Psi Chi/UPO Minutes

October 7, 2013

**Faculty members perspective on applying to graduate school**

Overview: Three UNL faculty members (Jeff Steven and Tim Nelson who are Assistant Professors in the Psychology Department and Ingrid Haas who is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science but who received her PhD in Psychology) talked about what they look for in potential graduate students and the types of experiences you should be getting to prepare for graduate school. Also at the meeting, Allison Skinner talked about the American Psychological Society (APS) who are now having a membership drive that allows undergraduates to become members for a discounted rate.

**Notes from the President:**

* Every time you sign in, your name will be placed in a raffle to win one of two $50 gift cards.
* There is currently a grant ($1,500) being awarded to Psi Chi members for their work in research. Apply online.
* There are still some labs looking for research assistants. Please see minutes from last meeting for available opportunities.
* There will be water bottles next meeting.

**Perspective from the Faculty:**

*Tim Nelson’s Perspective:*

* You should ask yourself some hard questions:
  + Do you actually *really* want to go? Is it something that is exciting to you and worth all the hard work? Or is this just the next logical step and you haven’t weighed the other options?
  + If you know you want to go, do you *really* want to do clinical or something else? There are other options than clinical programs. Clinical programs are hard to get into and are quite extensive. There are other options that may be right for you.

*Ingrid Haas’ Perspective:*

* Having good grades in undergrad and having good GRE scores are important, but also, personal statement is very important. Research experience in undergrad is great as well.

*Jeff Steven’s Perspective:*

* There are a lot of opportunities with psychology graduate programs (neuroscience, clinical, social, industrial, school, etc.).
* Get to know the faculty (your current professors)! Take the time—go to office hours to talk about the material and even chat. If you plan to ask a faculty member to write a letter of recommendation, he can’t write you a letter only knowing you name and grade.

**Question and Answer Portion:**

*When should I start thinking about grad school?*  
You are building your application for years (not just a couple weeks)… research experience, clinical experience, relationships with professors (three recommendations) all take time. It takes times to build your record

*When should I take the GRE?*

Normally take during or after your junior year of college assuming you are applying your senior year. Allow time to take it again just in case you need the second shot. Recommend studying for the test so that you can get a solid score.

*Do I need a high GPA to get in?*

The higher the better. In clinical a 3.5 or better is typical and it is going to be difficult to get in with a 3.0 or lower. A lower GPA than the average range may be offset by a glowing recommendation, but need to try to hit the 3.5 range to stay competitive.

*Do I need clinical experience?*

Try to get experience before going to grad school so that you know you will be comfortable in the settings.

*Tell me about the interview process.*

The fit between the applicant’s interest and the faculty member is very important. This is not the kind of thing where you apply to the best schools, you apply to a school looking to work with a specific professor in the school. So, in your interview know the professor well and ask informed questions. Try not to be weird (don’t break norms).

300 applicants, interview 25, give about 8

*When do I e-mail professors to see if they are taking students?*

Make sure you e-mail professors to show that you know what the professor is studying (use website), ask interesting questions, and ask if the professor is taking graduate students. Show enthusiasm. You should start e-mailing late summer into the fall. Do not write long e-mails about your life story when contacting professors. You MUST check the professor’s website before e-mailing! Express interest in the professor and hit some high points (keep it short) on your experiences. Ask thoughtful and informed questions (not ones that can be found on the website).

*What makes an application stand out to you?*

Someone who can write a good personal statement—this really separates you! Have someone (or two or three people) read and edit your personal statement… go through multiple drafts. This is the best way to make a good first impression. It helps to have specialized skills (stats training, second language, programming skills, etc.). These should be highlighted in your C.V.

**Information from Allison Skinner from American Psychological Society (APS):**

* Allison Skinner is the Student Notebook Editor and UNL campus representative for APS.
* There is a student membership drive going on now with discount.
  + Check e-mail for discount code.
* Some of the benefits of being a part of APS:
  + Student grant competition (due November 16)
  + APS members can apply to be a student reviewer
  + You can create a poster and present at their conference in California (they also student travel grants to help cover costs)
  + At the conference there are many opportunities that are student-oriented
  + There are student awards (outstanding research award and diversity research award)
  + APS offers graduate mentors
  + APS has a publication called the Undergraduate Update and it is a great a way to publish as an undergraduate

**Applying to Psi Chi**

Psi Chi is now accepting new member applications and the process is different than in years passed. Please review the notes below. Applications are due November 1, 2013.

As an undergraduate you qualify if:

* You are majoring or minoring in psychology.
* You are a second-semester sophomore with an established GPA that places you in the top 35% of your class and is at least 3.00 on a 4-point scale. (Psi Chi chapters may use more stringent academic criteria for membership, but they cannot use lower academic standards than those required in the Constitution.)

Once you submit your online application, Mike Dodd will review it and determine your eligibility. If you qualify, you will receive an email confirmation regarding my decision. To get started:

Go to [http://www.psichi.org/?page=JoinToday](https://bn1prd0112.outlook.com/owa/redir.aspx?C=FMUq6TXp3Eum-muoYvhLZo4zeFEml9AIW3yyxULaHiLJDIdgcTgyhcHxXvr5DHjl4A1t4RtY5Co.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.psichi.org%2f%3fpage%3dJoinToday" \t "_blank)

1. (or Apply for Membership on [www.psichi.org](https://bn1prd0112.outlook.com/owa/redir.aspx?C=FMUq6TXp3Eum-muoYvhLZo4zeFEml9AIW3yyxULaHiLJDIdgcTgyhcHxXvr5DHjl4A1t4RtY5Co.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.psichi.org%2f" \t "_blank) homepage, bottom right)
2. Read the qualifications for application and select APPLY NOW
3. Choose University of Nebraska - Lincoln from the Local Chapter drop-down menu and fill out the application including your name, email address, and student ID No.
4. At the bottom of the page, check the box authorizing the faculty advisor to review your college records to determine eligibility
5. Add your Name/Signature and select SUBMIT
6. Present payment of $65 to Psi Chi faculty advisor Mike Dodd in either his faculty mailbox or the Psi Chi mailbox, both of which are in 237 Burnett (this money will be returned if for some reason you do not qualify for membership)

If you have questions about the membership application, contact Mike Dodd ([mdodd2@unl.edu](https://bn1prd0112.outlook.com/owa/redir.aspx?C=FMUq6TXp3Eum-muoYvhLZo4zeFEml9AIW3yyxULaHiLJDIdgcTgyhcHxXvr5DHjl4A1t4RtY5Co.&URL=mailto%3amdodd2%40unl.edu" \t "_blank)).