College Drinking
Why College Students Drink More than Any Other Group

Michael McCullough, Ph.D.
Evolutionary Roots of Behavior

Malcolm Gladwell
David and Goliath: Why Rebel?

Study Abroad
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2014 Just Desserts
Happy St. Patrick’s Day!

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advising directions

1. If you have fewer than 45 completed UM credits you cannot register without meeting with an advisor to remove your hold.

2. Schedule an appointment at www.psy.miami.edu/advising. We will not see any walk-ins during advising.

3. Confirm you are taking the right classes to fulfill requirements for a timely graduation!

4. Familiarize yourself with residency rules if you are considering taking summer courses.

5. Please arrive 5-15 minutes early to sign in and fill out forms.

6. Come Prepared! Bring with you:
   - A list of ideal courses including full section with the letter and 4-digit number (e.g., B-LEC-0146)
   - Include at least 10 alternates
   - Completed section grid
   - Printed Degree Progress Report

You have arrived at your destination. Enjoy your Fall 2014 semester.

Before break roughly 50 students took advantage of our new service, Fast Track advising. These students were able to see Sean or Alida for full advising with no wait and no paperwork!

Students who have 45 or more completed UM credits are eligible for Fast Track appointments.

Benefits:

- Skip normal advising appointments.
- Spend more time with advisors with appointments that are twice as long.
- Explore interests or areas of concern.
- No paperwork required. Just bring a current DPR.
- No stress!

The Fast Track advising period is finished this semester. If you are or will be eligible for Fall 2014, keep an eye out for advertisements and make an appointment!

Important Dates

March 17: Classes are Posted
March 18: Advising Begins
March 24: Registration Appts. Posted
March 26: Last Day to Drop
April 7: Registration Begins
April 11: Advising Ends
April 14: First Day to Add Research Credit
I don’t hesitate to assert there are wild parties, loosely guarded night spots, and fake ID’s on every college campus across the country. In Miami, though, college drinking is taken to an entirely new level. Let’s face it, we live in a beautiful city known for luxury and excess. The glamor of Liv and insanity of Ultra happen right in our backyard. The Grove and Brickell are both short cab-rides away. Because of this easy access, it is even more important students at UM make educated and responsible choices. Every day, night, and weekend there are countless ways to have a good time; some choices better, healthier, and smarter than others. My goal in writing this is not to suck the fun out of your college experience, nor is it to scare you away from ever having a glass of wine. Much more importantly, my hope is to give you some insight into drinking culture, psychologically, and to empower you to make fun and safe decisions both for today and for the promising future you are working so hard to build. I encourage you to read on and spend the next 15 minutes giving me a chance to do so.

Let’s start with a few of my favorite things, statistics. Over 80% of college students in the United States drink alcohol, and half of those students binge drink [National Institute on Alcohol and Alcoholism (NIAA)]. In fact, college students “are drinking more than any other age or demographic group,” says University of Memphis psychologist James Murphy, Ph.D. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2011 survey, the leading cause of death in 17 to 20 year-olds is alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents. Additionally, the survey reports that roughly 400,000 college students (ages 18 – 24) engage in unprotected sex while under the influence and about a quarter of those students claim they were too drunk to remember if they consented to sex or not. According to the NIAA, about 1,825 students die each year from alcohol related injuries, over 690,000 students were assaulted by a drunk person, and another 97,000 were victims of sexual assault or rape by a person under the influence of alcohol. They also report that 25% of college students admit to experiencing academic consequences related to alcohol use. I could keep going but presenting numbers only goes so far and I promised my goal is not a scare-tactic. The point is that alcohol seriously affects the lives of hundreds of thousands of college students every year by impacting physical health, mental health, sexual relationships, and academics, and causing problems with the law.
So, why do college students drink so much more than other groups? The answer is multifaceted. The transition from high school to college is no doubt a milestone in students’ lives. It is also a big adjustment. Everyone becomes acutely aware of the new freedoms they possess – no parents watching what time and in what state you come home – but very few realize the immense responsibility that comes with those freedoms. Not surprisingly, freshmen have an even higher rate of problem drinking compared to older students. This is often because in situations where students used to depend on their parents for support, guidance, and/or approval, they now rely on peers instead. Though the new role peers play in students lives helps students adapt to college life, it also creates an increase in peer pressure. Peer pressure is defined as “the impact exerted by a peer group on its separate members to fit in with or conform to group expectations by thinking, feeling, and acting in a like or approved way” (psychologydictionary.org). Peer pressure is seen in several forms related to drinking: actively offering alcohol, modeling drinking behavior, and interpreting perceived drinking norms. It is important to know being the majority in a group is not required to exert peer pressure on others. Very often in a group of college students it is the desires and actions of the most vocal minority that are able to appear to be the majority. In this way, a loud and confident few can influence the behavior of a quiet or unsure many, either by offering alcohol or using it in excess themselves (modeling). Coincidently, it is easy to mistake the aggressive drinking behaviors of a few peers to be the behavior and “norm” of all peers.

