

COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY NEWSLETTER



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GREETINGS FROM THE DCT

I hope you are enjoying the cooler fall weather after another hot Texas summer.

This August, we celebrated the graduation of four advanced students who completed all degree requirements and earned their PhDs in Counseling Psychology:



Drs. William Archuleta, Justin Harker, Lindsey Slavin, and Julian Yoon. All of them secured positions in diverse professional settings—please see page 27 for details. We are proud to welcome these outstanding graduates into our alumni community.

This fall, we also welcomed nine new students into our 2025 cohort. They have adjusted well and are already showing an impressive commitment to their training. **You can meet them on pages 28–30 of this newsletter.**

Our annual welcome party on September 20th at our home in Dallas brought together more than 40 students, faculty, and family members. It was a wonderful way to launch the year in community—see the group photo.

In this issue, you'll also find highlights of faculty accomplishments (**page 2–13**), student spotlights (**page 21–26**), and alumni updates (**page 14–20**)—please take a look and celebrate with us.

I also want to thank alumni who support the program through donations. We're grateful for the alumni support that helps sustain student-centered activities and events. If you'd like to contribute, feel free to reach out to me at joshua.hook@unt.edu.

UNT continues to grow, now enrolling more than 46,000 students. I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve as program director and to work with such a talented community of students, faculty, and alumni. If you find yourself in Denton, I'd love to connect over lunch or coffee.

Warmly,

Joshua Hook, PhD

Director, Counseling Psychology PhD Program

FACULTY UPDATES

DR. INGRID HOGGE



Happy Fall! We've had a busy semester with many high points (and some challenges). One of the highlights of the summer was a trip to remote Alaska where we saw lots of bears, sea birds, and alpine flora. Our lab has welcomed a new doctoral student, Cameron Neath. Cameron is interested in sexual wellness, sexual trauma, relationship dynamics, and interpersonal violence. Welcome, Cameron! Chloe White (3rd year) will be defending her thesis on suicidality among mental health trainees this semester. Sreoshi (2nd year), had a busy summer participating in the HCOP program where she mentored high school students interested in behavioral health careers. Sreoshi is also working on her thesis and gaining additional research experience. Lately, the lab has focused on a set of projects related to traumatic experiences among older adults. I'm grateful to the many community members who shared their experiences with us and for the opportunity to shine a light on the ways that trauma affects wellbeing across the lifespan.

FACULTY UPDATES

DR. KIET HUYNH

I am now in my third year as a faculty member in the Counseling Psychology program. My husband, Andrew, and I have found a wonderful community of friends in the Farmers Branch area. We love hosting potlucks and game nights, and we go to movies almost every week with our movie group friends. We enjoy playing with our two corgis (Bao and Banh Mi), taking them on long walks on the Katy Trail, and dressing them up in cute outfits. Over the past year, we have also gotten really into playing pickleball and joined an LGBTQ+ pickleball league in Dallas—where our team won first place at the league playoffs! I've never played a team sport before, so this was very exciting for me.



BAO

It has been an exciting year of growth for our Intersectional Wellbeing Lab. Our team has made significant progress in our mission to advance research on minority stress and resilience among LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities. In collaboration with partner labs, we published six validated scales this past academic year, including scales assessing resilience among transgender and nonbinary individuals (TNB; and a separate but similar resilience scale specifically for TNB BIPOC individuals), minority stress among TNB individuals, intersectional microaggressions experienced by LGBTQ+ BIPOC individuals, internalized stigma among LGBTQ+ individuals, and dyadic TNB-affirming behaviors from partners of



BANH MI

TNB individuals. We are currently developing three new measures focused on LGBTQ+ community belongingness, intersectional internalized stigma among LGBTQ+ BIPOC individuals, and early life positive sexual and gender identity socialization from caregivers. These studies have been made possible through funding awarded to our lab from the Hopelab Early Career Research Award and the Center for Psychosocial Health Disparities Research Award, as well as funding from the National Institutes of Health received by our partner labs at Arizona State University, Michigan State University, and Washington University in St. Louis.



In this past year, we have celebrated many successes for our undergraduate RAs. Two of them were accepted into the M.S. Counseling & Development program at Texas Woman's

University, and all of our undergraduates presented posters at either UNT conferences or the APA Convention. In addition, four students were awarded the UNT Undergraduate Research Fellowship, providing funding to support their research and academic goals.

Our two doctoral students, Dannie Haakinson (2nd year) and McKenna Nhem (1st year), have made wonderful strides. Dannie had an outstanding year—co-leading a poster (with Tiffany Tran and other members of our lab) that received an award at the APA Convention's Counseling Psychology Social Hour, successfully proposing their thesis on effective and ineffective allyship toward TNB communities, and publishing three research articles, including an American Psychologist meta-analysis article on the links between structural, interpersonal, and individual stigma with physical and mental health.

