like ENGAGE, the annual alumni panel forum held in spring quarter for undergraduates, as well as through other avenues of support. Friends of Alumni Council are alumni who make a significant contribution of time to the support of PBS undergraduate students by sharing their experiences with our current students, helping students network, and serving as a role model and mentor. Friends of the Alumni Council typically commit 12-15 hours of service to PBS undergraduates in a 3-year period. Below are the new members of the Friends of the Alumni Council.

Armando Abrego ~ 2017

Armando Abrego graduated with a BA in Psychology and a minor in Applied Psychology. While at UCSB, he was working as a Behavioral Technician providing Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) to children on the Autism spectrum. After graduating from UCSB, he worked as a counselor for families and youth at Seneca Family of Agencies. At Seneca, Armando held different job titles, such as Recruiter, Bilingual Outreach Coordinator, and then lead recruiter. As a Bilingual Outreach Coordinator, he was working on the project Todo Por Mi Familia, where he worked with families that were separated from their child at the south border and connecting them to mental health services. As a lead recruiter, Armando leads the recruit team at Seneca that oversees hiring talent for the entire agency. Currently Armando is attending a pre-health post-baccalaureate program where he is continuing his journey in mental health in hopes to become a psychiatrist.

Shobha Ambi ~ 2020



Shobha graduated with a degree in Biopsychology and is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Nursing at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. She is dedicated to helping underserved adolescents who struggle with their mental health and found ways to serve her community at UCSB via her positions as Co-President of the Society of Undergraduate Psychologists, Lead Representative in the Student Mental Health Task Force, Campus Liaison in Active Minds, research assistant in several labs, External Vice President of Indus, Peds Reads volunteer in Partners in Wellness, and Mental Health Peer at CAPS. Since graduating, Shobha has worked in the psychiatric department at Children's Health of Orange County Hospital and at Newport Healthcare, while volunteering as a Crisis Counselor in Crisis Text Line and COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force Volunteer. Shobha is also the Co-Founder of Children Don't Suffer in Silence, an organization dedicated to destigmatizing mental health in Sri Lankan culture.

Emily Belote ~ 2009

During Emily's time at UCSB, she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta, holding multiple leadership positions, and worked with Dr. David Sherman in his research lab. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. in Psychology, a minor in Art History, and completed the Honors Program. Emily pursued a career in Higher Education and has worked at Chapman University in Orange, CA, for over 10 years in the Office of Residence Life and First Year Experience. Emily oversees occupancy, guides numerous departmental processes and procedures, and manages their housing software, StarRez. Since 2019, she has served on the StarRez Advisory Board, a board comprised of StarRez executives and invited global users, to provide regular feedback to the company and to support its users. On a personal note, Emily is married to a fellow UCSB alum and is still very close to her college roommates!

Juan Gonzalez ~ 2019

Originally from Northern California, Juan Gonzalez arrived in Santa Barbara in 2015 to attend UC Santa Barbara, where he then received his B.A. in Psychological & Brain Sciences along with minors in Education and Applied Psychology in 2019. Going into his Junior year at UCSB, Juan joined the Cultural Psychology Lab as an undergraduate research assistant and worked under the mentorship of Dr. Roxie Chuang and Professor Heejung Kim. After graduating in 2019, Juan has worked as a Research Coordinator in the Collaborative START Lab at the UC Davis MIND Institute and as the Facility Manager for a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program specializing in the treatment of JSO/SAY adolescent-males. Since 2021, Juan has worked as the Lab Manager for UCSB's Cultural Psychology Lab, where his primary role has been overseeing a project on the emotions and change of multicultural relationships.

MEET THE FRIENDS OF THE ALUMNI COUNCIL

Mary (Prenovost) Gray ~ 2005

Mary graduated with a B.A. in Psychology and Sociology from UCSB in 2005. She went on to receive a PhD in Social Psychology from Boston College in 2009. As Mary was completing her doctorate she worked as a Research Associate at a Boston-based nonprofit called Crittenton Women's Union (which is now Economic Mobility Pathways). She is currently a Senior Research Consultant at Engage R+D where she works closely with social sector organizations – philanthropic foundations, nonprofits, and public agencies – to assess the impact of their work and ultimately use evaluation as a tool to support the development of stronger and more equitable communities. Mary's experiences at UCSB, including her work in Professor David Sherman's research lab, serve as the cornerstone in her career. She learned that it is possible to coalesce her passion for social justice and equity with her penchant for learning through research, evaluation, and data.