The last type of peer pressure has less to do with the actual behaviors of others’ behavior. College students typically try to drink in quantity and frequency equal to those around them and in accordance with what is known as perceived drinking norms. The trouble is students misjudge how much others are actually drinking. “Students vastly overestimate how much their peers drink,” says Dr. Francis Flynn, the substance abuse counselor at UM’s Counseling Center. The literature agrees. Do you feel like your friends drink more than you do and work hard to keep up? It’s likely they think and do the same as you. Maybe a reality check is in order for all.

Not everyone views peer pressure the same way. Dr. Flynn has a different take on the peer pressure – drinking relationship. Students say they use alcohol because they “desire to fit-in. [But this] is distorted,” he explains. He views peer pressure as students’ rationalization of an individual’s bad behavior or poor decision-making. It is easy to point to an external cause (peers) and doing so conveniently excuses students from taking personal responsibility. Dr. Flynn also tells me how he often hears students give “social anxiety” as the reason for their alcohol use. If they have a few drinks they are not so anxious and thus able to come out of their shell and talk to other people, he summarizes. This is problematic because the reason for drinking is again being placed outside of personal choice. However, when students “cognitively rephrase what they tell themselves they don’t have quite as much a reason to drink,” he explains. Changing the way you think about drinking from external control (“others make me”) to internal control (“I choose to”) puts the power solidly in individuals’ own hands. Dr. Flynn’s assertions may be tough for students to swallow because they require students to step up and take responsibility, but they also are empowering. Whether we view peer pressure as the initiating force behind college drinking or rather as the convenient scapegoat to continue drinking, it is clear the relationship between peers and drinking is strong.
“It’s not alcoholism until you graduate!” said with a laugh before an epic “cheers.” Heard this before? Though it is meant in jest, the reality of this statement is grave. Dr. Flynn told me about his most-used and least-favorite word, “yet.” Not a fan of beating around the bush, Dr. Flynn cautions, “You’re not an alcoholic, yet. But you’ve got two feet on the banana peel and you’re slipping.” Behavioral patterns you establish in young adulthood, especially with addictive substances, are difficult to break just because your environment changes. The act of graduating and/or moving off campus will not alter any chemical or emotional dependencies you developed for alcohol. Most alcoholics begin drinking in adolescence and consumption usually escalates over time – post-graduation included. My question to you is this, if your parents drank as much as you do now, would you worry? Do you want to drink this much when you are a parent or a professional? If you said ‘no’ I hope you will think a bit about the frequency and quantity of your drinks, and there’s no time like the present. I know the whole campus will not go dry based on these facts, but hopefully if you are going to drink you might make more of an effort to drink responsibly.

The primary reason you are all here is to get an education, improve your prospects for better jobs with higher salaries and more potential for upward mobility, and become successful citizens of this society. I don’t disagree, college is awesome and access to alcohol is seemingly everywhere, but it is important not to lose sight of what brought you here in the first place. You can have everything, but only if everything is decided by a clear-headed and responsible you. Drinking should not be a prerequisite for fun, and fun doesn’t have to come at the price of your education, your health, or your life.

If you think you have a drinking problem, or just want to examine or talk about your alcohol use, there are resources for you. **Dr. Flynn, a certified addictions professional in the state of Florida**, and other excellent psychologists and therapists are available to you at the UM Counseling Center. “We have an incredible staff intensely dedicated to the well-being of students,” says Dr. Flynn. Also, there are many Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) groups and meetings close to campus and Dr. Flynn is happy to provide information about specific meetings. Acutely aware of the dynamics and realities of college life, UM counselors don’t make diagnoses or recommendations that don’t fit for college students. Also, Pier 21 is a comprehensive Prevention, Intervention, Education, and Referral program for drug and alcohol use, misuse, and dependency. They offer a variety of programs, services, and information, so check out their website at www.miami.edu/pier21.

