

## in this issue >>>

*Student Spotlight: Nathan Kearns*  
*Alumni Spotlight: Renee Cloutier*  
*Meet Our New Professor*  
*Dr. Wright: World Traveler*  
*Lots of Research*  
*Congratulations to our URA's*  
*Dr. Ryals' Research Lab*  
*Dr. Guillot's Research Team*  
*Best Food in Denton*  
*Program Director Message*



Department of Psychology, University of North Texas Behavioral Science Alumni Newsletter 2019

# Behavioral Science



## student spotlight >>>

### Student spotlight: Nathan Kearns

*Nathan Kearns, one of our Behavioral Science Program Representatives, has had quite the year. Please join us in celebrating Nathan's success.*

In August, Nathan was awarded the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Individual Predoctoral Fellowship (F31) – the first F31 awarded through the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) to a student at UNT. The \$80,462 grant will help with training and support for his dissertation project focused on understanding the influence of trauma-related stress induction during alcohol intoxication on driving-related risky decision-making. Additionally, Nathan earned several other scholarships.

- Toulouse Graduate Student Research Award
- Carol Williams-Nickelson Psychological Science Research Grant through APAGS
- Charlotte Friedersdorff-Boyd Memorial Scholarship for Outstanding Graduate Student
- UNT Graduate Student Council (GSC) Outstanding Graduate Scholarship
- UNT Golden Eagle Award

## Alumni Spotlight

### Renee Cloutier is heading East!

*It's always difficult saying goodbye to our wonderful students when they graduate but knowing they are moving on to new and exciting opportunities makes us very happy. We caught up with our newest alum, Renee Cloutier, to see what lies ahead as she begins her next chapter.*

*Congratulations on graduating. Where are you headed next?*

I've accepted a position at the Penn State Prevention and Methodology Training Program at Penn State University as a post-doc on the T32 program.

*What are you most excited about at your new position?*

I'm most excited for the amazing new research opportunities.

*What was your favorite part of our program here at UNT?*

First, is probably my amazing advisor (Dr. Blumenthal) who took the time to really help me develop a wide range of professional skills. Second favorite part would have to be my fellow students/alumni from the program. When I started, I had folks like Shana Southard-Dobbs who helped me with teaching, Eric and Carmen Schuler who helped me with all of my ridiculous stats questions, Stephanie Agatrap who helped prepare me for many of my professional service positions, and of course Sabrina Blackledge who helped keep me semi-sane.

*What's the best advice you've gotten from a mentor/faculty member?*

Oh, this is hard to choose...but the one I always end up circling back on is that every experience has some learning opportunity.

When something is really hard or stressful, try to focus on what you are learning/learned to help you move forward.

*Do you have any advice for incoming first years?*

1) Before you start, get yourself organized – buy calendars, set up a schedule, etc. Grad school

gets super busy super, super quickly and you want to have a structure in place before that happens, so you don't get overwhelmed. 2) Take the time to really think about what YOU want in your career, figure out what you need to do in order to get those things, and make sure you allocate your time accordingly. 3) Don't be afraid to ask questions or admit that you don't know something – you can't know everything and those gaps in knowledge provide opportunities to get to know someone who DOES know something. At a minimum, you get to learn something new, but it can also open doors for collaboration down the road.

“Every experience has some learning opportunity”

new faculty member >>>

## Get to know our newest faculty member, Dr. Slavish!

Don't be surprised if you see a new face walking around the halls of Terrill next Fall. After an extensive interview process, the Behavioral Science program is excited to announce the addition of its newest faculty member, Dr. Danica Slavish! Check out this interview with our newest Eagle!



When I was 5-years-old, I wanted to be a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.  
Artist.

What's the best advice you've gotten from a professor?  
We're all smart. Distinguish yourself by being kind.



Where is your favorite place to eat in Denton?  
Spiral Diner.

What's something you'd like for faculty and students to know about you?  
I'm a huge dog-lover. If you live in Denton, at some point you'll probably run into me trying to corral my energetic greyhound, Olivia.

What are you most excited about for the Fall?  
Working with graduate students!

Be sure to say hello to Dr. Slavish this Fall!  
Email: danica.slavish@unt.edu

What are your current research interests?

My research focuses on examining associations between sleep, stress, and health over time. I'm also interested in understanding how and when to intervene to improve individual's sleep and well-being. To examine these constructs, I assess people in their everyday lives using non-invasive technologies and employ longitudinal data analytic techniques.

You just finished your post-doctoral fellowship here at UNT. What is it about our program that made you want to stay?

I'm grateful to have the opportunity to continue working here at UNT. Over the past two years, I've been impressed by the department's commitment to high-level research, and efforts to recruit top graduate students. I'm looking forward to continuing my collaborations with others in the department, as well as having the chance to teach graduate and undergraduate students about the many applications of psychology.

world traveler >>>

## Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Rex Wright

Dr. Wright has had quite the year, much of it involving international scholarship and exchange. He led workshops, made invited presentations, and collaborated with some of the brightest minds in psychological science. In addition to meeting his obligations abroad, Dr. Wright (1) served as Co-Editor-in-Chief at the APA Journal **Motivation Science**, (2) authored multiple publications including an article in the high-profile APS journal, **Perspectives on Psychological Science**, (3) helped to secure a grant through the Swiss National Science Foundation (CHF 942 615 = \$950,313 USD), serving as international collaborator with Ruta Lasauskaite, Pl, and (4) served internationally on two dissertation committees, one at Jagiellonian University in Poland and one at the University of Geneva in Switzerland.

