

MAY 2023

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



A NOTE FROM OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

DR. ADRIEL BOALS

The BSci program has wrapped up another successful academic year. We had an unusually small cohort enter our program last year - a cohort of one (Melissa Materia). We will have another cohort of only one join us this upcoming fall semester (Patrick Hammond). These back to back years of a small number of incoming students comes from a perfect storm of some recent faculty retirements, labs picking up students from those retirements, and labs being mostly already at full capacity. We anticipate a much larger cohort for 2024. We are excited that Dr. Danica Slavish will be taking over our professional development course, and that Dr. Casey Guillot has created a new course - Addictive Behaviors. Our program continues to flourish and overcome challenges. I am very proud that not only do we continue to do well, but that we do it the right way - by following our core principles of commitments to science, training, culture, and diversity and inclusion.

*This year's
featured stories*

CORE PRINCIPLES - 2

BSCI BRAGS - 3

NOT-SO-FIRST YEARS - 4-5

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT - 6-8

Incoming Student Fall 2023

PATRICK HAMMOND - 9

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

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BSCI CORE PRINCIPLES

Commitment to Science

The Behavioral Science Program is grounded in a commitment to science. Generating and evaluating empirical evidence is the bedrock of our program. We strive for our work to be multidisciplinary, cross-cutting, and conform to the ethical principles outlined by the Nuremberg Code and APA Ethical Guidelines. We value all aspects of the scientific method, including creative idea generation, rigorous hypothesis testing, cutting edge variable measurement, core methodology, critical thinking skills, critical writing skills, and broad dissemination of our work. We do this with passion, commitment, focus, and a desire to never stop learning.

Commitment to Training

We are committed to training the next generation of psychological scientists. This starts with recruiting talented graduate students into our program. Once in the program, we value training in all aspects of science. This includes emphases on methodology, statistical analyses, scientific writing, professionalism, as well as expertise in areas of specialization. We expect our faculty to be committed mentors and we expect our students to be committed mentees. This commitment extends to our undergraduates as well, whether it be high quality teaching in the classroom to training undergraduate research assistants in our research labs.

Commitment to a Culture of Achievement, Cooperation, and Respect

The environment in which we work is often just as critical as the work itself. In the Behavioral Science Program, we strive to generate a work culture of achievement, cooperation, and respect. The scientific process is a team effort and we encourage collaboration both amongst members of our program and with members outside of our program. We expect members of our program to support one another, share with each other, lift each other up, and represent our program with pride that forms a culture of community.

Commitment to Inclusion & Diversity

True excellence requires that people from diverse backgrounds be able to work and learn in an atmosphere of respect, dignity, and acceptance. This value is a continuation of our commitment to culture, in that all persons who have a passion for psychological science feel welcome in our program. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion requires each of us to continuously ensure our interactions, our classrooms, and our syllabi be respectful, protect free speech, and inspire academic freedom.



BSCI BRAGS



2022-2023: A Reflection

The 2022-2023 academic year has been filled with many ups and down but the Behavioral Science program has showed immense amount of resiliency despite the continued challenges. As we work to rebuild our culture, community, and morale, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on a few wins we've had in the past year.

The recipient of the GREAT Grant to conduct research at the University of Vienna in Austria
-Ruth King (3rd year)

The department has re-launched the Bonney Speaker Series!

Linda Thompson (2nd year) and Dr. B received awards from the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT)

Named Intern of the Year from the UNT Career Center
-Madasen Briggs (3rd year)

Passing dissertation defense
-Lizzie Griffith (4th year) and Caitlin Hord (5th year)

CHEERS TO MORE WINS
IN THE 2023-2024
ACADEMIC YEAR!



Not-So-First Year Interview

A word from our first year BSci colleague

As we are wrapping up the 2022-2023 academic year, we took a moment to hear about how our first year colleague's graduate journey is going so far.

First Year Student:
• **Melissa Materia**





Not-So-First Year Interview

What was something you experienced that you didn't expect coming into your first year in the BSci program?

I didn't expect how understanding and supportive everyone would be. It feels like a very learner-centered environment, and it's been refreshing!

What were your top struggles in your first year?

Figuring out my schedule and reevaluating my time-management skills. I needed to make research the priority yet still excel in classes.

Any improvements for next year?

I want to learn ECG and GSR because we have access to that equipment and would love to utilize it.

What were the highlights of your first year?

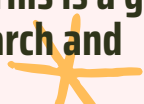
Getting to meet everyone and quickly getting involved! I felt like it was really easy to make friends, while still making time for research and learning.

Tips for Patrick?

Take care of yourself. Personal days are needed. Listen to your mind and body and ALWAYS feel free to reach out.

Something new you would like to see in the program?