McKenna has hit the ground running in her first year, balancing clinical training and research like a pro. She was awarded the Voertman Fellowship, which has allowed her to focus more deeply on research. McKenna has already published three articles and is currently in the revise-and-



resubmit process to publish her undergraduate honors thesis project focused on the associations between discrimination with mental health and substance use for sexual minority young adults.

Both Dannie and McKenna have been incredible role models for our current six undergraduate RAs, all of whom had their poster proposals accepted for the Texas Undergraduate Research Conference for the Social Sciences. One undergraduate RA is currently applying to doctoral programs in counseling and clinical psychology, while the other five plan to apply for psychology doctoral programs in the coming years. I am currently teaching the team how to use R to run regression, mediation, and

moderation analyses—and they’ve been both scared and excited about this process (if you’ve ever used R, you know exactly what I mean!). They are also very nervous and excited about presenting their posters at the Texas Undergraduate Research Conference for the Social Sciences, given this will be most of their first times presenting.

I’m so proud of everything our students have accomplished this year, and I can’t wait to see where their journeys lead next.



FACULTY UPDATES

DR. PATRICIA KAMINSKI

I hope you are all well. Things are busy as usual, but good! Patrick is still enjoying his position as Director of Psychological Services at the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science [TAMS]. All our kids are in High School now! Matthew is a senior specializing in welding at LaGrone Academy, Aaron is a junior and budding novelist at Guyer HS, and Calleigh is a sophomore planning an educational trip to Costa Rica with her teachers and peers at The Koan School.

As you read about all the students and recent graduate from our lab, you'll see that personal and professional congratulations are in order for everyone!

I could not be prouder of the stellar researchers, clinicians, and people I have the pleasure of working with! I am very pleased to introduce the newest two graduate students in my lab, Jacqueline "Jaqui" Sifuentes and Erin Vergara!

Jacqueline Sifuentes is a second-year counseling psychology doctoral student at UNT. Jacqui is Mexican American and from Bryan, Texas, with family from Monterrey,

Nuevo León, Mexico. Jacqui is a proud first-generation student. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a minor in Neuroscience and a certificate in Applied Behavioral Health from Texas A&M University. Prior to undergraduate studies, she attended an early college high school and earned her Associate of Arts. Her clinical interests center on expanding access to safe and culturally competent psychological care for children and adolescents in Spanish-speaking households. Her



research interests broadly focus on cultural resilience, acculturation, and discrimination in Latine adolescents and emerging adults. Jacqui will be proposing her master's thesis soon! She is conducting a qualitative study about cultural resilience among Latine mothers and daughters in the face of current

anti-immigrant policies. In her free time, Jacqui enjoys weightlifting, cooking, spending time with family, friends, and her dog, Boo!



Erin Vergara is a first-year counseling psych student at UNT. She graduated from Texas Woman's University with two degrees: a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and a Master of Science in Psychological Sciences. Before coming to UNT, she was a high school teacher in Irving, where she found her passion for making research, teaching, and care accessible for children and their families. Her research interests include parent-child spillover, children's and parents' experiences of victimization, intergenerational trauma, and positive psychology. Having come to UNT with a master's thesis, Erin is figuring out the direction for her thesis-equivalent research this year. Clinically, she is excited to work with adolescents, young adults, couples, and families. In her free time, Erin enjoys cooking, playing music with her friends, and

finding different ways to work out.

Here are updates from other members of the Scientia Conquistador lab:



Anna is in her 4th year of our program and has been reaching a lot of life and program milestones lately. Anna got engaged to her partner, Lane, who is in medical school in Fort Worth. She passed comps, is working on publishing her thesis, and feeling "super fulfilled" in her opportunities to work with children and families—both at her externship at The Telos Project and in our Child & Adolescent Treatment class/practicum. In addition, Anna will be taking a new grant-writing course this summer as a step toward getting funding for her dissertation — a family treatment outcome study.

McKenzie has been working on publications with the team and has two manuscripts under review! She recently passed her dissertation proposal, submitted her IRB, and is eager to continue balancing her clinical and research interests as she collects data related to early college high school students' well-being. In addition, McKenzie is excited to



be applying for an internship this year and hopes to match at a site that allows her to continue working with children and families while building her assessment competencies.



Lauren Kemble has had a busy year! While on externship in Colorado in AY 24-25, she proposed her dissertation, was accepted to an internship at the University of San Diego, passed her IRB, planned her wedding, and collected most of her dissertation data. AY 25-26 looks to be as busy because she moved to CA and began her internship in August, married Brian Wyatt in September, and is currently analyzing her dissertation data. We look forward to seeing her graduate in August!