### Travels

Dr. Wright was awarded a Visiting Professor Scholarship at Jagiellonian University, spending two weeks in residence in Krakow, Poland. He also was flown to Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates, to participate in the 2018-2019 Seminar Series at New York University Abu Dhabi. Dr. Wright was awarded a UNT Faculty Development Leave for Fall 2019. He intends to spend a portion of it (six weeks) in Switzerland, basing in Geneva. Central purposes of the visit will be idea exchange and research collaboration with colleagues at the University of Geneva and the University of Basel. Safe travels Dr. Wright!



## We Miss You!

We here at UNT hope this newsletter finds all of you thriving in 2019! We hope your year has been fulfilling and stimulating, and if something has happened in your life that we have missed, feel free to let us know. If this is your first time seeing one of our newsletters or invitations to reach out, we hope these updates leave you interested in connecting with us again in the future. Please don't hesitate to reach out and let us know what you've been up to since graduating!

Go Mean Green!

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# Our students have been doing A LOT of research this year

*Check out some of the projects our students have been working on!*

“This year I’ve been prepping for Dr. Guillot’s Personality and Smoking study, where we’ll have participants smoke cigarettes in the lab. I’ve also been working on getting my ma Dr. Guillot’s research team will be presenting research at the next annual meeting of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence in San Antonio, TX in June. I’ve also been working on getting my master’s thesis published and am planning some studies to run in the Fall.” -Heather Lucke, 1<sup>st</sup> Year

“I’m working on my own research project that is focused on investigating the effects of racial trauma by utilizing self-report and physiology measures. The lab I am in is currently doing a research project that assesses perceptions of fictional superhero characters based off of the character’s race, gender, and sexuality.” -Kyjeila Latimer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year.

“I have two cool projects lined up right now. One is a collaboration with Sandeep Roy and Dr. Neumann looking at shooting bias, prejudice, and discrimination in individuals with psychopathic traits using EEG methods. The other is a write up of a previous study connected with shooting bias as well, this one is a collaboration with our newest faculty, Dr. Slavish, using hierarchical linear modeling. Lastly, I’ve also been doing research on American Identity in the Latinx population.” -Ivan Carbajal, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year.

In addition to individual research projects, many of our research teams have been hard at work creating posters and presentations for upcoming conferences, as well as preparing manuscripts for publication. For example, Dr. Guillot’s research team will be presenting research at the next annual meeting of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence in San Antonio, TX in June. To learn more about Dr. Guillot’s research, check out UNT’s D.E.A.R. Research Lab and if you’re in San Antonio in June, be sure to say hello!

D.E.A.R Lab website:  
<https://psychology.unt.edu/disposition-emotion-addiction-research-dear-laboratory>

## summer session >>>

*One of our very talented graduate students – Christopher Mlynski – learned recently that he was selected to attend a summer school program offered through Konstanz International School on Motivation Science in Konstanz, Germany. Selection includes coverage of travel and accommodation expenses. Christopher will attend for 10 days in August. Way to go, Chris!*



## Dr. Ryals’ research lab>>>

*We caught up with Dr. Ryals to see what his research team has been up to.*

“Kirby Doshier (1<sup>st</sup> Year) and I are currently working on contributing a chapter to an upcoming book from Routledge titled ‘Memory Quirks: The Study of Odd Phenomena in Memory.’ This promises to be an interesting piece comprising work from a diverse group of international memory experts. We will also be attending and presenting at the associated conference this June at Colorado State University.

Our group was also confirmed for UNT Osher Center for Lifelong Learning continuing education series this coming Fall. We will be sharing work on learning and memory development during aging, memory strategies, and contemporary research.”



*Welcome to our incoming first years!*

*~Lizzie Griffith~*

*~Jacob Hanes~*

*~Banan Ramadan~*

*See you in August!!*

## undergraduates >>>

*Congratulations to our graduating undergraduate research assistants!*

*Several of the undergraduate members of our research teams are graduating and have been awarded positions in their first-choice graduate programs! Join us in celebrating these excellent students.*

Marlen Corral-Coralle, *UNT College of Education*

Jessica De La Garza, *University of Texas, Dallas*

Sonia Hunter, *Rutgers University*

Quadreon Miller, *University of California, Berkeley*

Nikki Nielsen, *University of Texas, Arlington*

Azlynn Osborn, *UNT School of Business*

Anna Server, *Texas Women’s University*

Samuel VanVleet, *Miami of Ohio*

Zeles Vargas, *Washington University in St. Louis*

*Congratulations graduates! Thank you for all that you’ve contributed to our program. We wish you nothing but the best in all of your future endeavors. Please keep in touch!*

# final thoughts...

## A Message From Our Program Director: Dr. Boals

We have had quite a fast-passed year with a lot of changes! Last year concluded with our first ever town hall meeting, which raised numerous suggestions to improve the program. The BSci Committee heard these suggestions and worked very hard this year to implement numerous improvements. For example, for the first time we implemented IDPs in which mentors and mentees formalize mentor-mentee expectations and improve communication. We also conducted an extensive search for a new faculty member. We are very excited to have Dr. Danica Slavish officially join us next fall. Dr. Slavish is currently a post-doc working with Dr. Taylor, so she is already pretty familiar with Terrill Hall. It is bittersweet to see Renee Cloutier graduate from our program – we are sad she is leaving UNT but we are excited for what lies ahead for her at Penn St. University. As the BSci program continues to grow and expand, we look forward to working together to meet and overcome all challenges.



### denton staples >>>

### Where is the best food in Denton?

“Killer’s Tacos” -Heather L., 1<sup>st</sup> year

“Hanabi Ramen” -Kyjeila L., 2<sup>nd</sup> year

“Hands down has to be Taqueria Guanajuato” – Ivan C., 3<sup>rd</sup> year

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## Behavioral Science Program

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