**References**


Students flocked to the fifth floor of Flipse for our annual Just Desserts event, celebrating academic achievement in the past calendar year. Psychology and neuroscience students who made the Dean’s List, Provost’s Honor Roll, or President’s Honor Roll were invited to partake in this sweet affair. Students frittered away time chatting with their peers, not knowing where to start with this Payday of desserts. Every square inch of table space was filled with a wide array of delectable favorites. Faculty and students alike started to pack on the pound cake with plates full of chocolates, croissants, and cheesecake (just to name a few). Many Sweethearts were seen together throughout the event, with this delicious celebration right before Valentine’s Day. As some students deserted the party, more flooded through the door to consume the masses of sugary confections. Hopefully at the end of this day no one tossed their cookies (literally or figuratively), but I donut believe that an event that ran as smooth as red velvet could end in such tragedy.

Another annual treat at Just Desserts is the presentation of the Victoria Noriega MUSE Cup for Contributions to the Undergraduate Program. This year, the MUSE Cup was awarded to Dr. Kiara Timpano, who invests much of her time in undergraduate students. She has supervised over 100 hours of research credits and mentored six senior honors thesis students over the past two years. Her current research focuses on anxiety disorders, specifically Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and hoarding, and the risk and vulnerability factors associated with these disorders. She is investigating the bio-psycho-behavioral factors that influence affected individuals. She teaches undergraduate classes such as Abnormal Psychology and FORUM, and some graduate classes such as Introduction to Evidence-Based Psychological Treatments. She is passionate about her research assistants and wants to prepare them well for future graduate school and research positions. Congratulations, Dr. Timpano!
I happily sat down to discuss research with a friendly and familiar face, my former research mentor, Dr. Mike McCullough. Previously a professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, Dr. McCullough moved closer to his hometown in Florida and joined the University of Miami family. Dr. McCullough is currently a professor in the Adult Division here in the Department of Psychology and he takes an evolutionary approach to the field of psychology.

Please note the following is a summarized interpretation of my interview with Dr. Michael McCullough. Responses are not verbatim unless indicated as such with quotations.

I don’t think many undergraduates are familiar with evolutionary psychology. Can you tell me what that type of approach is all about?

Well, it’s similar to how people might examine biological or physiological characteristics of the body, for example how birds fly or why our hands are the way they are to easily open a jar, and ask “what is this for?” We look at behavioral processes in the same way. We try to examine what is the purpose, if any, of things like emotions and behaviors. What problem is the behavior designed to solve? What is anger or guilt for? Following the same steps as evolutionary biologists, we aim to answer these types of questions by experimentally testing hypotheses to see if our intuitions are correct.

That seems like an awfully complex subject to tackle. Is it?

I don’t think it really is. The reason is that we study the same subject matter that other psychologists do: behavior and mental processes. The difference is that we want to understand them by getting down to the level of the structure of the mind or brain itself, and why it developed to be the way it is. We know absolutely that there are specific structures or areas of the brain that are related to certain functions. We can see this easily with brain damage or stimulation of specific structures in the brain that impact speech, or memory, or balance. But, the brain does more social things too. We want to examine the brain’s faculties for behavior; the (possible) dedicated psychological systems we can implement that have evolved to help us carry out certain types of behaviors. Essentially, what behavior functions do we have up there and what are they for?

So how was it you became interested in that approach?

I actually had no interest in biology, evolution, or natural selection and its application to psychology during undergraduate or my early years in graduate school. But, I owned a copy of *On the Origin of Species*, of course. It was in a way by accident that I became interested, actually. We were driving around to try to lull the baby to sleep and we happened upon a bookstore where I picked up a book by Matt Ridley called *The Origins of Virtue*. It was about the evolutionary origins of the human instinct to cooperate. I had always been interested in things like forgiveness, generosity, and other positive behaviors, but I had yet to find an explanation of why we do them. Why were these behaviors so pervasive in society? Why were they something that most people
could understand and concepts people relate to? Natural selection favoring these behaviors, for some reason or another, was the first good answer to the question why. Previously I hadn’t even thought of psychology as being able to answer a question of “why?” instead of “what?” or “how?”