Will completed his internship this summer, graduated with his Ph.D., and settled in Plano, TX with his wife, Lilly and their toddler, Jacy.



After putting in a lot of time cutting his complex dissertation to manuscript size, we and our collaborators are about one week away from submitting.

Will is completing a postdoc at the Dallas Therapy Alliance, specializing in child therapy and testing, with an emphasis on personality testing. He plans to open a practice in the north Dallas area once he is licensed.

Lilly is opening her own audiology practice (Happy Ears Audiology) and Jacy is loving his daycare. Jacy is very sociable, loves outdoor adventures, and can't put down his books! And (drumroll....) the Archuletas are expecting a baby girl in January!

FACULTY UPDATES

DR. MARTINQUE JONES

Members of the BWell Lab have been very productive over the past few months and are excited about the Fall semester. Members of the lab are working on developing their research, proposing their dissertation projects, and working on academic manuscripts. Amber Williams and Cassandre Jean-Ceide successfully proposed their dissertation projects in Fall 2025. Additionally, Cassandre Jean-Ceide and Quanisha Whittfield had a manuscript accepted for

publication to the Journal of Counseling Psychology, which is one of the premier outlets for our discipline. Students have also received awards and recognition for their scholarship. For instance, Dionne Regis' thesis project was selected to be featured in the American Psychological Association Division 35: Society for the Psychology of Women's Newsletter, The Feminist Psychologist, while Quanisha Whittfield received the Texas Higher Education Board Leadership Research Scholar Doctoral Award. Additionally, our lab has worked diligently to disseminate our knowledge into the public sphere. Along those lines, Raven Gipson-Washington submitted a commentary to the Texas Psychological Association's quarterly newsletter, which will be published in Winter 2025. In all, we are excited to continue our scholarly work centered on the experiences of women of color and sharing this work with the larger community. For more information about our lab, please see <https://www.bwelllab.org> or @bwell_lab.



FACULTY UPDATES

DR. CHIACHIH DC WANG

We have had a productive time in the past few months since last issue of the program's newsletter. Shiho, our 5th year lab member, was matched with her top choice of pre-doctoral internship program of the Salt Lake City VA Medical Center. She will be relocating to Utah this summer for her internship. Congratulations to Shiho and we hope she will have a smooth transition to the next stage of her professional development. Cachet and Ashley are both working diligently to pass their IRC and complete their dissertation proposals this semester. Tiffany has accepted an offer from Great Life Counseling Center and is excited about completing her 1st externship there next year. Additionally, Ayurda is in her last step of completing her 5910 project.

Christie has finalized a research model for her thesis and has been working on writing up her thesis proposal. Lynn has begun the process of conceptualizing a research model for her thesis and plans to schedule her proposal meeting in the beginning of Fall 2025.

Our lab had a multicultural potluck gathering in mid-March of 2025 at Dr. Wang's house. Each attending lab member and their significant other brought a homemade dish or dessert to the lab social. Following the tradition, everyone shared a story regarding how the dish/dessert is associated with or reflecting their cultural backgrounds and/or family upbringing. The group photo was taken in the Spring 2025 lab social gathering.



FACULTY UPDATES

DR. NAYEON YANG

The past academic year has been both inspiring and productive for Dr. Yang and members of the Grief, Emotion, and Trauma (GET) Lab.

First off, we are thrilled to have our lab spaces fully up and running! (see the photo below of our newly set-up lab space).



And the team has made great progress in their research. We successfully presented two posters at the 2025 American Psychological Association (APA) Convention and the 2025 Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) Conference. At the 2025 Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) Convention, Dr. Yang and her colleague led an interactive session on language as decolonial praxis for collective emotion, resistance, and healing. In addition, Dr. Yang and her colleagues delivered a featured stage presentation at the 2025 APA

Convention, exploring collective trauma and community resilience in the context of sociopolitical crises. The session concluded with a standing ovation and heartfelt conversations, offering space to reflect on our shared purpose in psychology and the hope that moves our work forward.



Further, Dr. Yang published new research on AI and technology in grief support in *The Counseling Psychologist* (TCP). She recently presented this work at a Psi Chi Speaker Event, sparking an engaging discussion with undergraduate students

about how AI and emerging technologies are transforming our understanding of grief and creating new possibilities for grief support.

The GET Lab kept the learning spirit alive over the summer as well. We came together for a seminar series on emotion and emotion regulation across grief, trauma, culture, and AI, reading and presenting peer-reviewed articles and engaging in lively discussions (Below is the group photo taken after our summer seminar series).