Joe Isaacson ~ 2000

Joe was born and raised in Santa Barbara, California. He enrolled at UCSB in 1998 and graduated in 2000 with a B.A. in Psychology. Upon graduation, Joe was able to extend a successful collegiate baseball career playing minor league baseball for three seasons. After his baseball career, Joe settled in San Diego, California and began a career as a personal trainer and baseball coach. Joe's years as a trainer and coach honed his passion for working with children and an encounter with a parent sparked his interest in school psychology. In 2009 Joe returned to school to attain his Masters of Education in school psychology. Upon graduating with his Masters in 2012, Joe was offered a job in the same school district he attended as a youth, Goleta Union School District, where he continues to work as a school psychologist.

Chassidie Liu ~ 2021

Chassidie graduated from UC Santa Barbara in 2021 with a B.S. in Psychological and Brain Sciences and a minor in Applied Psychology. She received the department's first ever Diversity and Inclusion Service Award for her continued efforts in supporting different mental health populations within the Santa Barbara community. Throughout her undergraduate career, she worked at an eating disorder treatment center and a behavioral health facility for bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. On campus, Chassidie served as a mental health peer with CAPS and was an intern with CARE. Not only that, but she fulfilled her passion of supporting survivors of interpersonal violence as a volunteer and co-facilitator for the Thriving Initiative. Now she is currently a Clinical Research Coordinator at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Department of Psychiatry, advancing the research of eating disorder treatments. Her goal is to become a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner.

Christopher McFerron ~ 2002

Chris transferred from a western Colorado college to UCSB in 2000 to study Psychology and Philosophy. He graduated in 2002 with a B.A. in Psychology and a B.A. in Philosophy. After graduation, Chris started working with his alma mater in the Psychology Department, soon to be renamed Psychological & Brain Sciences. Chris slowly worked his way from the Subject Pool Coordinator, to an undergraduate advisor, and finally the Student Affairs Manager. Chris oversees both the undergraduate and graduate programs in the PBS department. He loves working with both student populations, helping them through their time at UCSB and fighting for equality amongst all students. Chris has a deep understanding of academia, the job market, and graduate school. When Chris is not working with students and faculty, he spends his spare time with his Golden Retriever, Tucker, and teaching boxing in the Santa Barbara community.

MEET THE FRIENDS OF THE ALUMNI COUNCIL

Dairine Pearson ~ 2006

Dairine grew up in Ireland and emigrated to California over 30 years ago. She attended UCSB and worked with Drs Heejung Kim and David Sherman in their research lab while an undergraduate, receiving the Distinguished Graduating Senior Award in 2006. She went on to receive a Master's in Social Work from California State Long Beach and is now a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Since 2010, she has been a full-time grief counselor and Bereavement Care Coordinator for VNA Health, a provider of home health and hospice care in Santa Barbara County. She is a graduate of the Metta Institute End-of-Life Care Practitioner Program. Dairine is passionate about helping people navigate the end of life process with resilience and compassion. She is excited about being a resource for students in Psychological and Brain Sciences, to find the path that is right for them to achieve a satisfying and fulfilling career. Outside of work, she enjoys crafts, writing, running and hiking our amazing coastline and mountains.

Lexi Provost ~ 2018

Lexi Provost is a Senior Member Success Manager at TSIA, supporting some of the company's largest accounts in their pursuit of full efficiency in service delivery, revenue optimization, and offer development. One of Lexi's most recent accomplishments has been helping to pioneer TSIAs Mentorship Program. Prior to joining TSIA, Lexi served as a Business Development Manager for multiple Healthcare and Healthcare Technology companies. She started her professional career as a Medical Assistant. Lexi graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara with a Bachelor's degree in Psychological and Brain Sciences, with certifications in Business Analytics, Economics, and Financial Accounting from Harvard Business School.

