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Graduation awards,
Psi Chi,
Phi Beta Kappa,
RCIF, and the
Meeting of the Minds
National Student Employment Week is designed to recognize all outstanding student employees. One annual event at UM is the Student Employment Award Celebration where a select few students are recognized for their marked contributions to their offices. This year, UASP’s very own Nicole Lavina was selected as the 2013-2014 University of Miami Student Employee of the Year! UASP nominated Nicole because she completely embodies the office’s mission, facilitates a team atmosphere, takes the initiative to propose and design new services, and genuinely enjoys helping undergraduate students! Nicole is always willing to go above and beyond for our team and for the students who come in to see us, whether it’s by spearheading the Social Media Team or putting in extra hours. For winning the award, Nicole will receive a $1,000 scholarship and be entered into a national competition. Congratulations, Nicole!
To Task, or to Multitask? That is the Question.

By: Jennifer Baumgartner

“Ugh, cell molec is so hard. Oh look, there’s Jason. He keeps texting me. I only got 10 likes in the last 5 minutes, should I take my status down? It’s not even summer, why do I keep on playing ‘Summertime Sadness’? After I finish this paragraph, should I go make some coffee? I really need some, but first, let me take a selfie.”

Welcome to the era of multitasking, where we are the pioneers of texting and driving, the champions of writing essays while talking to four people, and the vindicators of taking notes in class while on Facebook. In the past five minutes, I myself have checked my e-mail at least once and sent two Snapchats (don’t tell Sean or Alida). Compared to previous generations, we have much more opportunity to be distracted, or multitask, if you will. Within my reach I have a cell phone and computer, and through these, access to endless entertainment. The next time you go to the library, look around and observe people. Within a minute of looking I can guarantee that you’ll find someone listening to music and answering their texts while reading notes. That person represents the trending lifestyle of students today, where we believe that we can do everything at once and still maintain a high level of proficiency.

With such a rapid increase in the ease of accessibility of personal technology, the study habits of students have changed drastically over the past decade. As such, psychology researchers have eagerly jumped on the opportunity to examine how multitasking affects learning, grades, and brain function. A survey of 500 college students by Wakefield and CourseSmart found that 73% of students were unable to study without some form of technology and 38% reported that they couldn’t go more than 10 minutes without checking their laptop or phone. Shocker, huh? Have you checked your phone since the beginning of this article? A study by Calderwood, Ackerman, and Conklin (2014) observed students as they completed a homework task over a three hour period, during which they averaged around 35 distractions totaling up to an average of 25 minutes. When asked to estimate how they apportioned their time, students could not accurately estimate how long they spent on the homework task and how much they really spent on distractions.

The general consensus on studies concerning multitasking is that compared to a non-multitasker, the level of comprehension or quality of work of a “multitasker” will be noticeably worse if both had the same amount of time to work. A study by Rosen, Carrier, and Cheever (2013) found that if the multitasker was given an ample amount of time, then performance levels are around
the same as the non-multitasker. At what point do the benefits of multitasking outweigh the costs? The perception that most students today seem to have is that we are completing more work in less amount of time, which isn’t necessarily true. We are completing work, but not comprehending it as well as we could, or we are using up much more time than it would take to sit down and push through.

“Advances in computer technologies have increased the practicality of building systems that allow people to perform multiple activities at the same time. However, people’s cognitive capabilities have not increased.”

–Daniel McFarlane

A 2010 study by Bowman, Levine, Wait, and Gendron looked at how our brain is actually processing material when our attention is shifting. The constant shifting of attention involves something called the psychological refractory period: this is the lag-time it takes to focus your attention on a second task because your mind is still processing the first task. But wait, what about practice effects? Would enough experience in switching between tasks lead to a decreased refractory period? Meaning I can be an expert at texting, tweeting, and learning statistics? The answer from this study is no, at least in the cases of messaging other people and working on mentally engaging tasks. The more engaging and mentally challenging the tasks are, the harder it is to focus your attention, especially if you are switching between more than one of these tasks. These dual-task activities, while superficially impressive, actually lead our brain to code the information in different learning pathways. If we aren’t focused on explicitly one subject, the information is coded as procedural learning, which tends to be superficial and inflexible. Focusing only on one subject leads to the information being processed in declarative memory and allows you to have a more comprehensive understanding of the information. To make a long story short, when it comes to information you will need to develop a strong foundation or where understanding not memorization is paramount, multitasking is not the way to go.