We are also proud to celebrate our members' achievements:

- Undergraduate member Jacqueline Bravo received the Undergraduate Research Fellowship (URF) to conduct research on the impact of AI on individuals' mental health.

- Dr. Yang was awarded the UNT Mentoring Grant for her project on Integrating AI to Enrich Research and Mentorship in Counseling Psychology.

Lastly and most importantly, we are excited to welcome our new graduate member, Zeina, to the GET Lab. Zeina's research interests include Arab Americans' mental health, secondary trauma, and collective violence within broader geopolitical contexts. We look forward to learning and growing together in the years ahead. Welcome to the team, Zeina 😊

The new academic year is in full swing, and GET Lab members are learning and growing together.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

DR. FARAHA HASAN



Hi everyone! My name is Faraha Hasan. I graduated from the program in 2024, and I am one of the nine from the 2018 cohort (also known as Sensonyne!!!). I worked with Dr. Wang and also did a lot of work with Dr. Heidemarie Blumenthal. I completed my doctoral internship at the University of Washington (UW) Counseling Center.

I still remember the social at my UNT interview day when several students advised me to never put my life on hold during graduate school. I took that advice to heart and left the DFW area before my fifth year to follow my husband to the West Coast for his new job. During my fifth year, I completed a practicum at a Seattle group practice,

where I focused on conducting ADHD and learning disability assessments for adolescents and adults. After matching at UW's internship site, I had the opportunity to stay another year and was elated at being near the beauty of the PNW for longer. What we thought would be a one- or two-year move turned into three years, and we've officially settled in Seattle. We still return to Texas several times a year, and our hearts are always there.



After finishing internship, I unexpectedly took a five-month break. It just sort of happened as I was caring for one of my pet bird's health issues, studying for the EPPP, visiting family in Texas, and figuring out what I wanted to do next. I grappled with whether to return to college counseling, start a solo private practice, or join a group practice. During this break, I passed the EPPP and became licensed in Washington.

Initially, I decided on solo private practice. Washington doesn't require postdoc hours for licensure, but I wanted to accrue them for potential future licensure in Texas. While looking for a postdoc supervisor, I connected with Dr. Diana Hu, whose clinical interests aligned with mine and who happened to be seeking a postdoc to expand her solo practice. What she offered fit with what I was looking for, and I ended up joining her practice, Nuance Psychological, at the beginning of this year. The name of the practice also really fits what I enjoy doing in therapy—holding space for the nuance.



Together, we specialize in working with Asian Americans, adult children of immigrants, and neurodivergent folks. We also conduct ADHD and autism assessments for adults. I've connected with the Muslim and South Asian therapist community here and am now working with the very communities I dreamed of serving at 13. I still sometimes have to pinch myself that I get to do this every day. When graduate school felt overwhelming, this "why" kept me going, and I am so glad I made it through.

I think back to my time on campus frequently, missing the sense of

belonging and the constant learning and growth. I am so grateful for my time at UNT. I feel confident in my abilities as a psychologist and in who I am as a person. I really wanted to figure out how to integrate my professional and personal selves during graduate school and feel like I have done that, especially through the modeling provided by peers and supervisors (special shout-outs to Dr. Ene delia Saucedo, Dr. Ed Watkins, and my cohort).

To current students: cherish your time in the program—it truly goes by quickly, and

there will be aspects you'll miss (and many aspects you won't...). I also recommend staying open to how your plans may change and how those changes can result in ending up somewhere even better than you expected!

When I'm not working, I am usually with my pet birds (I'm still known as the "bird lady" and they've even joined me on a few hikes), reading, or flying back to Texas! Wishing everyone in the UNT community well! If I can be of any help to you, please reach out at faraha.hasan.2@gmail.com!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

DR. CARLIE MCGREGOR

While completing my internship year at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), a fellow UNT graduate, a few years ahead, messaged me to inform me that Notre Dame was hiring, and told me that I might like working with the director of Sport Psych there.

My response: Where's Notre Dame?

After a few more nudging messages and several googles of "what to do in South Bend, Indiana?," I applied. In the Fall of 2022, after wrapping up at VCU, I began working at Notre Dame as an embedded psychologist in the athletic department. And though I wasn't initially set on working in sports, I love my job (and I love working for my boss, Joey, another UNT alum, who hates when I refer to him as my 'boss'). Our Sport Psychology Department now has 4 full time psychologists and I have the pleasure of helping to coordinate our training experiences, both for staff and UCC interns. What I love about our work, is that we have the honor of being a protractor (yes, like the one from 5th grade math class), where just a few angle degrees of change or impact can result in a wonderfully different end point when carried through a whole life.