Jenna Sanfilippo ~ 2020

Jenna graduated from UCSB in 2020 with a B.S. in Biopsychology. During her time at UCSB she did undergraduate research in the Neuroscience and Behavior department in the lab of Dr. Skirmantas Janusonis. She also served on the committee to organize UCSB's annual spring Mental Health Conference. Upon graduation, Jenna moved to Baltimore, Maryland to do a post-baccalaureate research fellowship through the National Institute of Health where she works on developing new treatments for alcohol and substance use disorder. She now plans to move to San Francisco to continue working in clinical research to improve mental health disorders before applying to graduate school for Clinical Psychology in the future. In her free time Jenna loves hiking, rock climbing, and playing soccer.

Alyssa Villa ~ 2020

Alyssa attended UCSB as a transfer student and graduated with a B.S. in Psychological and Brain Sciences in 2020. During her time at UCSB, she developed an interest in research and health through her experience as a research assistant and as a volunteer for the Health and Wellness organization on campus. After graduation, she decided to apply for graduate school to pursue a degree in epidemiology, and, in 2021, she received and accepted an offer for UCLA's M.S. in Epidemiology program. Currently, she is in her first year of graduate school and learning about epidemiological methods and biostatistics and plans to spend the summer in Mexico for an internship. She holds immense gratitude for the faculty and friends who supported her during her time at UCSB, and is excited to share her experiences with the UCSB community.

FACULTY AWARDS

Professor Vanessa Woods received the UCSB Distinguished Teaching Award

Professor Daniel Conroy-Beam receives the 2022 Harold J. Plous Award

UC SANTA BARBARA
Academic Senate

Professor Mary Hegarty elected to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

AAAS
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

STUDENT AWARDS

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS 2022

Distinguished Graduating Senior

The award for distinguished graduating senior is awarded in recognition of academic and research excellence, and service to the department, the university, and the community

Priscilla Diaz-Gonzalez, Eddie Seamans

The Morgan Award for Research Promise in Psychology

The award for research promise in Psychology is for graduating seniors who demonstrate the most promise in the area of experimental research in psychology, as selected by the department faculty

Lucas Castle, Isaias Ghezae, Shivang Shelat

The Morgan Award for Academic Excellence in Psychology

The award for academic excellence in Psychology is given to graduating seniors in recognition of outstanding scholarship, as selected by the department faculty

Stella Rufeisen, Runan Wang

Phillip S. Rethis Memorial Award

The Philip S. Rethis Memorial Award is given to a graduating senior in recognition of outstanding "character", "determination", and "scholarship"

Sydney Jawitz

Distinction in the Major

Distinction in the major recognizes the completion of a senior honors project or thesis with distinction

Aarushi Aggrawal, Anvitha Akkaraju, Amel Alrifai, Tanya Bhatia, Lucas Castle, Chris Chi, Ashley Coventry, Annabel Dang, Sreya Dhanam, Alex Garcia, Priscilla Diaz-Gonzalez, Yenni Giang, Isaias Ghezae, Sydney Jawitz, Jackie Kalleberg, Sarah Khorsandi, Sydney Kilgore, Genevieve Knott, Skylar McCarty, Marco Christian Muñoz, Katrina Ostrander, Nathalie Paesler, Aurora Parks, Naomi Pierce, Nele Ponce, Nichole Pulaski, Ethan Rogers, Kiana Sabugo, Anabel Salimian, Jakob Saloner, Brooke Schwartzman, Eddie Seamans, Shivang Shelat, Jesssica Simonson, Isabel Sobrepera, Amy Tran, Miranda Tran, Pauline Yang, Delaney Whitaker, William Zhang

STUDENT AWARDS

Diversity and Inclusion Service Award

Service award given to a recipient who actively seeks to increase their knowledge about diversity-related issues, participates in opportunities to raise awareness of diversity and inclusion, and/or provides service to diverse communities through leadership and volunteerism

Marco Christian Muñoz

Abdullah and Marjorie R. Nasser Memorial Scholarship Fund Award

Abdullah (Al) and Marjorie R. Nasser Graduate Student Memorial Scholarships are awarded to senior students in the program who have a strong scholarly record and have contributed to the broader PBS and the more general UCSB community.