As students who want to succeed and pass our exams, it would make sense to cut back on the multitasking in order to focus more on our academics. Presumably we are all here in the pursuit of knowledge and expanding our horizons, and doubtless we have all learned many new things while we’ve been here. I know as psychology and neuroscience students we have read at least one, if not dozens of research articles on simple things we can do to help improve our lifestyle; whether it be sleeping more, eating breakfast, not cramming for tests, or not multitasking. As a generation, I feel like we read these articles and in our heads they make sense, we acknowledge that they are legitimate and have numbers to back them up, and then the information zips straight to the back our minds once a new distraction comes along. So let me leave you with this question that keeps popping up in my mind as graduation looms nearer and my college education comes to a close: why are we here to learn if we aren’t incorporating the findings of our scientific community into our lifestyles?
We’ll All Float On Alright

Congratulations, Seniors!

Ana Moss will join City Year to work here in Miami with underserved youth. During that time she will also complete her prerequisites for Master’s programs in Speech Pathology.

April Barnes will be commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the United States Army upon graduation. She will attend Acryn University to pursue a Ph.D. in Counseling.

Seven Basart was accepted to a Ph.D. program for Computer Science at the University of Chicago.

Stephen Ralph will attend the Miller School of Medicine.

Alexander Perez is taking time off to backpack through famous ruins in Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala before applying to Master’s programs in Public Health.

John Weiss will attend the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University to earn his Master’s in Public Health.

Riana Brown was accepted to the VU University Amsterdam Social Psychology Research Master’s program with a Fulbright Scholarship to study in the Netherlands. Way to go big, Riana!

Taylor Owen accepted a full-time Research Assistant position working with Dr. Michael Alessandri and the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) here at UM.

Daniel Valenzuela will be attending Medical School at Vanderbilt University on scholarship.

Alea Agrawal will pursue a Master’s Degree in Animal Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she will design an independent research project working with dairy cattle.

Jessica Stern will pursue her Master’s in Special Education at George Washington University.

Madhuri Nagaraj will transition full-time to the Miller School of Medicine as part of the Medical Scholars Program.

Matilde Siman will pursue her Master’s in Mental Health Counseling at Boston University.

Dina Dajani was accepted to UM’s Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program with a full University Scholarship to work with Dr. Lucina Uddin.

Grace Madsen will work for the Target company as an Executive Team Leader.

Rachel Salinger will attend the University of Delaware to pursue her Ph.D. in School Psychology.

Raisa Uddin will attend the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine at Florida International University.

Kayla Radler will pursue a Master’s in Marriage and Family Therapy at Hofstra University in New York.

Sarah Marmol will pursue her M.D. at the Miller School of Medicine.

Katrina Nuñez will attend Columbia University’s Psychological Counseling Master’s program in the fall.

Vidhya Krishnan will attend medical school at the University of South Florida.

Nicole Lavina has accepted a full-time position within the Department of Psychology and will join the UASP team as an Academic Advisor.

Radhika Joshi will be applying to Medical School and working full-time at Coconut Grove Cares, Inc., a non-profit organization aiming to build a better community for children and families in Coconut Grove.

