



# BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

2021 ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



## A NOTE FROM OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

DR. ADRIEL BOALS

We certainly faced a challenging year with all of the changes resulting from COVID.

Our faculty had to learn to teach via Zoom,

our students had to learn how to be a student in a Zoom classroom, and many students had to simultaneously learn to teach and be a student via Zoom. Terrill Hall, along with the rest of UNT campus, was a ghost town the entire academic year. Despite the challenges, we were still able to have a productive year, continuing our learning and training via online formats. Conducting psychological research was particularly challenging for many of us. I am very proud of the way people in our program responded and adapted. The resiliency and determination of our students and faculty was on full display last year. The BSci Committee made a number of continued changes to our program manual, with an eye towards constantly improving the opportunities and experiences for our students. We love to hear updates from our alumni, so please feel free to reach out to me with updates on how you are doing or even just a friendly hello!

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## INCOMING STUDENTS FALL 2021

Alexandria Aleman

Isamar Almeida

Kara Stuart

Linda Thompson

## A Thank You and "Good Luck" to Drs. Yolanda Flores-Niemann and Rex Wright

As of Fall 2021, **Dr. Yolanda Flores-Niemann** begins modified service. She is still working on ongoing grant projects, graduate student mentorship, and publications but remaining remote to be near her family.

**Dr. Rex Wright** also begins modified service this fall. He will continue teaching UNT's social psychology class for undergraduates.

## Welcome to Our New Department Chair!



**DR. DONALD DOUGHERTY, PhD**

Dr. Dougherty joins us August 1st as the new chair of the Department of Psychology. Coming from the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, he brings years of research and academic experience. We are excited about his passion for research and working with students. We are excited to have an enthusiastic new face in Terrill Hall.

## Congratulations to BSci's Newest Graduate: DR. IVÁN CARBAJAL!

Upon graduation, Iván accepted the position of Assistant Professor at Oregon State University

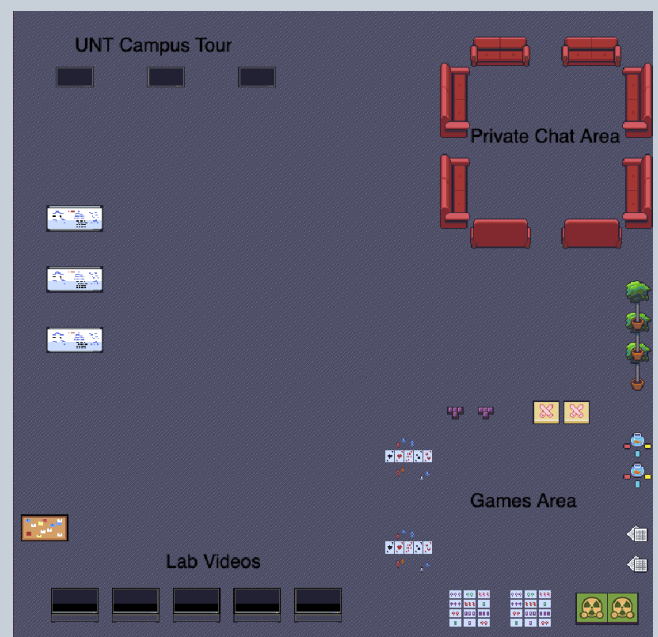
*"I f\*\*\*\*\*g made it y'all, and y'all will too. Much love, BSci"*

## Virtual BSci Interview Day

January 29, 2021

Due to Covid restrictions, this year's Interview Day was completely remote. Students showed up in their nice shirts and pajama bottoms for a full day of Zoom interviews, information sessions, and casual down time.

At the end of the day, some current and potential students and faculty met (remotely) at Terrill Hall on GatherTown! Attendees could walk around and watch lab tour videos, take a campus tour, play games, or have private chats.



*Pictured: Virtual Terrill Hall on GatherTown*

# Students' Thoughts about a Year at Home

## What We Liked

Having more flexibility

Being comfy at home

"Being remote initiated the transition of certain lab tasks to be electronic (e.g., data tracking, selected meetings)"

"I liked the fact that I could start working immediately after waking up. I didn't have to worry about traffic, parking, etc."

Not having to spend time getting to school

## What We Didn't Like

"I did not like the altering of courses for the online format. I feel that it is easier to convey one's message when working face-to-face."

Zoom fatigue

"The university has more resources than I have at home"

The lack of boundaries between work and life

No social aspect of graduate training

"It was hard for me to focus at home"

## What We Learned

"I learned the importance of self-starting. You cannot wait for others to do things for you, otherwise it won't get done."

"Adaptability is crucial."

"I spend too much time talking to people when I'm on campus."

"I never want to work from home"

"I like having the option to work from home"

"You don't have to move forward perfectly; you just have to move forward!"

# ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Elizabeth Hamner



**Dr. Hamner is currently a full-time faculty member at Collin College in Frisco, TX.**

## ***What is your favorite thing about your job?***

My favorite thing about my job--and teaching in higher education in general--is working with students. I love teaching them critical thinking skills, how psychology applies to all of us in our everyday lives, and advising them in their college journeys. Being out in the "real world," I get to focus on my strengths and passions--which do not include doing a lot of research.

## ***What have you been doing since your time in BSci?***

I graduated from BSci in 2016 and immediately got a full-time teaching position at Hill College (just south of the DFW metroplex). It was a great place to begin by first few years teaching as it was a really small college with only two full-time faculty members. In 2019, I moved to Collin College in Frisco, where I am now. It has been an interesting transition, and I am thankful for my experiences teaching at UNT during my graduate training! I also got married in 2015, had my first child in 2018, and have another on the way this summer!

## ***What do you feel is the most important or valuable thing you have accomplished since your time in BSci?***

Since I don't do research or work with clients, most of my work is subtle and integrated into individual students' lives. But, when I get a "thank you" email or note from a student, which is rare in college, it really touches me and re-energizes / motivates me to keep working in my field. I have helped students move forward in their careers, become better / more informed citizens, and encouraged some to pursue psychology!



# ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT (CONT'D)

## ***What is the most valuable thing you learned while in BSci?***

The most valuable thing I learned was the teaching experience I got. This also included a special topics course with Dr. Boals, joining and presenting at the Society for Teaching of Psychology, and having a fellow graduate student (Dr. Shana Southard-Dobbs) who was interested in the same career goal that I was. The BSci program was a great, flexible option that allowed me to completed my PhD requirements while being able to focus on the career that I wanted.

## ***What is/are the most important thing(s) you have learned since your time in BSci?***

A few things. First, Getting a PhD in something doesn't mean you have all the answers; it just means that you have been trained to find them and how to think critically about information. Second, and more specific to my profession, I have had to adjust my understanding and teaching style to students of different backgrounds and experiences than those I grew up with--and taught at UNT. Graduate and undergraduate students who can be successful at a university have certain personal abilities and levels of social support to be able to do those things.

## ***(cont'd) What is/are the most important thing(s) you have learned since your time in BSci?***

But, many people don't have that, and I have found it to be an important part of my job to adjust my teaching to access and educate those who may not come from the best backgrounds. I've also learned just how the administration / behind the scenes of higher education works. The politics etc. of college (and education in general) are mind-blowing.

## ***What have you learned about yourself and your working style since Covid-19?***

Yikes! I had NO experiencing teaching online before my first job at Hill College. Luckily, I got about 3 years of experiencing teaching 1-2 online classes per semester before Covid hit. If BSci students don't already know, teaching online is NOT necessarily easier than teaching face-to-face. It requires a lot more proactive planning, thinking, and explaining of material, as well as better organization skills. Luckily I am relatively young and took online classes during my undergrad, and I can figure out technology pretty easily. But, my communication skills were definitely tested in my job during the past year.

# ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT (CONT'D)

***If Covid-19 has prompted changes to the way you work and get things done, do you think you'll maintain those changes when life goes back to "normal"?***

Overall, I think the pandemic allowed me to take a step back and think about how to more efficiently do my job. It has helped me reconsider doing things the traditional way (lecture-style, for example) that maybe I was taught or experienced, and I am going to try and move toward a more flipped style classroom. It also helped me be a better professor online overall in terms of what I most, how I communicate, etc.

***Do you have any advice for current or future students?***

Take advantage of the program--its flexibility, the professors, and your classmates. It will be a unique opportunity that will benefit you most based on the effort you put in. Don't be afraid to get out of your comfort zone while you can "afford to"--present at a few conferences, get teaching experience, etc., so that you are prepared for whatever might come (or be available) after you graduate.

***Do you have any advice for students approaching graduation?***

Be open minded. The first job you get probably won't be the last. Start applying to places early, but don't get discouraged if you can't find something right away. Just because you have a Master's / PhD doesn't mean that you can get a job any easier or faster than those in other fields with a Bachelor's degree.

***If you had to go back and do anything differently, what would it be?***

I don't know that I would change much--because of the experiences I had while there, I have had a successful teaching career so far! But, if it hadn't been for my friends, family, peers in the program, and my mentor, I definitely would not be where I am today. They helped me so much and pushed me to be better. If I had not had those people and experiences, I certainly would have needed to get out of my comfort zone by going to conferences by myself or asking others to go / present with me, to be more outgoing and ask questions about class material or other various topics that came up over the years in general. Again, graduate school is more about what YOU make it, not what is given to you.