Yuchen Hou, Jose Torres-Gonzalez, Jorryn Tovera, Miranda Tran

Skylar McCarty Receives Roy Research Fund Scholarship

The department of Psychological and Brain Sciences is pleased to announce that undergraduate student Skylar McCarty was selected as the first recipient of the Mr. Jashojit and Mrs. Helen Roy Research Fund scholarship. The Mr. Jashojit and Mrs. Helen Roy Research Fund was established in 2020 and provides need-based financial aid with the mission to offer a scholarship to an undergraduate student from an underrepresented background who is committed to research excellence in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences.

Skylar is a Biopsychology major interested in studying the barriers undergraduates from groups minoritized in higher education (e.g., BIPOC students) face while studying science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics (STEM) which can negatively affect their persistence in STEM majors and careers. Skylar was selected for this competitive award based on her outstanding academic achievements and her dedication to research excellence. Skylar plans to use the award to support her trip to the Western Psychological Association Conference in 2022, where she will present the results of her research. After graduation, Skylar plans to pursue a career in the medical profession.

Congratulations, Skylar!

STUDENT AWARDS

Exceptional Academic Performance

The award for exceptional academic performance is given to graduating seniors who have achieved a 3.9 or higher GPA in their upper division coursework of at least 36 units

Payton Adams, Aarushi Agrawal, Anvitha Akkaraju, Warsan Ali, Amel Alrifai, Natalie Alvarez, Eliza Anguiano Martinez, Sejal Anuraji, Braeden Bailey, Paige Baskovitch, Tanya Bhatia, Michelle Bogart, Angelina Cao, Emma Cimino, Solange Clark, Mar Cornelius, Ashley Coventry, Annabel Dang, Ella Davis, Allie Diaz, Priscilla Diaz-Gonzalez, Janet Do, Adam Doney, Daniela Escorcia Ayala, Isaias Ghezae, Yenni Giang, Henry Gonzalez, Isabel Hammana, Leah Hauptman, Joyce He, Talia Heimanson, Robert Hinojos, Hengwei Hsu, Yuchen Hou, Sydney Jawitz, Zhuoyan Jiang, Jackie Kalleberg, Ida Kazerani, Samantha Keppler, Sarah Kohrsandi, Brianna Kissmann, Simran Kokar, Kian Kolahi Sohrabi, William Lao, Raymond Lee, Kacey Leone, Sophia Lewis, Tony Liao, Chenyan Liu, Marissa Ludwig, Lonergan Kian, Thea Machale, Ananth Mahes, Isabel Meena, Juan Mendoza Jr., Marissa Middleton, Jasmine Mitchell, Gordon Moody, Anna Morgan, Marco Christian Muñoz, Josh Nemani, Ellie O'Donnell, Nini Ogele, Lyra Okita, Katrina Ostrander, Natasha Pansare, Aurora Parks, Lexi Philips, Naomi Pierce, Fatima Qubadi, Claire Reddick, Emily Robinson, Stella Rufeisen, Keyla Ruiz, Jakob Saloner, Gavin Scheldrup, Brooke Schwartzman, Shivang Shelat, Jessica Simonson, Paulina Sipilian, Jack Snyder, Emily Speltz, Yousef Srour, Sydney Stern, Max Tashima, Kelly Thi, Jorryn Tovera, Malia Vallender, Allison Vargas, Sydney Vizvary, Runan Wang, Alexander Weitzel, Rebel Weldon, Delaney Whitaker, Qi Zhang

Chairperson's Award

The recipients of the Chairperson's award are students who have provided service to the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences

Natalie Alvarez, Lukas Bechtel, Tanya Bhatia, Marian Castro, Daniela Escorcia Ayala, Campbell Green, Nathaniel Ilo, Katriyana Jacobo, Ida Kazerani, Tiffany Lei, Christy Malik, Olivia Mendoza, Oliva Olds, Brandon Ravens, Eddie Seamans, Jessica Simonson, Emily Speltz, Amy Tran, Jake Tran, Malia Vallender, Linh Vo, Pauline Yang

CONGRATS TO ALL!