Lindsey Salay will pursue her Ph.D. in Biology at the University of California, San Diego.
Psychology and Neuroscience Graduates, Class of 2014

Alea Agrawal
Lorena Alfonso
Regla Alfonso
Sarah Alfonso
Tiffany Alvarez
Melanie Amaro
Anna Anderson
Taylor Ashmore
Chelsey Axelrod
Michelle Ayazo
Monica Bahamon
Shreya BaiD
Semerjit Bains
Vijay Bajnath
Lauren Baker
Amanda Baquero
Lily Barash
April Barnes
Steven Basart
Jennifer Baumgartner
Katherine Beam
Chloe Behar Pires
Samantha Belabin
Nestor Belfire
Brittany Bemis
Bennett Blachar
Nataly Blanco
Rachel Blank
Divina Bolano
Dieayyah Boney
Kathleen Borghoff
Rachael Brothers
Elyssa Brown
Riana Brown
Adam Burton
Julianne Byun
Gregoire Calon
Anne Campbell
Jessica Canosa
Alivia Carter
Jennifer Castellanos
Sarah Cepero
Nour Chaer
Kelly Chambers
Tyron Charles
Alexander Chimienti
Clara Choi
Paul Chu
Brenton Cozby
Selena Cunkle
Alexandra D’Otto
Dina Dajani
Alice Daramola
Eric Darpini
Sasha De Cruise
Haydee Del Calvo
Michael Delgado
Vittoria Di Giacomo
Alfredo Diaz
Melissa Diaz
Rachel Dorfner
Laurence Doyle
Gimenez Echeverria
Elleanor Eng
Kristol Erazo
Paradis Esfandiari
Elizabeth Evalen
Emily Farnen
Matthew Feldman
Alexa Fernandez
Melanie Fernandez
Taylor Ferrer
James Flagg
Lauren Foley
Jason Frishman
Jordan Fuchs
Jacqueline Gallo
Brock Gamez
Alyssa Garcia
Amir Gang
Alexandra Garnago
Andres Gaviria
Alexander Getz
Emily Geresser
Callie Gilchrest
Anna Gogos
Jami Goldberg
Alexis Goldstein
Ashley Gonzalez
Natalie Gonzalez
Rachel Gonzalez
Allison Gordon
Blake Hampton
George Hay
Valentina Heinz
Tamara Henry
Hernan Hernandez
Jorge Hernandez
Sara Hewitt
Charlotte Hickok
Shelby Hoffman
Christa Hunt
Hafsa Hussain
Fahd Imam
Aakangsha Jain
Corey Janson
Amanda Jimenez
Joaquin Jimenez
Katherine Jordan
Radhika Joshi
Michael Kane
Melissa Kaszak
Omar Kawash
Thomas Kershaw
Faran Khan
Sonam Khubani
Jasmyne King
Ryan Kowalsky
Katelyn Kozbial
Vidhya Krishnan
Emily Kus
Justin Lacson
Merika Lang
Nicole Lavina
Keun Lee
Annie Leopold
Lindsay Lester
Jennifer Levine
Maytal Levy
Suzanne Lippman
Juan Lizama
Zebulon Loewenstein
Mohamed Loudani
Jeffrey Lowell
Deepa Luka
Kaelyn Lynch
Donald Maclean
Grace Madsen
Victor Mancini
Monica Mangra
Karna Mangrola
Sarah Marmol
Andrew Mathew
Matthew McCabe
Shanna McCartney
Eryn McIlton
Taylor McMorrow
Hayley McPhedran
Heidy Medina
Benjamin Medvin
Johanna Mejia
Stephanie Mendigutia
Haley Meskunas
John Meskunas
Maria Metawe
Amy Mickelsen
Milena Mihovilovic
Emily Minor
Ana Moas
Bennett Monaco
Adriana Morel-Pacheco
Branden Moreno
Sarah Mosler
Megan Motley
Kyra Munzenmaier
Emily Naclerio
Madhuri Nagaraj
Andrew Nashed
Jennifer Navarro
Abigail Nichols
Rachel Niederhofer
Jason Novacki
Katrina Nunez
Alixandria Olmo
Sarah Olson
Casey Orzechowicz
Taylor Owen
Kristina Pak
Neema Patel
Roshni Patel
Charlotte Pechtel
Anais Pedoussaut
Vicky Perez
Alexander Perez-Calvo
Christina Perry
Kathryn Pfister
Julian Pierce
Alexa Pierro
Alexis Blair
Jocelyn Polansky
Isabella Politano
Carlotta Porta
Tina Pournazarian
Alice Pozzi
Juliana Prieto
Brenna Prindiville
Yu Qi
Ciaran Quille
Kelsey Quinn
Kayla Radler
Stephen Ralph
Michael Ramos
Kaitlyn Rancour
Joseph Recabo
Eleanor Rector
Luis Regalado
Rachel Resnick
Matthew Rhodes
Rochelle Riley
Nino Rishmague
Talia Robinson
Sofia Rodriguez
Gabrielle Roland
Melany Rosa
Corey Rosenthal
Lindsey Salay
Thomas Salazar
Rachel Salinger
Ilyssa Salomon
Ashley Saludes
Gina Samson
John Saras
Alexandra Sarau
Danielle Sasson
Kristen Schlitzhauer
Carly Schwartzman
Xavier Scott
Aaron Seifer
Zachary Sell
Jiannan Shi
Patrick Shiller
Matilde Simon
Frances Socash
Aamlynn Soto
Serene Steinfeld
Jessica Stern
Lisa Surowiec
Richard Taylor
Emil Thyssen
Samantha Torres
Diane Trif
Kaitlin Tunney
Dylann Turffs
Raisa Uddin
Daniel Valenzuela
Teresa Vargas
Ayita Verna
Kiera Wallace
Clayton Wandishin
Mara Weiner
John Weiss
Olivia Wessol
Samantha Wilker
Hayley Williams
Nicolette Wisotsky
Sara Witcraft
Tiffany Yancey
Ran Yang
BreAnne Young
Jessica Yudin
Michele Zaragoza
Oliver Zornoza
Jessica Zwaan