**What projects are you currently working on?**

One project I’m very into right now is looking at how and why humans get angry enough to want to punish others who have either harmed them or harmed another person. We think we have a good natural selection logic for why one would want to punish someone who has harmed him or her. If you are attacked or mistreated and you then retaliate, you typically discourage the behavior of the attacker and thus hopefully prevent further attacks and mistreatment. It can also be viewed as essentially training the other to treat you better by using punishment. We also see that humans sometimes desire to punish on behalf of a third person, when the victim of the attack or mistreatment is not the individual himself. Now, there is a theory in the social sciences that people are innately generous. To illustrate, imagine people naturally think of themselves as superman-like characters, doling out punishments to the bad and defending the good. We find some flaws with this theory, however, and think that it is actually very rare for people to intervene on behalf of another at a cost to themselves. We do see, however, that there are some predictable times when people will intervene or selectively punish: typically when the “other” is a family member or loved one or when there is a reputational benefit associated with being the superman character (think of politicians or first dates). The goal of this study is to find what incentives are processed in the mind that may cause one to intervene or not. Basically it comes down to a cost-benefit analysis. Costs of intervening could include putting oneself in harm’s way, making an enemy, or using up time and resources. Benefits could include making a new friend, strengthening a relationship, or saving a genetic relative from harm. Humans are designed to evaluate costs and benefits as a result of natural selection.

The other main project right now is actually the polar opposite of the punishment study. I am working in collaboration with Dr. Debra Lieberman on the function of gratitude. Intuitive answers may include things like “it helps repay people who have been kind to you” or “it strengthens relationships.” These are good starting points but we’re looking for something more specific. What exactly was happening that made it evolutionarily favorable to express gratitude?

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

RAs are trained to be experimenters. We usually have between two and five experimental studies going on at any particular time and so RAs will run participants through experimental manipulations and get a lot of hands-on experience. It’s a busy lab! Also, as students stay with us for longer periods of time they earn more responsibilities.

“I think our lab is an effective place to come and learn how experimental social science is done. [It also exposes students to] a lot of different ways about thinking about how natural selection might be building human behavior.”

Follow Dr. McCullough on Twitter: @McCullough_Mike
You can also check out his blog at www.social-science-evolving.com
What do you look for in undergraduate RAs?

The most important thing is for students to be enthusiastic about a natural selection approach to psychology. I think of it as an acquired taste that may be very different from the way students are used to approaching behavior. Most psychologists will agree that behaviors serve some function. The key to research in my lab is to understand the idea that in order for those functions to develop there must have been something that evolution “liked.” The difference is in the framework, it is a different and specific lens through which we approach and evaluate human behavior and social processes and students should be open to learning about and adopting that lens. Many of my students come from a neuroscience or biology background or interest but many do not. Maybe they are just fascinated by natural selection or read a book by Richard Dawkins or Stephen Jay Gould or E. O. Wilson. Maybe they had FORUM with me!

You bring up a great name, Richard Dawkins. Last year Dr. Dawkins came to UM and spoke not only to the public at the BUC but also intimately in our very own conference room with psychology students, faculty, and staff which you helped arrange. Can you speak on that?

“I saw Dawkins’ visit as an opportunity to introduce social scientists on campus to the joy of natural selection thinking and applying [that thinking] to humans. He is a superb speaker with incredible clarity and one of the greatest communicators of science in history.” The whole experience was really a pleasure.

Are you planning any other speakers or events in the near future?

There are actually, right now, two of the most important evolutionary biologists in the country here as part of a Distinguished Visiting Professors series, Dr. Joan Strassmann and Dr. David Queller. Though I don’t personally have anything planned right now I do have some ideas and hope to bring more speakers in the future.

You have mentored a few Senior Honors Theses students. What is that process like for you?

It’s rewarding. I didn’t used to mentor theses until I had one student who was exceptional. She was with the lab for years and really had the ability and dedication to complete the project. I felt she deserved departmental honors and wanted to facilitate her ability to earn it. She actually went on to publish work from her thesis project in a scientific journal. Since then I have continued to mentor honors thesis students, selectively. It is a rewarding but intensive process to go through, so students interested in completing theses should be dedicated and have a secondary goal of producing an article for potential publication. Also I like students to have been with my lab for long enough to absorb how we think and approach science and who have shown a high level of commitment. In general, thesis students start in my lab as sophomores and continue until graduation in order to do a thesis with me senior year.