There is in fact a decent amount to do in South Bend, Indiana, some of which were



not included in my previous google searches. Weekends are filled with random house projects, finding new coffee shops, or venturing to the small towns that dot the coast of Lake Michigan. I bought my first house almost 2 years ago and my coworkers are helping to advise my lawn maintenance. My sister lives in Bloomington, Indiana, which makes it easy to do nearly monthly trips to visit one other. And my parents are still in Washington state, confused as to how both of us ended up in cornfields. Each year, holds a longer adventure such as scuba diving in the reefs of Cozumel, spending a week in the highlands of Scotland, and kicking off a multi-day hiking trip by conquering Angel's Landing in Zion.

While I was walking the halls of Terrill Hall, one of my (several) soapboxes was not waiting to 'Live Your Life' – not using grad school as the reason to pause the fulfilling parts of who you are or to wall yourself off from meaningful



relationships, trips, hobbies, etc. If I could do it all over again, I would have leaned more into my own advice. But I also would have been more courageous. Taken risks. Tried out the externship that intimidated me. Asked the question burning in my brain. Shared a little bit more of myself.

And even though I sometimes played it safe, there's countless mentors, supervisors, upper years, and fellow peers that I owe the entirety of not only my UNT experience and my professional lens, but also how I view the world and my role in it. And this seems as good of a place as any to thank them all. Thank you for patience, for your compassion, your understanding, your knowledge, and your lived experiences. I hope you know who you are.

Current students, I hope this reminds you to lean into your mentors, your supervisors, your peers, and absorb as much as you can from them.....it might just change your world.

"Yet, what is an ocean but a multitude of drops?" David Mitchell, Cloud Atlas

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

NINA CALMENSON



Hello to my fellow alumni and current UNT Counseling Psychology graduate students! I am so excited to reconnect and share a glimpse into where life and work have taken me since graduating.

After matching at Community Reach Center, a community mental health center outside of Denver, Colorado, for internship, I began the year with anticipation and excitement, eager to focus on clinical work and deepen my training in couples and family therapy. My husband, Yehuda, and I were also thrilled to enjoy a year in the mountains hiking and skiing. But halfway through, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and our entire cohort was suddenly sent home to finish our clinical work virtually. Even the ski resorts closed. The world suddenly felt frightening and uncertain, and for me there was an added layer of stress; I was pregnant with our first child.

I completed the second half of internship from home, navigating telehealth, a new healthcare system, isolation, and a rapidly changing world, all while preparing to become a mother. Ten days before internship ended, and three weeks early, our daughter, was born. And yes, I still had an assessment to write five days postpartum. Would not recommend. But I did finish everything on time in the end.

After internship, I took the following year off to be home with her. When I was ready to return, I found Therapy Dallas, a private practice led by Dr. Kristen Ohlenforst, PhD. It was the perfect environment to balance motherhood and my first professional role out of graduate school. At the time, it was a practice full of young mothers I could relate to, learn from, and grow alongside as I stepped into my identity as a psychologist. I completed my postdoctoral fellowship there and became licensed shortly after welcoming our second child and first son. I returned to Therapy Dallas as a licensed psychologist, where I continued to develop my specialty in couples therapy, parent consultation, and family work with clients ranging from parents of teenagers to multigenerational families that included grandparents.

About a year ago, after the birth of our third child and second son, I took another maternity leave. But this time, I made the decision to leave Therapy Dallas and open my own practice.

A few months ago, I launched my solo practice in Far North Dallas: Calmenson Family Treatment, PLLC. Opening my practice was a gradual choice, born from my desire to build something of my own, a greater sense of stability in my home life, and, if I'm honest, the hope for a shorter commute in a full season of life. Our children are now 5, almost 3, and almost 1. Every minute counts. Today I juggle a caseload of couples, families, and parents in Far North Dallas, Plano, and surrounding areas. Building a practice from the ground up has been both daunting and deeply meaningful. I am proud of what I have created, and I take great joy in sharing my multiple roles and identities with my family, who watches it all unfold. None of this could have been done without my supportive husband.

laid with Dr. Trish Kaminski and Dr. Shelley Riggs. I hold the memories of supervision so dear and still draw strength from the wisdom they offered when I encounter particularly challenging moments in my current work.

Alongside this professional growth, my personal life continues to shape my clinical lens. Having three children in less than four and a half years was not easy. And it has been humbling in the very best ways. Motherhood has deepened my empathy, expanded my patience, softened my approach, slowed my pace, and sharpened my ability to meet families where they truly are. My work and my family inform and enrich each other; both remind me daily to listen more carefully, judge more slowly, and honor the individual differences in front of me.