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Smiling, Dr. Patrice Saab welcomes me into her fourth floor Flipse office and offers me a seat. There is something calming about her sparsely furnished, low-lit office. The dim light is contrasted by a vivid-green view of the canal and tropical South Florida foliage beyond. It seems to balance the room. I quickly take note of and appreciate Dr. Saab’s naturally relaxed and kindly demeanor as we begin to discuss her research in cardiovascular health.

The following is a summary of my conversation with Dr. Saab. Responses are not verbatim unless indicated as such by quotations.

Alida: I always like to start at the beginning, so, when was it you first came to UM?

Dr. Saab: I came here in 1985 after completing a post-doctoral fellowship in cardiovascular medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. I completed my Ph.D. in Clinical Health Psychology at Ohio University. It was interesting, actually, because when I started my doctoral program was right when health psychology and behavioral medicine were emerging as a field. I found UM appealing because there were opportunities here for health psychology research and related activities at a time when that was very rare. I’ll admit I never saw myself living in Florida – in 1985 I thought it was a place for retirees, right?! – but here I am almost 30 years later (laughs). I’m from Cincinnati so it is quite different.

Alida: Can you tell me about your research interests?

Dr. Saab: I have research that falls into two main areas: basic and applied. My basic research has to do with understanding the influences of stress on cardiovascular functioning including blood pressure or other markers and indicators of heart health. My applied research is all intervention-oriented. On the one hand, I have studied people who have had heart attacks and we are trying to increase their survival rates by reducing their risks for further heart problems. For example, if they have psychosocial factors playing a role, like depression, we try to help minimize those effects on the heart through interventions to reduce symptoms. We’ve also worked with teenagers who have high blood pressure and other risk factors like being overweight, having high cholesterol or high triglycerides, or having metabolic syndrome. We try to reduce their risk using interventions to educate about nutrition, the importance of physical activity, and stress management.

Additionally we have been involved in a couple other studies that are more prevention- rather than treatment-oriented. One study that is really exciting, called Heart Smart, got started back in 2006 through collaboration with the Patricia and Philip Frost Museum of Science and also UM’s Dr. Judith McCalla. The study is actually an exhibition at the museum that was designed by us and a team of creative artists. Honestly, it’s “the most fun I’ve had in science.” The goal of Heart Smart was to convey nutrition, physical activity, and stress management concepts that were traditionally taught in our clinical settings to a much broader audience using a new medium. It is an interactive experience and when visitors enter the exhibition they type in their age, sex, ethnicity, and are asked if they want to contribute their data that is collected to a research study. So far since it’s opening in October, 2009, we have had about 200,000 participants check in and about 79% have agreed to contribute their data to our study, which is a huge number in the clinical world! I learned a lot working with the museum team about how to convey
information succinctly and “distill messages in crisp, clean ways.” In research that’s invaluable.