Interested in working with Dr. McCullough and his team? Fill out their online application at http://www.psy.miami.edu/ehblab/join.html. You can also email Liana Hone or Eric Pedersen at l.hone@umiami.edu or e.pedersen2@umiami.edu
As the newest of the University of Miami’s semester on location programs, UBuenos Aires offers students the opportunity to spend a semester in Argentina’s culturally rich capital, Buenos Aires. The largest city in Argentina, Buenos Aires offers students historical and cultural enrichment in the midst of contemporary metropolitan life. This city’s prime location offers students a multitude of travel opportunities with two or three program directed excursions to Uruguay, the Iguazú falls, and the city of Tigre. Classes will be taken at the University of Belgrano, a private institution established in 1964 with a widely recognized international exchange program and courses covering a diverse variety of subjects to accommodate students from most majors. Through UBuenos Aires, students can earn a minor in Latin American studies by taking History of Latin America (UM equivalent to LAS 101) or Estudios Culturales Latino Americos, one Spanish language course or a course taught in Spanish (for advanced speakers), and three additional courses of their choice. The student may participate in one of two fieldwork courses involving an internship with a variety of organizations to choose from that are specific to the students’ major and interests, or a capstone course that involves fieldwork in film, the arts, or social justice. Both the internship and capstone course experience count as a 3 credit LAS course and may be applied toward the minor. These opportunities provide the students with a rich hands on experience geared toward expanding their academic and career-related knowledge in a novel, culturally diverse setting.

PUC-Rio
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Nestled on the Costa Verde, Rio de Janeiro is the second largest city in Brazil, boasting a population of 6.3 million. As a World Heritage site, this city’s diverse “cultural landscape” has earned it the name “Rio De Janeiro: Carioca Landscapes between the Mountains and the Sea.” Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC—Rio) is a Catholic University located in Gavea, which is ideally positioned between the beautiful Brazilian forest and beach. It is the first private university established in Brazil and is recognized for its excellence in law, engineering, psychology, economics, business, and international relations. Students will attend classes with native Brazilian allowing for immersion in an extensively diverse student population, with courses taught in English to ensure a fluid transition. As the 2014 FIFA World Cup approaches, Brazil will be bathing in the international limelight between June 12th and July 13th, making it an especially appealing time to visit Rio!

Applications for Spring programs are typically due October 1st. Applications for Fall programs are typically due March 1st.
For general information on Study Abroad, visit the Education Abroad Office in Building 21, Room D.
Malcolm Gladwell

David and Goliath: Why Rebel?

By: Jennifer Baumgartner

The crowd tentatively closed their eyes in accordance with Mr. Malcolm Gladwell’s request, eagerly awaiting something along the lines of a meditation exercise. On the count of three we opened our eyes to see that Gladwell had donned a University of Miami hoodie and was throwing up the “U”. Phones and cameras flashed as the crowd scrambled to take pictures of this honorary Hurricane. On Tuesday, February 11th, Gladwell visited UM to address the student body and discuss opinions expressed in his most recent book, David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants.

A writer for the New Yorker since 1996, Gladwell is an English-Canadian journalist known for his often academic articles usually related to the fields of psychology, sociology, and social psychology. He has written five books to date, each appearing on the New York Times’ Best Seller list, and was named one of Time Magazine’s 100 most influential people in 2005. Released in October, 2013, David and Goliath examines the social and psychological role(s) of the underdog against the popular favorite, as applicable to history and current events.

In the new Student Activities Center, Gladwell opened with a short summary of the “Falls Curfew,” also known as the Battle of the Falls, during Britain’s occupation of Northern Ireland in the 1970’s. In his storytelling Gladwell explained that, despite the increased punishments inflicted upon the Irish people for breaking curfew, they still rebelled and eventually overcame the British. This was accomplished through a demonstration of 3,000 women and children walking through the streets. The question he put forth immediately after the tale was simple: “What compels someone to defy authority?”