I am also so grateful for my time at UNT, which helped shape me into the clinician I am today. My foundation in Emotionally Focused Therapy, the Gottman Method, systems work, and psychodynamic thinking was

As I reflect on the broader field of counseling psychology, I cannot help but notice how our professional community, like our larger culture, has become increasingly polarized. I have seen it in conference conversations,

on social media, in community forums, and through painful increases in hateful rhetoric. I am concerned by the growing suggestion, subtle or explicit, that certain people are not welcome to be psychologists or are not worthy of receiving treatment by psychologists because of their beliefs, values, or identities. At our best, counseling psychologists are a light that unites. My hope for us is to remain professionals who bring equity, compassion, and openness to all.

And yet, I worry that we are slipping into a kind of selective empathy, where care is offered only to those we agree with. If we isolate, shame, or reject those who think or believe differently, we become, in essence, the other side of the same intolerable coin. My hope is that we hold tightly to the idea that difference can be met with curiosity and care, and that our spaces remain defined by welcome rather than hesitancy. This, I believe, is the heart of our discipline and the path back to our greatest strength.

Looking ahead, I'm eager to continue building community here in Dallas. If any alumni or students are practicing in the Far North Dallas area, I warmly welcome opportunities for consultation, professional connection, or just a coffee. Please feel free to reach out at dr.nina@ninacalmensonphd.com. I would truly love to be in touch.

Student Spotlight **QUANISHA WHITTFIELD**

Hey y'all! I honestly can't believe I'm writing this as a fourth year. Fourth year really snuck up on me! I still remember walking into the program with my motto: "I am a person who just so happens to be a [insert current role here: PhD student, researcher, clinician]." I'm proud to say that motto has stuck with me, though, let's be real, it's been tested more than a few times along the way. But that's kind of the point, right? Remembering that we're people first, even when we're waist-deep in research, clients, and deadlines.

Over the years, this mindset has shaped the way I move through the program, the opportunities I say yes to, and the boundaries I try (keyword: try! I won't hold it against you if you don't hold it against me) to maintain. One of those yes's came prior to the beginning of my fourth year, when I was invited to receive mentorship from Dr. Maryam Jernigan through Jernigan & Associates. As a Junior Associate, I've gained firsthand experience in consultation, and it's stretched me in new and exciting ways and reminded me that growth can



actually be... fun (most days). It's been incredible to learn from someone whose work aligns so closely with my own passions for wellness, community, and advocacy.

Speaking of exciting things, this semester I was awarded the 2025–2026 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Leadership Research Scholar Doctoral Award! I'm still processing this one. It was such an honor receiving this recognition which will allow me to further my work in Black women's holistic wellness.



And because I like to keep life interesting, Cassandre (5th year in the program) and I decided this was the perfect semester to launch our podcast called Tea & Theory. We have cultivated a space where we get to blend research, real life conversation, and a whole lot of sisterhood into meaningful (and sometimes hilarious) conversations. It's been such a joy-filled project and a creative outlet that helps me stay grounded. We hope you'll follow us @teaandtheorypodcast!

Of course, life isn't all work and productivity. My motto reminds me to put my personhood first, so I've made sure to sprinkle in plenty of rest, travel, and fun. I took a cruise over the summer AND saw the Queen Bey herself! I was living my best life going from jet to deck, catching flights and screaming every lyric from Bey's set. It was a much-needed reminder that joy is part of the work too.

If I could leave you with one little piece of advice, it would be this: Don't forget the "you" underneath all your roles. Take that trip, sleep in when you can, go to brunch, laugh until your stomach hurts, and remind yourself that you're doing something extraordinary, but you're also allowed to just be. So, here's to being people who just so happen to be PhD students

Student Spotlight MIKAILI ROBERTSON

It is a strange feeling to realize I'm already in my third year of the Counseling Psychology Ph.D. program. When I zoom out, it feels like time has flown by, yet when I look closer, the days often feel long and full. I still remember the mix of excitement and uncertainty that came with starting this journey—nervous energy, long hours, and the hope that things would make more sense as I went along. Three years later, I'm beginning to see how all of those small steps add up.

Being in the sport psychology cluster has allowed me to pursue what I'm truly passionate about—working with athletes to enhance not only their performance but also their overall well-being. My goal is to become a sport psychologist working in professional sports, and the opportunities I've had at UNT have made that goal feel tangible. Getting to work directly with UNT athletes and teams, while receiving incredible supervision from Drs. Petrie and Balcom, has been invaluable. I've learned how to apply evidence-based techniques to real-



world challenges, but more importantly, I've learned how to show up for people—not just as performers or clients, but as whole individuals navigating complex lives.

One of the greatest lessons this program has taught me is to look beyond the surface. Every athlete, every client, every person brings their own story—their background, culture, family, and values all shape how they experience the world. Learning to understand and appreciate that context has changed the way I see

my work and, in many ways, myself. The program has helped me recognize that being an effective psychologist starts with self-awareness—being willing to reflect, to grow, and to see your own blind spots. That process isn't always comfortable, but I've learned that it's where the real learning happens.

