

# EYE on PSY

## Psychology Department Newsletter Fall 2022 - Spring 2023



### Psychology Club & Psi Chi Honor Society

This year students arranged successful social events and partnered with other clubs and organizations to provide important advocacy for students at UIS. The club hosted a social event that included

#### Executive Board

President - Isa Durham  
Vice President - Chloe Berna  
Treasurer - Alexia Davis  
Secretary - Kate Hummel  
Advisor - Dr. Dylan Blaum

coloring and Halloween trivia and they also partnered with the Military Veterans Club to help run a Y2K trivia event. Students volunteered at the Send Silence Packing event sponsored by Active Minds to promote suicide awareness and they worked

with UIS Title IX Peer Educators on an event about sexual assault myths and misconceptions. In November, students partnered with UIS Cares and added "This or That" voting options to donation bins to encourage donations of Thanksgiving food items. The club also sold stickers related to mental health in a successful fundraising campaign. Twice this year they partnered with the Alliance of Therapy Dogs organization that brought therapy dogs to campus the weekend before midterms and finals to provide students with stress relief during anxious times of the semester.



Alliance of Therapy Dogs



#### Psi Chi International Honor Society Inductees

Meridith Bradley	Brian Larimore	Eric Shell
Edgar Gasca	Nicole Machen	Kendall Turner
Carly Goebel	Lezlie McCoy	McKenna Vereeke
Sydney Hilliard	SJ Pike	Rebecca Wiggins
Olivia Johnson	Kaitlyn Scott	

#### Department Chair

Carrie Switzer

#### Full-Time Faculty

Dylan Blaum  
Hypatia Bolívar  
Michele Miller  
Dennis Papini  
Sheryl Reminger  
Frances Shen  
Diana Zaleski

#### Adjunct Faculty

Joshua Camins  
Karla Ivankovich  
Maureen Talbert  
Rachel Tohme  
Robin Vansacik

#### Academic Advisors

Andy Egizi  
Robin Vansacik

#### Office Administrator

Mary Ellen Gass

#### Graduate Assistant

Alyssa Shaw

## Student Award Winners 2022-2023

### Graduation Marshal



**Edgar Gasca**

The Psychology Graduation Marshal leads students in the processional for graduation and epitomizes the values and goals of the department. In addition to being the Psychology Department Student Representative, Edgar is a member of the Black Male Collegiate Society and serves as the President of the Psi Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity at UIS.

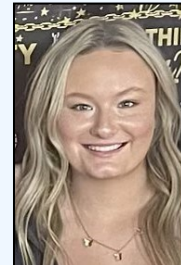
### Outstanding Service



**Isa Durham**

Isa is an active member of the Psychology Club. Last year, she was Vice-President of the club and this year she is President. Isa has been instrumental in revitalizing the organization. She is also a member of the Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology, Alpha Phi Sigma International Honor Society in Criminal Justice, and the National Society of Leadership and Success.

### Outstanding Research



**Olivia Charles**

This year Olivia conducted an independent research project using Dr. Zaleski's Illinois Educator Well-Being Study data. She presented the results at the Mid-Western Educational Research Association Annual Meeting and the Midwestern Psychological Association Annual Conference. Olivia's research examines the well-being of minority educators during the pandemic.

## Previous Award Winners

### 2019-2020

#### **Graduation Marshal**

Benjamin Schulte

#### **Outstanding Service**

Alice Caceres-Turcios

#### **Outstanding Scholar**

Gabriella Weybright

### 2020-2021

#### **Graduation Marshal**

Jace King

#### **Outstanding Research**

Julia Mayes

#### **Outstanding Scholar**

Rebecca Wheeler

### 2021-2022

#### **Graduation Marshal**

Christa Willoughby

#### **Outstanding Service**

Brooke Seacrist

#### **Outstanding Scholar**

Mason Wisley

#### **Outstanding Online Scholar**

Hunter Gourdie

## Psychology Faculty Focus



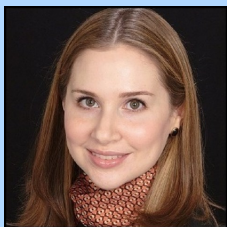
**Dylan Blaum** joined the Psychology Department as a faculty member in fall 2022. Dr. Blaum graduated from Northern Illinois University with a Ph.D. in

Cognitive and Instructional Psychology. His areas of interest include text comprehension, argument evaluation and processing, memory systems, and more recently, understanding the impact that AI language models (like ChatGPT) will have on education. Dr. Blaum is also the new faculty advisor for Psychology Club and Psi Chi at UIS. In this role he hopes to help students learn how psychological concepts can help improve their lives and the lives of those around them. Outside of academics, Dr. Blaum enjoys playing, coaching, and watching badminton. You may also catch him rolling around campus on a Onewheel™ electric skateboard when the weather permits!