In my master's program we would do this thing called, "First Fridays". It would be neat to have lab talks where a lab can volunteer to discuss whatever research they've been working on. This is a great way to showcase our research and practice talking about it.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Renee Cloutier, PhD

ABOUT

Graduated UNT: 2019

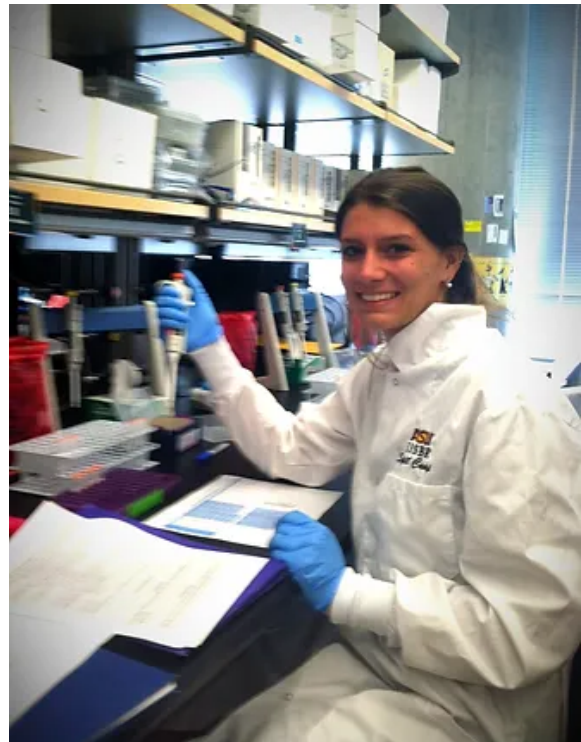
Current Position: Scientific Director - University of Pittsburgh Program Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU)

Location: State College, PA

Postdoc: Penn State University

Favorite Things:

- Opioid overdose and use-disorder prevention and intervention
- Program implementation and evaluation of opioid treatment programs
- Community based research/partnerships
- Survey Implementation and Design



EXPERIENCE

I am a behavioral scientist with training in prevention science and advanced quantitative methods. I have 10+ years of experience in quantitative research methods, advanced statistics, data analytics, and project management.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

SINCE GRADUATING IN 2019, WHAT HAVE BEEN WORKING ON?

After I graduated, I became a post-doc researcher at Penn State University working in the Prevention and Methodology Training Program to characterize young adult alcohol and cannabis use in daily life.

When COVID-19 hit, my focus shifted from a more theoretical viewpoint to an applied one. Once my post-doc ended, I found a more applied position and joined The University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy Program Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) as the Scientific Director. In this role, I run a research unit focused on enhancing community well-being through public health programs related to substance use disorder, mental health, and suicide prevention/treatment.

HOW DID YOU DECIDE BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND ACADEMIA?

My job is a mix of both! My biggest priorities were wanting to do substance use research that has a real-world impact and providing for my family.

I went on the job market while at Penn State in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic when tenure track academic jobs were at a historic low, so I applied to a range of opportunities. I was in the fortunate position to receive and negotiate several competitive offers; the job I chose happened to be the one that allowed me to maximize my professional growth/goals and maintain the personal life I had been working towards.

WHAT ARE MARKETABLE SKILLS YOU LEARNED IN THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM?

Publishing, grant writing, and grant management (including budgets).

In the Teen STAR lab, I was able to help Dr. Blumenthal build her lab from the ground up which gave me a depth and breadth of experience that translates well to academic and non-academic settings such as project management, implementing/refining processes, and delegating responsibilities while also actively applying for funding and disseminating results.

WHAT IS THE MOST VALUABLE SKILL YOU LEARNED IN THE PROGRAM?

Perseverance with hard things, conducting in-depth research, and developing my critical thinking skills.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION, WHAT RESEARCH TRENDS HAVE YOU NOTICED

Research is moving towards community-based studies with real-world impact, including designing studies to address disparities and enhance equity/well-being for all populations, not just those that are convenient to recruit. Larger and more multidisciplinary teams to enhance feasibility, impact, and sustainability.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL GRADUATE STUDENTS CURRENTLY IN THE PROGRAM?

I encourage students to reflect on what they want out of their life and out of their career. Also, take advantage of additional research collaborations outside of your lab and outside of UNT. To take it a step further, explore other institutions or different industries as these opportunities can be immensely helpful for when you're on the job market.

WHAT IS NEXT FOR YOUR IN YOUR CAREER?

Right now I'll be sitting tight in my current position! I'll keep working toward meeting life goals, needs, and addressing the substance-use crisis.

THANK YOU DR.
CLOUTIER!



Incoming Student

Patrick Hammond

ABOUT

Alma Mater: : National Forensic Sciences University (India)

Degree: Master's in Neuropsychology

Born and Raised: Ghana

Favorite Things:

- Table Tennis
- Soccer



EXPERIENCE

UNT Mentor: Dr. Anthony Ryals

My research interests include eyewitness testimony, memory encoding and recall. I aspire to become a forensic neuropsychologist in the future.