Funded by a grant from the National Institute of Health another study I’m working on with Dr. Maria Llabre, called Get in the GROOVE!, is also collaborative with the Frost Museum of Science and also the New York Hall of Science in Queens, NY. It is a randomized control trial focused on a science-enrichment summer camp for 11 to 14 year old girls. We are testing to see if the inclusion of virtual world technology improves health behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge, as compared to the conventional camp. Some research has shown that healthy virtual behaviors translate into more healthy behaviors in real life. During the camp, the girls learn about nutrition, wear pedometers, meet mentors from their communities who have health careers, and more.

Our last project is newer and is called UROSE. We are in our second year of this project. It is funded by a generous gift from retired ophthalmologist Dr. Howard Rose and his wife Muriel. Dr. Rose would see many overweight patients with diabetes. Out of concern he would recommend that patients take steps to lose weight and offer them counsel to improve their health. Not getting the responses from patients he was hoping for, Dr. Rose turned his health-promoting efforts toward a younger generation and obesity prevention. UROSE stands for Reaching Overweight Students Everywhere and is a community outreach program to educate youth about nutrition and the like. Trained undergraduate and graduate students serve as Health Ambassadors and go into schools throughout Miami-Dade county to give presentations to kids of all ages, pre-k all the way through 12th grade. So far this year we have reached 4,000 kids! We are also offering free clinical services to those children and families who are interested in getting help to make behavioral changes in seeking healthier lifestyles.

Alida: It seems obvious that prevention is as important, if not more so, than treatment, but historically research efforts have focused predominantly on treatment. Can you talk to me about your views on prevention research?

Dr. Saab: Well, “prevention is really the key.” When I was growing up my dad always used to tell me, “when you have your health, you have everything.” I really didn’t understand that fully then but I do now. To be healthy, what does that mean to us? We know that people who are physically active have better cognitive function and physical health outcomes, including better psychological well-being and longevity. It is much easier to maintain your health than it is to regain it and people of all ages really need to understand that your health really is everything. I look at “prevention as a way to function optimally,” including a healthy, non-sedentary lifestyle, eating right, getting enough sleep, coping effectively, and more. Historically the medical model has not been a preventative one, but we now are able to demonstrate potential benefits of intervention early in life to avoid later negative consequences. It’s great that now healthcare providers, insurance companies, and even corporations and universities are coming to understand that prevention is important and implementing practices and policies to support it.

Alida: How did you become interested in cardiovascular research?

Dr. Saab: I did my Master’s degree in sleep disorders and during that time I was trained in a psychophysiology laboratory. I found that I enjoyed that. Later there were opportunities in cardiovascular research and my previous psychophysiology training bridged the gap. I also had an undergraduate experimental psychology professor who I admired who was a physiological psychologist. I think he influenced my decision to go in that direction, too.

Alida: In association with your UROSE program you recently showed the documentary Weight of the Nation at Cosford Cinema. How was that event?
Dr. Saab: We had about 85 people in attendance including undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty, as well as general members of the Coral Gables community. People seemed to like the film and there was a lot of discussion afterward. We had a fantastic panel of experts to lead the discussion that was made up of myself; Associate Professor of Psychology and member at the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, Dr. Monica Webb-Hooper; Psychological Services Center therapy coordinator Dr. Judith McCalla; staff psychologist from the Miami Veterans Affairs Healthcare System, Dr. Jason Dahn; Research Associate Professor and epidemiologist from the Department of Pediatrics at the Miller School of Medicine, Dr. Sarah Messiah; the director of the nutrition division of UM’s Mailman Center for Child Development, Sheah Rarback; and Whole Foods Healthy Eating and Green Mission Specialist, Camille Lamb. People seemed shocked and inspired by the film and discussions went on much longer than we planned – happily so!

Alida: What do undergraduate research assistants (RAs) typically do in your lab?