I've also learned that you can't do this program alone. Graduate training can feel like a marathon that you're somehow running uphill, in the dark, and in slow motion. The people you surround yourself with make all the difference. I've been incredibly lucky to have a cohort and colleagues across cohorts who have supported me, challenged me, and reminded me to laugh when things get heavy. Whether it's late-night case discussions, long hours in the clinic, or Thursday Night

Football at Buffalo Wild Wings, those moments of connection have been the glue holding everything together.

Even though the finish line still feels far away, I can finally see a faint light at the end of the tunnel. There's still more to learn, more to grow through, and more people to meet along the way—but that's part of what makes it meaningful. I'm grateful for how this program has shaped me, both personally and professionally, and I'm looking forward to seeing where the rest of the journey leads. It hasn't always been easy, but it's been worth it—and I'm learning to trust that every long day is just another small step toward something greater.



Student Spotlight **ANNA STRAUGHN**

Howdy y'all! It's nice to be in a non-editor role for this edition of the newsletter. My fourth year has been treating me so well, and I'm grateful to be able to share my reflections and experiences while I feel like I'm in the 7th inning of my journey as a doctoral student.

My past self would be in disbelief at the opportunities I've been offered. I've always wanted to travel the world. I set up my whole undergrad timeline to hold space for a year abroad, only to have my plans blocked by a global pandemic. I never thought I would get the opportunity to participate in

academics abroad while a graduate student, and I feel so incredibly thankful that I was able to go to Taiwan this past summer with Dr. Wang and help with his study abroad course (see photo of me and my cross-cultural buddies). No amount of words could describe how much I enjoyed and learned from this experience, and I look forward to helping plan the visit to UNT for the National Taiwan Normal University students this upcoming Spring. Professionally, I'm at an externship that was nowhere near first-year's me radar. The Telos Project has been incredibly fulfilling for me. The opportunity to



learn more about comprehensive assessment and work with kiddos again after a long hiatus has filled my cup. I still look up to the Foundations lab TA I had as a first-year, and it's been an honor to be able to hold this role and be a part of the current first-years' journey of becoming a clinician (check out their bios! I think they're all pretty cool 😊).

In writing this, I've found that my reflections of the past few years have been filled with feelings of pride, but also grief. I can proudly say that the clinician I currently am is one that my first-year self would have looked up to. The undergrad RA version of me would be wide-eyed to hear that my laptop completely died a month before I successfully defended my thesis while I was running around campus from Terrill Hall to CTS. I've hit all my expected program milestones, and I have no doubt that I'll be able to knock the rest of them out, graduate, get licensed, and then be a psychologist. That has been my goal, but as I'm in this quieter period in my time in the program, I realize that I never thought about all of the people who have come and gone into my life to make this goal possible. So many of my peers and clients have sculpted me into the clinician, researcher, educator,

and advocate that I am today. Watching so many of my friends go off to internships and graduate is exciting, but it's hard to see them move away. I've recently been aware of the fact that my time as a student will soon be coming to an end as I step into the identity of a full-time professional. We like to tell prospective students that we're a "group PhD," but this goes beyond sharing notes and textbooks. If it wasn't for the casual clinician waiting room conversations, break-time hallway circles, or runs to Jupiter House, I wouldn't have been able to make it this far. My strength and hope is in my community. The faces may change, but the support and care is the same. I plan to continue to foster community as long as I'm here, and to continue to build community wherever I end up next. Even when it's my turn to move away, I won't be easy to get rid of, so reader, don't be a stranger 😊 I'll always make time to consult or coffee with my Mean Green friends.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2025 SUMMER GRADS!



WILL ARCHULETA

Completing a postdoctoral fellowship
at Dallas Therapy Alliance



LINDSEY SLAVIN

Completing a postdoctoral fellowship
at UCLA Athletics



JUSTIN HARKER

Completing a postdoctoral fellowship at
Quince Orchard Mental Health Group



JULIAN YOON

Starting a new position at the University
of Southern California

MEET THE FIRST YEARS!



KELECHI EZIRI

- **Hometown:** Charlotte, NC
- **Degree & School:** B.A. in Psychology & Black Studies from Amherst College, M.A. in Public Administration from Villanova University.
- **Advisor:** Dr. Trent Petrie
- **Cluster:** Sport Psychology
- **Hobbies/Fun Fact:** Part-time Barber, love to play basketball, avid reader.