STUDENT AWARDS

GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS 2022

Richard E. Mayer Award for Outstanding Research Contribution in Psychology

The Richard E. Mayer Award recognizes the second-year psychology graduate student who presents the best research paper at the Psychological & Brain Sciences Mini-Convention. The Graduate Affairs Committee receives nominations from all four areas and selects one student from the department whose research paper demonstrates outstanding contributions to the field.

Hannah Grotzinger

Harry J. Carlisle Award

The Harry J. Carlisle Award was established to recognize the important contributes of Professor Harry Carlisle, a longtime faculty member in Psychology. This award recognizes an advanced graduate student in the Neuroscience and Behavior (N&B) Area for their sound scholarship, strong research record, and a concern for others and the functioning of the N&B area.

Kasie Mays

Charles G. McClintock Graduate Fellowship in Social Psychology

The Charles G. McClintock Award is a tribute to Charles (Chuck) G. McClintock, the first social psychologist at UCSB. This fund recognizes his contributions to social psychology, the UCSB graduate program in social psychology, and all those who benefited from knowing him. This fellowship recognizes an advanced graduate student in the Social Psychology Area for their outstanding scholarship.

Payton Small

Abdullah (Al) and Marjorie R. Nasser Graduate Student Memorial Scholarship

An award given to senior PhD students in Psychological & Brain Sciences. Scholarship recipients are selected for having a strong scholarly record and contributing to the broader PBS and more generally UCSB community.

Kasie Mays, Elle Murata, Katy Walter, Vinnie Wu

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship helps ensure the vitality and diversity of the scientific and engineering workforce in the United States. The program recognizes and supports outstanding graduate students who are pursuing research-based master's and doctoral degrees in fields within NSF's mission.

Elizabeth Quinn-Jensen (Honorable Mention)

President's Dissertation Year Fellowship

The President's Dissertation Year Fellowship provides financial resources to allow fellows to devote full attention to completing the dissertation in a twelve-month period. The fellowship's goal is to increase the number of students who contribute to the diversity mission of the university.

Delancey Wu

STUDENT AWARDS

Graduate Division Dissertation Fellowship

The Graduate Division Dissertation Fellowship is a one-quarter award intended for doctoral students from all academic disciplines who have advanced to candidacy and who are in the final stages of completing their dissertation.

Melissa Hingorani

Excellence in Teaching Award

The UCSB Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award recognizes graduate students who have shown excellence in teaching and gone above and beyond in their teaching duties at UCSB.

Elizabeth Quinn-Jensen

Fiona and Michael Goodchild Graduate Mentoring Award

The Fiona and Michael Goodchild Graduate Mentoring Award recognizes graduate students who have distinguished themselves as mentors of undergraduates, acknowledged campus initiatives to improve the educational experience of undergraduates by integrating research into undergraduate education at UCSB, and encouraged others to become involved in these research efforts.

Jordan Garrett

Dixon-Levy Graduate Student Associate Service Award

The Dixon-Levy Graduate Student Associate (GSA) Service Award recognizes graduate student Travis Dixon's and Alan Levy's many years of service to the GSA. The dual name of the award acknowledges that service to graduate students at UC Santa Barbara comes in many forms, not only through serving as an elected GSA officer but also through the advocacy of graduate student interests in various ways.

Alyssa Lawson (Honorable Mention)

PhD Student Ava Ma de Sousa Awarded Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Fellowship

Ava Ma de Sousa was awarded a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowship from the Canadian Government. Ava is a first-year Social Psychology PhD. student at UCSB from Toronto and this fellowship will support her graduate training from 2022 to 2026. Broadly, her work focuses on intergroup relations, social identity, and emotions. Her awarded proposal examines how computational reinforcement models can be used to study the effects of dehumanizing language on biased learning and behavior in social interactions. Ava's advisor, Kyle Ratner, says, "I was delighted, but not surprised, to learn that Ava received this prestigious funding. Ava is a very deep and innovative thinker, talented researcher, and an overall great member of my lab and the UCSB community. I have no doubt that this recognition will be one of what will be many in her career."