Dr. Saab: It mostly depends on their schedules. If they have blocks of free time then they can serve as Health Ambassadors for UROSE. If they do that they go to schools and other community settings to give presentations and interact with the kids. For older students they use a Prezi and try to create interactive sessions with the class asking things like, “what does health mean to you?” The younger kids are really fun because the sessions are built around the reading of a children’s book called Henry Gets Moving, where Henry the hamster is sluggish and overweight and he decides he wants to change and have a better life. They do an interactive story-reading with the kids and then after we have a giant hamster costume and “Henry” comes in and they do a song and dance together. It’s really a good time!

If RAs don’t have time or aren’t interested in going out to the schools then they work on things like data management, performing literature searches, getting trained on research protocols, and more. “I try to involve them in all aspects of the research process from [data] collection to management to analysis.” We also try hard to fit tasks to students’ strengths, for example if they are afraid of public speaking we would not have them go give presentations, and so on.

Alida: What qualities or qualifications do you look for in a research assistant?

Dr. Saab: Because of the nature of the work we do I like someone with social skills who is comfortable interacting with people. I prefer students who are academically successful because it shows that they honor their commitments. Also the ideal RA is flexible and inquisitive, and at ease with the research. It also helps if they are interested in health and kids!
The 9th annual ACC Meeting of the Minds conference was held April 3rd-5th at the University of Pittsburgh where outstanding undergraduate students from each of the 12 ACC schools gathered to share their research.

Congratulations to our UM Representatives!
- Christa Hunt, Psychology
- Emily Minor, Psychology
- Sam Powell, Neuroscience
- Raisa Uddin, Neuroscience

Social Sciences
- 1st Place (tie): Nicole Lavina, Sara Witcraft
- 3rd Place (tie): Adam Burton, Sarah Alfonso

Congratulations to our psychology and neuroscience RCIF winners and to all majors who participated in this event!
From the glacial rivers of Iceland, the exotic wildlife of the African savannahs, and the bustling metropolis of Tokyo, the world has never been more accessible to college students. Through established relationships with universities abroad, UM’s reach of opportunity extends far beyond the boundaries of national borders. Despite this, only 5-10% of our very ambitious, pre-health students take part in these enriching experiences. Many students en route to medical school or other health-related fields are deterred from studying abroad because of their rigorous academic curricula and often operate under the assumption that they simply don’t have enough time to go abroad. This raises the questions, how important can studying abroad really be for your future and how can you realistically fit it in?

Although you may have heard in passing that some international diversity on your resume is important, the stigma also exists that studying abroad is no more than a college student’s semester-long vacation. However fun the experience may be – and it is fun – there is much more involved than tourism when engaging in university study in a foreign country. “I encourage study abroad; it broadens your outlook on life,” says Dr. Michael Gaines, Professor of Biology, Assistant Provost of Undergraduate Research, and Pre-Health Advisor. Dr. Gaines himself spent a year abroad in Oslo, Norway on a Fulbright Faculty Fellowship and now spends time doing work in Johannesburg, South Africa every year. “International connections have been extremely useful for me. My South African colleagues feel like lifetime friendships, both personally and professionally.”

In addition to building an international network, studying abroad can improve students’ applications to medical schools and other graduate programs who recognize the applicability of real world experience gained in international settings. In the words of Dr. Gaines, “international diversity absolutely makes an applicant stronger.” With all other things being equal, it gives depth to the student, making them cross-culturally adept, and subsequently more fit for a successful career in the health sciences. When asked about the disadvantages, Dr. Gaines’ only concern was that “students who are unprepared may not have it together enough for the MCAT,” a problem easily overcome with proper planning.
So, in the midst of learning three-dimensional chemical structures in Orgo, finding shadowing opportunities, and preparing for the MCAT, how will you be able to go abroad, too? Dr. Gaines says, “the most important thing is to come in with a plan,” referencing the stringent curriculum of a science major. “With good planning, anyone can do it.” Although it is not recommended to take pre-med requirements abroad due to the cultural differences in academic structure, science majors have a lot more wiggle room than rumor tends to suggest. Some biology courses and most humanities requirements are suitable courses to take abroad; it’s all a matter of thinking a few steps ahead. “The key is to get pre-med courses done in the first two years,” Dr. Gaines advises freshmen with the travel bug. But where does that leave the rest of us?