ZEINA HAMMAMI

- **Hometown:** McAllen, Texas
- **Degree & School:** Bachelor's in Psychology, Minor in Information Systems from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.
- **Advisor:** Dr. NaYeon Yang
- **Cluster:** Culture, Identity, and Well-being
- **Hobbies/Fun Fact:** Painting and weight training



PATRICK MANEVAL

- **Hometown:** Waynesboro, Virginia
- **Degree & School:** BS Exercise Science, BS Psychology – minors in Physiology, Biology, & Coaching – Shenandoah University & MS Sport & Exercise Psychology, High Performance Coaching Certificate – University of Kentucky
- **Advisor:** Dr. Trent Petrie
- **Cluster:** Sport Psychology
- **Hobbies/Fun Fact:** I love to go for walks, go to concerts, and cheer for Philadelphia sports teams.



CAMERON NEATH

- **Hometown:** Chicago, IL
- **Degree & School:** BA from Brown University, Post-Bacc from Northwestern University
- **Advisor:** Ingrid Hogge
- **Cluster:** Culture, Identity, and Well-Being
- **Hobbies/Fun Fact:** Horseback riding & thrifting



MCKENNA NHEM

- **Hometown:** Plano, Texas
- **Degree & School:** Bachelor in Psychology from the University of Oklahoma
- **Advisor:** Dr. Huynh
- **Cluster:** Culture, Identity, and Well-Being
- **Hobbies/Fun Fact:** **Hobbies:** Musical theatre, weightlifting, singing!

ELIZABETH NUTH

- **Hometown:** Dallas, TX
- **Degree & School:** B.A. in Psychology from Bryn Mawr College; M.S. in Psychology from UT Dallas
- **Advisor:** Dr. Wang
- **Cluster:** Child and Adolescent Therapy
- **Hobbies/Fun Fact:** Reading and baking!





JASMINE SEEGMILLER

- **Hometown:** St. George, Utah
- **Degree:** B.S. from Utah Tech University
- **Advisor:** Josh Hook
- **Cluster:** Child and Adolescent Therapy
- **Hobbies/Fun fact:** I love trying new foods, winning board games, and walking down EVERY AISLE of the grocery store.

ERIN VERGARA

- **Hometown:** Dallas, TX
- **Degrees:** BS Psychology; MS Psychological Sciences – both from Texas Woman's University
- **Advisor:** Dr. Kaminski
- **Cluster:** Child & Adolescent Therapy
- **Hobbies/Fun Fact:** Playing music with my friends, cooking for my family, and finding new ways to work out



LAUREN WAGNER

- **Hometown:** Jackson, WY
- **Degree(s) and from which school(s):** Bachelor of Combined Science in Math and Physics and Master of Science in Kinesiology, Sport and Exercise Psychology from Texas Christian University
- **Advisor:** Dr. Petrie
- **Cluster:** Sport Psychology
- **Hobbies/Fun Fact:** I love dancing, biking, and hiking



STUDENT REPS COLUMN

Hello and greetings. We are Raven and Javon, your 2025–2026 student representatives! We really enjoyed the Program Welcome Party, where we all got to know each other a little

better, helping to build a sense of community within the program. Thank you to Dr. Hook for graciously opening up his home for the event and to the department for allocating us the funds for catering. We are looking forward to Fall Town Hall, continuing to foster a space for students to voice their concerns and engage in productive conversations. We are hopeful for our program to continue to grow and evolve. As your student reps, we will continue to voice student concerns in program committee meetings and with the Dean. We are dedicated to being an equitable, effective voice for the student body, ensuring that everyone is heard. Our goal is to help create and sustain a culture that values and respects diversity in all its forms. To achieve this, we are committed to actively promoting social justice, equity, and inclusion throughout our program.

Remember, completing this program is a team effort. We are truly all in this together! Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any ideas, concerns, or questions. Your voice matters, and we are here to support your every step of the way.

Raven & Javon

EDITOR'S COLUMN

As always, we want to extend a huge thank you to everybody who was able to contribute to this year's newsletter.

There were so many thoughtful

submissions this year from faculty, students, and alumni that showcase the best of the Counseling Psychology program. Without you, this issue would not be possible.

To all others, we hope that you are finding ways to rest and recover during this stressful time! The finish line is close, but there is still a lot to get through, so please feel free to check out the events and resources offered by the Graduate Association of Students in Psychology (GASP) and Psychology Advocates for Social Change (PASC).

The members of our program continue to make amazing accomplishments each semester.

We are so excited to see what is yet to come for personal and professional developments. Best of luck and can't wait to catch you in the next issue!

Ayurda & Sreoshi



**INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING
TO THE SPRING NEWSLETTER?**

**EMAIL AYURDAPATHAK@MY.UNT.EDU
OR SREOSHICHOWDHURY@MY.UNT.EDU**