STUDENT AWARDS

PhD Student Madeleine Gross Wins an APA Dissertation Award and a Fulbright Award

Madeleine Gross, a fifth-year CPCN student, wins two awards: the APA dissertation award and a Fulbright award for research abroad. Madeleine's research takes a broad perceptual, phenomenological, and cognitive-behavioral approach to understanding the mechanisms that drive individual differences in personality. Her early investigations revealed that curiosity predicts how people think (i.e., the qualitative features of thought), how people view the world (i.e., their eye movement behavior), and how people explore information (i.e., their information foraging styles). Her dissertation research harnesses these findings to develop large-scale interventions to promote dispositional changes in curiosity, by employing behavioral and attitudinal habit formation strategies. While working as a doctoral student with Jonathan Schooler, PhD, at UCSB, Madeleine has used the support of two interdisciplinary fellowships to develop new approaches to examining personality. As a Fulbright researcher, Madeleine is currently investigating the perceptual and genetic correlates of personality with Martin Rolfs, PhD, at the Active Vision and Cognition Lab in Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

Postdoctoral Researcher Dr. Caitlin Taylor Receives Daryl and Marguerite Errett Discovery Award in Biomedical Research

PBS postdoctoral researcher Dr. Caitlin Taylor, who works in Emily Jacobs's Lab, has been selected to receive the Daryl and Marguerite Errett Discovery Award in Biomedical Research for 2021-22 to support her research to advance our understanding of the increased incidence of major depressive disorder in women. Funded through an annual gift of up to $75,000 from the Errett Fisher Foundation, the Daryl and Marguerite Errett Discovery Award in Biomedical Research is intended to honor the lives of Daryl and Marguerite Errett, while providing seed funding to the most exceptional young postdocs or research professionals (non-tenured faculty) at UC Santa Barbara early in their careers to support their innovative research in the field of biomedicine.

Students Receiving PhDs

Sakurai Arai, Chelsea Brown, Puneeth Chakravarthula, Diya Das, Julian Gerson, Paul Kovacs,

Evan Layher, Spencer Mermelstein, Lauren Ortosky,

Anudhi Munasinghe, Michelle Shteyn Handy, Payton Small, Jack Strelich

CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU DID IT!

What are your fellow Gauchos up to?

For more information on getting involved with the PBS alumni community, contact us at: pbsalumni@psych.ucsb.edu

Andy Arkin, 1972, BA, Psychology & Economics. Since graduating, I've spent most of my career as an Executive Producer/Agency mostly for TV commercials. 31 years ago, I started a company called BLAH BLAH BLAH, which represents animation and visual effects production companies. Then three years ago, I started doing my own animation for an online show called A FLY ON THE WALL.

Cameron Brick, 2015, PhD, Psychological & Brain Sciences. After bouncing between faculty and postdoc jobs in central NY and the UK, I have settled now in Amsterdam, where I just received tenure as an assistant prof. My research is mostly about the climate emergency, and I increasingly give talks to other departments about how to incorporate sustainability into all areas of psych education and research (clinical, developmental, cognitive, etc.). If this would be useful, please get in touch. www.cameronbrick.com

Mitchell Chang, 1987, BA, Psychology. I have been a faculty member at UCLA for over twenty years, with dual appointments in the School of Education and the Asian American Studies department. I was recently appointed to serve as the Associate Vice Chancellor of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion after having served three years on UCLA's Council for Academic Personnel. My youngest son was recruited by UCSB to play baseball and will begin his studies as a Gaucho in Fall 2022.