Students who decide to study abroad later in their college careers have options as well. Taking the MCAT or GRE in January of a student’s junior year leaves room for an international adventure as a senior, as long as they participate in a UM-affiliated program so as to not violate the Residency Rule. There are also programs during summer and winter or spring intersessions allowing for international experience without interfering with students’ academic plan. Another option is to take medical school prerequisites over the summer here in the States in order to enjoy a full fall or spring semester of greater flexibility while abroad.

Finally, there are UM-sponsored organizations, like the VIDA medical volunteering organization, providing students with hands-on medical, dental, or veterinary experience in the form of a one- to two-week excursion to countries in Latin America. Aside from the varied array of options available to all types of undergrads, one simple and highly recommended option is a gap year. Dr. Gaines, a strong advocate of time off, asks, “what’s the rush? The average age of accepted medical students is 25 now.” Medical schools appreciate a student who has taken the time to solidify his/her interests and explore other opportunities. These types of experiences typically contribute to a more well-rounded applicant.

Ultimately, study abroad not only facilitates cultural enrichment, but provides students with the experience necessary for an increasingly globalized marketplace. It propels students into unfamiliar territory while building and refining skills they will implement in their lives and careers. With proper planning students can shadow, volunteer, and pursue academic opportunities they would not normally have access to here in Coral Gables. So, how important can studying abroad really be for your future? For many, it can truly make a world of difference.

Thinking about study abroad but not sure how to fit it in? Come by to meet with Alida Lambert or Sean Kilpatrick in UASP to work out a plan. You may have more options than you think! Also check-out the study abroad website at www.miami.edu/studyabroad for available programs.
Student Shout Outs

Sophomore psychology major Ana Ivanova has been awarded a College of Arts and Sciences Beyond the Book scholarship to conduct research over the summer. Ana will receive a $2,500 stipend to work with neuroscience faculty member Dr. Lucina Uddin.

Katryna Thomas, a freshman psychology major, was the winner of the 2014 Miami Commitment Newcomer Award presented at the Student Employment Award Celebration on April 15th. This award is presented to a freshman who shows outstanding dedication to the Miami Commitment program based on a combination of program participation, work hours, GPA, and credit load. Congratulations to Katryna for her outstanding performance both professionally and academically!

Senior neuroscience major Amit Garg was nominated by his supervisor, Dr. Christopher Bennett of the Department of Music Media, and Industry, for the Student Employee of the Year award that was presented at the annual Student Employment Award Celebration on April 15th. Amit was nominated for his work as a research assistant in Dr. Bennett’s music engineering lab and was described as “an independent worker, a critical thinker, an inquisitive learner, … and a wonderful person to work with”

Stefania Pinto, a junior double-major in psychology and art history, was accepted to the College of Arts and Sciences Summer Research Program for Underrepresented Minorities and Women to conduct research with Dr. Youngmee Kim. She will also participate in the Department of Psychology’s PRIME program as a PRIME Associate member.

Sophomore psychology major, Nareka Trewick, was accepted to a summer pre-medical program at Duke University.

Alumni News

December graduate and former PAL, William McAuliffe (B.A., ’13), will be joining UM’s Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program beginning Fall 2014. Will was accepted to several graduate programs around the country, and we are proud he will be staying at his alma mater. Will will be working under the mentorship of Dr. Michael McCullough and researching in the field of evolutionary psychology.

Hayley Gordon (B.A., ’12) is working toward her Ph.D. in clinical psychology at Virginia Tech and is currently recruiting participants for her Master’s thesis. Hayley is studying the relationship between empathy, emotion regulation, and helping behavior. Study participants complete a survey online and are entered into a drawing to win one of four $50 Amazon gift cards. To participate in Hayley’s study visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3ZM38BK.