He followed his question with the elaborate tale of Alva Vanderbilt, a woman predominantly known for her role in the women’s suffrage movement. Alva’s story began with a series of bewildering decisions: her lavish spending on living spaces, the strict micromanagement of her daughter, Consuelo, and the taboo decision to divorce her husband, William Vanderbilt. Gladwell lead us along, giving us the amusing impression that Alva was a little bit wild. In the end, though, he illustrated that the reasoning behind Alva’s behavior, in addition to that of the 3,000 women and children of Ireland, adhered to the principles of legitimacy and not the theory of deterrence, as is widely assumed.
Since the 16th century, the psychological theory of deterrence has been the leading explanation for why people rebel against the norm or against authority. The general idea is that people will rebel when the cost of rebelling is lower than the potential benefits. Seems obvious, right? What Gladwell points out is that while there are plenty of examples that support this theory, there are just as many that defy it. His primary example was the tax system in the United States. Within this system the citizens are likely to be honest while filing taxes even though the probability of being audited and fined by the IRS (the cost of rebelling), is minimal. Other countries, for example Greece, are notorious for evading taxes. So, according to the theory of deterrence, we should see higher rates of tax evasion at home that parallel other countries since the benefit outweighs the cost—however this is not the case.

Gladwell explains that the legitimacy of the law consists of three principles:

1) People subject to the law feel treated with respect
2) Laws are trustworthy and consistent
3) The law is fair

It is when the law lacks these characteristics, or when we don’t perceive them to be present, we are prompted to rebel. In the case of Northern Ireland, the British curfew was not respectful to the Irish, it was inconsistent with previous interactions, and was overall unfair. In Alva’s case, the social standards for women were not respectful to their gender at all, nor were they fair to those who were educated or those who had ideas and could make a difference in the world. Alva’s perception of the lack of legitimacy in her society’s rules compelled her to work as an influential member of the suffragette movement and to help establish the National Women’s Party. Returning to the seemingly exceptional situation of our taxation laws, we view our government as fair (or rather, mostly fair) when it comes to taxes, and the laws are consistent throughout time. Thus, because the United States tax laws meet the criteria for legitimacy we respect them enough to follow the rules while the government in Greece is viewed as corrupt in its taxation and thus illegitimate and not worthy of respect.

When asked what the next big “David and Goliath” story will be, to use Gladwell’s coined phrase, it will be in the United States, he answered, saying the next big clash is not next, but now. It is happening abroad all around us. The civil war in Syria is one prime example, as well as the uprisings in Venezuela and Ukraine. This is not to say that the psychological theory of deterrence is not applicable or relative to these occurrences, but rather to say that it is peripheral instead of central. Gladwell asserts that, contrary to popular belief, deterrence is just not the root cause. Instead, he continues, it is the perception of the people of their treatment and ruling as legitimate or not. It is the latter case which ignites the tinder that often escalates into a flame of rebellion.
Student Shout Outs

By: Jessica Janos

Psychology major Christa Hunt, neuroscience majors Raisa Uddin and Samuel Powell, and biology and psychology double-major Emily Minor, were selected to represent the University of Miami at this year’s ACC Meeting of the Minds Conference, hosted by the University of Pittsburgh. The conference will take place from April 3rd to April 5th and welcomes student projects from many research disciplines to promote the diversity of research being conducted amongst undergraduate students.

Christa Hunt is a senior working under Dr. Shearer, who is her Senior Honors Thesis advisor and was her PRIME mentor. She will present a poster titled “Peer Social Interactions Between Preschoolers with a Language Match and Preschoolers with a Mismatch.” Her study aims to analyze the composition of classroom language of Head Start Centers in Miami-Dade County, and to decide if students are speaking the same languages at home that they speak in the classroom. The goal is to determine if the match or mismatch of these languages has an association with higher or lower levels of peer interactions.

Raisa Uddin works at the UM Brain Tumor Initiative with her mentor, Dr. Regina Graham, in the lab of neurosurgeon Dr. Ricardo Komotar. Raisa’s research project examines glioblastoma multiforme stem cells. Glioblastoma multiforme is the most aggressive and most malignant form of primary brain tumors and the stem cells are believed to be responsible for tumor recurrence. It has been shown across multiple glioblastoma stem cell lines that a certain pro-survival pathway known as the Akt pathway is hyperactive. The team hypothesizes that this pathway contributes to the ability of stem cells to cause tumor recurrence. They are testing drugs that target various checkpoints of the Akt pathway to see if they reduce the viability of the stem cells. By comparing the efficacy of the drugs, they hope to identify a certain target that appears more promising than others.