Chris Chuck, 2013, BS, Biopsychology. After graduating from UCSB, I attended the University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry in San Francisco and went on to complete a 1-year residency program in general dentistry through NYU Langone Hospitals. I am now living and practicing in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Sarah Hunter, 2000, PhD, Psychology. I have worked at the RAND Corporation located in Santa Monica, CA since graduating from UCSB. I am currently the Director of RAND's Center on Housing and Homelessness in Los Angeles. In addition to publishing in academic journal outlets, my research has also been recently cited in a number of news outlets including the Los Angeles Times and CNN. When I am not working, I enjoy spending time on my road bike and hanging out with my husband Gary and English bull terrier rescue mutt, Raleigh.

Mathieu Kolacz, 2002, BA, Psychology & Art History. My dedication to the field has evolved, most recently starting my own private psychotherapy practice specializing in the full spectrum of trauma work, first responders, as well as executive coaching & business development. I am a LICSW and nationally certified Master Addiction Counselor and a Board-Certified Diplomate while moving towards my Doctorate. With my three boys and wife, we love to garden and enjoy the Seattle Sounders.

Hoben Thomas, 1958, Psychology. I am a Professor emeritus of Psychology at Penn State University. To just keep alive during the pandemic, I've tackled the old problem of why girls' mean scores on reading tests worldwide crush boys, while boys' means just marginally exceed girls' mean scores on math tests. See e.g., Nations' Report Card, or PISA data. Such findings have existed in the US since the onset of testing around 1900. Unrecognized patterns in data summaries are well modelled and explained by a (convolution/finite mixture) probability model. Now that I can remove my face mask, I can return to life!

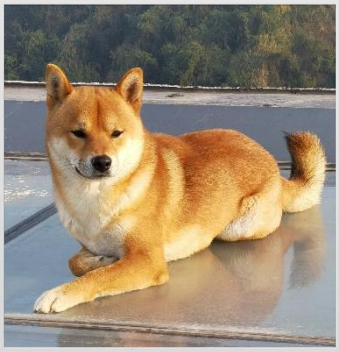
THE PETS OF PBS

Pets are a big part of the shared community at the department of Psychological & Brain Sciences. From appearing in the background (or foreground) of a zoom, to accompanying students, faculty, and staff as we work, to reducing our cardiovascular reactivity. Indeed, research conducted by PBS emeritus faculty Jim Blascovich and new PBS Alumni Council member Wendy Berry Mendes demonstrated the benefit of pets in their 2002 *Psychosomatic Medicine* paper titled "Cardiovascular reactivity and the presence of pets, friends, and spouses: The truth about cats and dogs." *Inside Psychology* wanted to shine the spotlight on our furry, feathered, and scaly friends with this pictorial feature.

"Kazandibi and Leyla"
Dan Conroy-Beam

"Mac, Cash, and Zuul"
Tamsin German

"Data"
Viktoriya Babenko



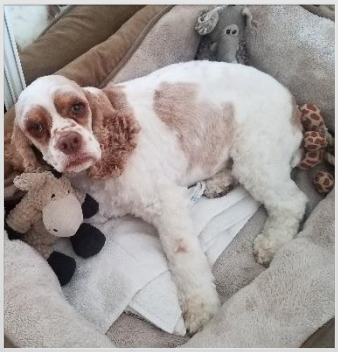
"Chengzi"
Lu Zang

"Wolfie"
David Sherman & Heejung Kim

"Pepper & McGruff"
Ron Keiflin

"Calvin"
Brenda Major

"Arlo & Aspen"
Shelly Gable



"Teddy"
Rich Mayer

THE PETS OF PBS

"Ace"
Christine Griffin

"Uni & Cali (University & California)"
Courtney Durdle

"Atticus"
Kallie Hill

"Zoom"
Alyssa Lawson

"Archie"
Barry Giesbrecht

"Ben"
Diane Mackie

"Daisy"
Alan Fridlund

"Harlow"
Bailey Immel

"Freddie"
Delancey Wu

"Oreo & Toby"
Madhuri Kashyap

"Jax"
Lexie Kunz

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Vice Chairman, Oracle Corporation

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Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences

University of California, Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9660

Webpage: https://psych.ucsb.edu/

Email: pbsalumni@psych.ucsb.edu