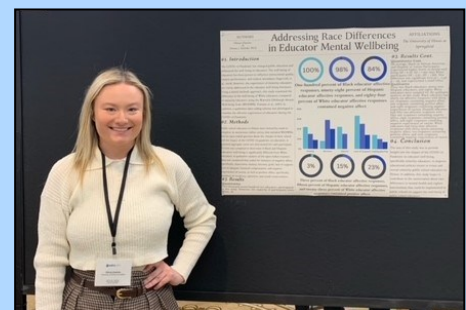
**Hypatia Bolívar** joined the Psychology Department as an instructor in fall 2020 and an assistant professor in fall 2022. Dr. Bolívar graduated

from the University of Florida with a Ph.D. in Psychology, concentrating in Behavior Analysis. She came to UIS after a one-year fellowship at the University of Vermont, where she was helping with tobacco regulatory science research. Her areas of interest include experimental analyses of human behavior; relapse and recovery in addiction; and, more recently, pedagogical approaches to enhance diversity, inclusion, equity, and social justice on campus. When Dr. Bolívar is not teaching, doing research, or serving the community, you will probably find her walking her dog, Ollie, out at one of Springfield's many outdoor parks!



**Diana Zaleski** is one of the Undergraduate Research Faculty Mentor Award winners this year. This award recognizes faculty members who have demonstrated excellence in mentoring undergraduate researchers. Dr. Zaleski was nominated by psychology major Olivia Charles. Under Dr. Zaleski's

mentorship, Olivia conducted an independent research study that examined racial differences in Illinois educator mental well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic and she presented her research at two conferences. Dr. Zaleski also played a critical role in Olivia's acceptance into an Industrial-Organizational Psychology graduate program.

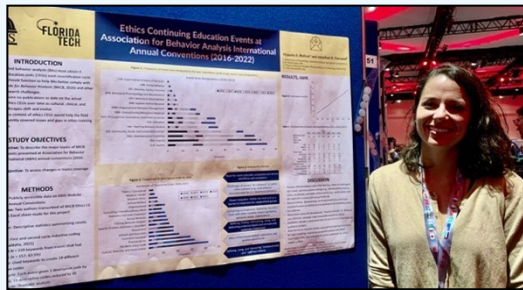


**Olivia Charles**

## Psychology Faculty & Student Research

**Dylan Blaum** and **Sheryl Reminger** are currently mentoring undergraduate **Bryce Marsaglia** with a research project related to autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR). Bryce has an interest in ASMR and wanted to better understand some of the psychological effects it may have on people who watch or listen to it. This research project is in the early stages, but aims to unpack the relationship between different types of ASMR videos and levels of anxiety and focus for those who watch the videos. The research could provide support for using ASMR videos as another tool to help reduce stress and increase the effectiveness of their time studying.

**Hypatia Bolívar** and **Diana Zaleski** both shared data from their experimental research project on the impact of syllabus language on students' perceptions of the instructor and course at the Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA) in Chicago, IL. The work they shared focused on

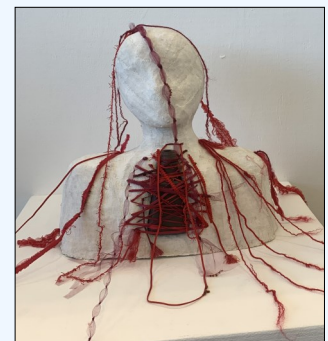


the psychometric properties of a scale they are using in the project and some of the data from the pilot experiment, including the impact of syllabus language on students' recall of information from the syllabus and the role of syllabus language on students' perceptions of the goal structure in the course. As part of her research interest on pedagogy, Dr. Bolívar presented a poster at the Association for Behavior Analysis International

(ABAI) conference in Dublin, Ireland, from an ongoing research project she is conducting with Dr. Jonathan Fernand (Florida Institute of Technology). The project involved analyzing seven years of past ABAI conference continuing education events on ethical issues in the field of behavior analysis. The goal of the project is to better understand what topics are being discussed as well as those that need additional coverage. As part of her research interest on addiction and contingency management, Dr. Bolívar has been working with psychology students

**Megan Doan, Zygfried Kurzynski, and Caleb Warmbier** on two projects. The first project is a mixed-methods approach to understanding the motivations of individuals who use oral nicotine products such as smokeless tobacco and nicotine pouches. The second project is a systematic review paper of acceptability assessments of contingency management, a behavioral intervention that involves the use of incentives to reinforce behavior change such as abstinence from drugs.

Dr. Bolívar was also the faculty mentor for **Elauna Wilkins** who presented her artwork at the 2023 UIS STARS Symposium. Elauna's mixed media sculpture is meant to bring awareness to people suffering from alcohol use disorders.