Alexander Locust (B.S., ’12) was accepted to San Francisco State University to pursue a Master’s in Rehabilitation Counseling beginning in fall 2014.
Honor Society Updates
By: Andrea Lafnitzegger, President, and Ana Moas, Public Relations Chair

Hello, Psychology and Neuroscience majors!

Psi Chi E-board hopes you had a great semester! We cannot believe it is already time for summer. We are beyond happy with how this semester went and we would love to update you. We just inducted new members into our honor society! These members needed to have 9 credits in psychology, have a psychology GPA of 3.0 or higher, be at least a second-semester Sophomore, and be in the top 35% of their class.

Congratulations to all newly inducted members:

- Liz Alvarez
- Chelsea Axelrod
- Rachel Berquist
- Gregory Damian Brusko
- Rebecca Dreizen
- Vanessa Feola
- Lauren Friedman
- Robert Glaser
- Victoria Patricia Hrebicek
- Hailey Hutcheson
- Michelle Jaremko
- Mary Straneva Kalpakoff
- Savanah Leaf
- Kathryn Louis
- Lissa Mandell
- Caroline Mazzer
- Sarah McGriff
- Samantha McLaughlin
- Jamie Nucho
- Chelsea Verduin
- Alexandra Walker
- Jessica Wienand
- Talia Joelle Weintraub

Psi Chi also has a new executive board for the 2014-2015 calendar year! We received more applications than ever before and we are excited to welcome four very deserving new members on the board! Hailey Hutcheson and Andrea Lafnitzegger are both continuing to serve on the board as well.

**Psi Chi Executive Board 2014:**
- President: Andrea Lafnitzegger
- Vice President: Hailey Hutcheson
- Treasurer: Talia Weintraub
- Secretary: Lauren Friedman
- Public Relations Chair: Nicole Foster
- Historian: Caroline Mazzer

We would like to thank graduating executive board members, **Matt Siman** (Vice President), **Teresa Vargas** (Treasurer), **Christa Hunt** (Secretary), and **Ana Moas** (Public Relations Chair) for such amazing hard work and dedication to Psi Chi. All of your passion and work put into Psi Chi made it as successful as it was.

For updates on Psi Chi next semester, please visit our chapter website in the coming months: http://umiamipschi.wix.com/umiamipschi. Feel free to contact umiamipschi@gmail.com with any questions or concerns! Check-out photos from the 2014 Psi Chi induction ceremony on page 6!

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The Undergraduate Neuroscience Society

By: Rhiya Mittal, PR Chair

Hello all Neuroscience and Psychology Majors!

Can you believe the year is almost over? TUNS has had so many fabulous events this semester and we cannot wait to have even more! Last month, our E-board and our members volunteered at the annual Brain Fair, during which we educated young children about basic neuroscience topics and helped them gain knowledge in fun and interactive ways through our creative booths. The booths explained the specificity with which neurotransmitters bind to receptors by using puzzle pieces as a representation and also had a “Pin the Function on the Brain” game for children to learn what each part of the brain does. On behalf of the TUNS E-board, we would like to specially thank Dr. Atkins for allowing us to participate in the Brain Fair and we would like to congratulate her on an amazing event.

One of our speakers this semester was esteemed neuro-oncologist, Dr. Ricardo Komotar who discussed his work in brain tumor removal and laser tumor ablation. He also spoke to us about awake craniotomy and a special cancer vaccine that could potentially change the field of neuro-oncology. We encourage our members to come to our meetings next year to listen to even more renowned speakers.

TUNS will be hosting a faculty mixer next semester where neuro-science and psychology majors can meet faculty members involved in the field, network for possible research or shadowing opportunities, and learn more about faculty projects. We will also be having our Zombie Walk in October and more information regarding how to become involved in that will be released to our new members next fall. On behalf of the TUNS E-board, we thank all our current members for their support and interest and are very excited to welcome new members next fall!
Thank you for your hard work and countless good times,
Peer Advising Liaisons!

Alea Agrawal
Jennifer Baumgartner
Vidhya Krishnan
Nicole Lavina
Grace Madsen
Alex Perez
Raisa Uddin