Samuel Powell is a junior currently working at the Center for Therapeutic Innovation under Dr. Claes Wahlestedt. At the conference, he will present research he has conducted that identifies a novel role for a specific class of proteins in the epigenetic mechanisms of cocaine addiction. This protein family, known as bromodomains, is affected by cocaine exposure and plays a key role in gene expression changes underlying drug addiction.

Carolina Gonzalez, a senior neuroscience major, was accepted to the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Exceptional Research Opportunities Program (HHMI EXROP) for the summer of 2014. This program paired Carolina with Dr. Charles Zuker at Columbia University to conduct research for the summer with a $4,500 stipend.

Junior psychology major, Haley Edwards, was chosen as a nominee in the internal University competition to represent the University of Miami for the honor of winning the Beinecke Scholarship. This scholarship program offers each student two years of funding for a graduate school of his or her choice.

Senior neuroscience major, Paradis Esfandiari, was accepted to the Lake Eire College of Osteopathic Medicine, School of Dental Medicine. Congratulations, Paradis!
Hello, Psychology and Neuroscience majors!

Psi Chi E-board hopes your semester is going well so far! We cannot believe how quickly this semester is going. We are happy to say that we have a lot of exciting things planned for the rest of the semester.

Let’s quickly recap what Psi Chi has already done so far: On January 27th we had our first general meeting when many students came to find out what Psi Chi is about and learn about the induction process! On February 15th many Psi Chi members attended Fun Day, a community service day where 300 special citizens from the Miami area come to campus and are paired up with students to enjoy a day of fun and games. We even received a shout-out from the Fun Day Facebook page for having so many Psi Chi members sign up!

February 25th we had a graduate student Q&A panel where members could ask the panel any questions they had about medical school, law school, M.D./Ph.D. programs, and/or graduate school in psychology. We thank everyone on the panel for providing our members with such a great opportunity! Our next meeting will be Wednesday, March 26th at 7 p.m. and we will have a guest speaker from the field of psychology! We will announce who the speaker is soon via email.

We sent out invitations to all the students who qualify to become inducted members of Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology! We congratulate all members who qualified! We will be having the induction ceremony Sunday, March 30th from 1-3 p.m., with the location TBA. It will be a formal ceremony with Sean Kilpatrick in attendance. To be inducted, the required due and forms must be in the Psi Chi mailbox (5th floor of Flipse) by March 7th. For any questions about the requirements for induction or the induction process, please email us. Executive board applications will be coming out right around the time of the induction ceremony and we encourage everyone to apply.

Last, since April is Autism Awareness month, we will have a meeting and community service event centered on the cause. Come join Psi Chi for these exciting and rewarding events! All are listed on our official chapter website: http://umiamipsichi.wix.com/umiamipsichi. As always, feel free to contact umiamipsichi@gmail.com for any questions or concerns!

Hello all Neuroscience and Psychology Majors!

We hope you all are having a great semester so far! TUNS has surely been working hard to make this semester better and more productive than ever. We kicked off this semester's bimonthly meetings with our speaker, Dr. Atkins, from The Miami Project, who discussed the upcoming Brain Fair in which TUNS will be participating. The Brain Fair is a fabulous event, held at the Patricia and Philip Frost Museum of Science, that aims to teach children of all ages about neuroscience in a fun and interactive way. This year’s Brain Fair will take place on March 22nd and TUNS members are encouraged to volunteer for this rewarding event. We also had a speaker from Relay for Life attend one of our meetings to motivate members to support Relay’s cause and take part in the nationwide fundraiser.

Not only do we at TUNS help the community via outreach activities but we assist members too! This semester we are accepting Shadowing Applications at every meeting which will help students get matched with specialists in their desired field to begin shadowing as soon as possible. We will also be having a bake sale the week of March 24th in honor of Brain Awareness Week and information will be sent out regarding how to become involved with that.

TUNS encourages all students to join us at our next general meeting on March 27th at 7:30 p.m. in LC 190. We are expecting an exciting speaker to attend this meeting and as always, shadowing applications will be accepted and free pizza will be served! For more information regarding shadowing and involvement opportunities, email us at umtuns@gmail.com. We are looking forward to seeing you at our meeting!