**The Human Beneath**  
by Elauna Wilkins



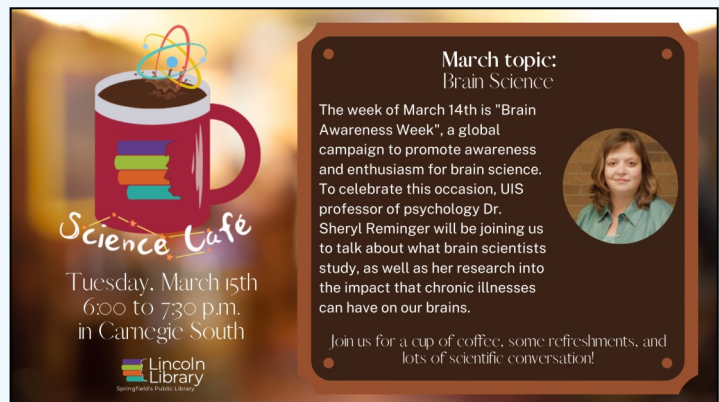
## Psychology Faculty & Student Research



**Michele Miller** co-wrote a book chapter titled "Research and Teaching Methods for Children who have Experienced Trauma" in *The Handbook of Trauma Informed Practices* with Dr. Meghan Kessler from the department of Teacher Education. This interdisciplinary publication reviews research on the developmental implications of childhood trauma and provides daily instructional strategies that can be used to create trauma-responsive classrooms. Dr. Miller's current research program is focused on trauma-informed practices in the elementary schools of Springfield's District 186. Preliminary results from teacher surveys that in part identified key themes of the importance of relationship building, the need for more support and training, and the holistic nature of practices and training, were recently

presented at The Society for Research in Child Development's Biennial Meeting in spring 2023.

**Sheryl Reminger** gave a presentation on *Brain Science* at the Lincoln Library in March of 2022. The presentation was given at the Science Café of the Springfield public library to help promote Brain Awareness Week, an annual global campaign to foster greater enthusiasm and awareness of issues involving brain science and health. In the presentation, Dr. Reminger spoke about the field of neuropsychology and the role of various brain structures in different forms of cognitive function. She also spoke about her research investigating how chronic illnesses such as cancer can impact the brain and quality of life.

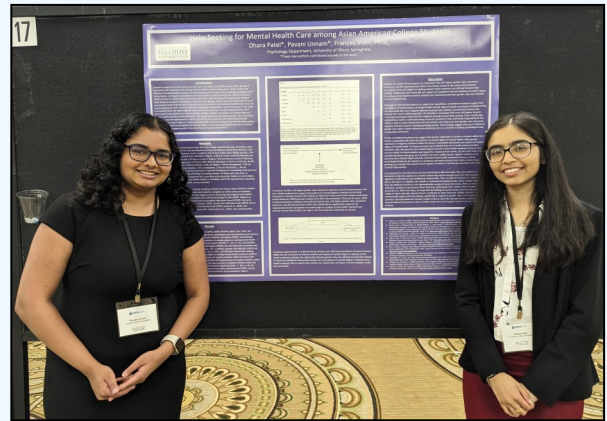


**Carrie Switzer** and co-authors **Sheryl Reminger**, **Frances Shen**, and **Michele Miller** presented the results of a study that examined the student benefits of using reflection in a senior capstone course at the Society for the Teaching of Psychology conference in October 2022. Students reported that reflecting on what they learned made them feel more confident and competent in their academic abilities. It also engaged them in thinking about their future and career and the ways they could use their knowledge and skills when applying to graduate school or for a job.

## Psychology Faculty & Student Research

**Frances Shen** is currently working on a manuscript that examines the mediational and moderated mediational effects of minority stress, discrimination, negative parental attitudes towards homosexuality, social constraint, and internalized homophobia on mental health among Asian American LGB persons. She is presenting her findings from this project at the 2023 American Psychological Association (APA) annual convention in Washington DC. She also has a book chapter on Asian body image assessments that is currently under review, which will also be presented at the 2023 APA convention.

Undergraduates **Pavani Unnam** and **Dhara Patel** are working with Dr. Shen on a study to explore the culturally-relevant factors that contribute to Asian American college students' stigma towards mental health and help-seeking behaviors. Dhara and Pavani presented their preliminary findings from this project at the 2023 UIS STARS and Midwestern Psychological Association annual meeting in Chicago. Undergraduate **Kyla Leones** is also developing a study with Dr. Shen on the impact of generational trauma on the mental health of Southeast Asian Americans. She plans to submit her study for IRB approval in summer 2023 and begin data collection in fall 2023.



**Pavani Unnam & Dhara Patel**

**Diana Zaleski** studies educator well-being and the application of positive psychological interventions in public education. Her primary research project is the Illinois Educator Well-Being Study, which is an annual survey of public-school educators. To date, approximately 6,000 educators have participated. Dr. Zaleski recently published an article titled "The Longitudinal Impact of COVID-19 on Teacher Well-Being" based on the initial results of this study in the *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*. She received funding from the UIS Competitive Scholarly Research Grant to hire undergraduates **Olivia Charles** and **Anthony Serra** to assist in qualitative data coding of the Illinois Educator Well-Being Study. They have coded over 4,000 open ended responses from public school educators. Dr. Zaleski was also awarded a competitive grant for \$52,982.64 from CARLI's Illinois SCOERs (Support for Creation of Open Educational Resources) grant program to write an open educational resource textbook titled *The Psychology of Exceptional Children*. She also published a book chapter titled "Quantitative Methods for Examining Community Literacy" in an edited book titled *A Field Guide to Community Literacy: Case Studies and Tools for Praxis, Evaluation, and Research*.