



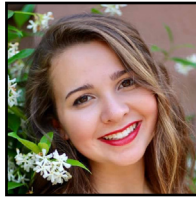
**UNC CHARLOTTE**

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

**PSYCHOLOGY  
STUDENTS OF  
DISTINCTION**



**MAY 6, 2021**



## **LAUREN ALLEN**

Nominated by: Dr. Kim Buch

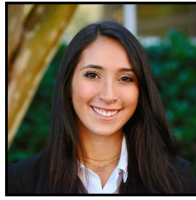
She has been a Research Assistant in the Transfer Student Learning Community (TLC) Lab, exploring the factors related to transfer student success. She has also supported the TLC and its students as a Teaching Assistant and has worked as a Peer Advisor in the department. Lauren maintains a 4.0 GPA and plans to graduate early in December, 2021.



## **ANGEL ANDERSON**

Nominated by: Professor Katie Burke

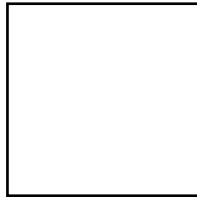
I could tell right from the start when I first met her that she was extremely passionate about psychology and also about helping others as well. When she performed wonderfully in positive psych and I got to know her through meetings outside of class, I knew she would be a great fit as a TA. Angel surpassed my expectations as she communicated with our students wonderfully and did everything she could to help with that class. Her motivation, passion, and enthusiasm for learning about psychology was truly amazing. I know she is going to do absolutely phenomenal things in her future, and I'm so excited for her!



## **ANDREA BADILLO-PEREZ**

Nominated by: Dr. Sara Levens

Andrea began working in my lab three years ago as a Sophomore. She is a wonderful research assistant who brought positivity, enthusiasm and continuousness to every lab task and research project. She embraces lab tasks as joyful learning opportunities and went above and beyond when ever she could. Through her own initiative she prepared lab data to present at an international health related conference while she was studying abroad. For her honors thesis she combined her love of psychological research and public health to explore the impacts of socioeconomic status and locus of control on the outcomes of a healthy eating intervention. After graduating from UNCC Andrea will be starting medical school at New York University. Andrea brings her whole heart and mind to everything she does. She will be an amazing doctor and world citizen. I feel privileged to have had her as a research assistant these past three years and I look forward to hearing about all the amazing things she does in the future to make the world a better place.



## **HANNAH BORUM**

Nominated by: Dr. Sara Levens

Hannah was a TA for my Brain and Behavior course in Fall 2020. She was a key member of my instructional support team during a critically challenging time. She regularly went above and beyond in giving detailed feedback to students on assignments. She was professional and compassionate and significantly contributed to student success in the class. She offered to help whenever she could and communicated with me and the other TAs well. I am grateful to have such a strong and dedicated TA during a semester where extra support was so greatly needed and valued.



## **SYDNEY, CAMPBELL**

Nominated by: Dr. Erika Montanaro

Rarely have I had the opportunity to watch a student grow over the entirety of their undergraduate experience, but I have had the unique pleasure of witnessing Sydney Campbell transform into a phenomenal researcher. Sydney joined my lab as a freshman seeking research experience and almost immediately became an integral member of the team. Over the course of three years, Sydney has become an expert in recruitment and retention for a particularly difficult study. She was pivotal to the success of that study and countless others at this point. Her work ethic, organizational skills, and value for team cohesion are just the top three things that come to mind when I think of why Sydney has become my go-to person if I need help with anything research-related. I cannot overstate how hardworking she is—she's managed to complete all of her required courses ahead of schedule (graduating in three years!), works a full-time job, and fits in several research projects into her schedule. I cannot wait to see how Sydney develops herself in the years to come; I am so proud of the researcher she has become already!



## **DANIELLE CANADAY**

Nominated by: Dr. Alexia Galati

Dani was one of my top students in Research Methods II in Fall 2019. For her term project, Dani and her project partners examined the association between college students' relationship status and academic self-regulation. Beyond her stellar scores in the course, Dani impressed me because, while working on her manuscript revisions, she often followed up with me with apt questions that reflected integrative, high-level critical thinking. Because Dani's writing and research competencies stood out, I invited her to serve as a Teaching Assistant for RMII in Spring 2020 and 2021. Dani was an invaluable resource to me and to the students in the course. She helped me develop rubrics, refine grading guidelines, and helped students with their assignments and the development of their research projects. Dani was instrumental to running the course smoothly with the transition to online teaching since March 2020 due to COVID-19. Dani is passionate about the intersection of social justice and mental health, which is reflected in involvement in different service and leadership roles on campus. Dani will be continuing her training as a graduate student in the Master of Social Work program at UNCC.



## SHAYNA FARRIS

Nominated by: Dr. Erika Montanaro

It has been an absolute pleasure serving as Shayna's honors thesis advisor over the last year and a half. From day one, Shayna has been proactive in her engagement in research and has shown a drive, motivation, and understanding of theoretical and methodological concepts beyond many advanced undergraduates and early graduate students. I feel so fortunate to have had her as a research assistant as well. Shayna has approached every task in the lab and her own research with a positive can-do attitude and has truly been instrumental in keeping my lab productive during the pandemic. Additionally, her ability to understand processes and provide guidance has made her an invaluable leader in the lab. I am so excited to see what is next for Shayna and know she will be successful as she goes on to pursue her PhD in health psychology. I will miss our weekly meetings. It was such an honor to be a part of Shayna's undergraduate experience.



## MARVIENE FULTON

Nominated by: Dr. Alexia Galati

Marviene was one of the first research assistants joining my lab. With her methodical approach and organizational skills, Marviene has been instrumental in helping establish rigorous protocols and lab procedures. She has contributed to the transcription and coding of dialogues for a project that examines the interpersonal dynamics of pairs collaborating on different tasks. Marviene and two other RAs recently won the Social Science - Oral Award for their presentation of findings from this project at the UNCC Undergraduate Research Conference! Because Marviene's writing and research skills stood out in my lab and in my courses, I invited her to serve as a Communication Consultant for RMII this semester. In this role, beyond the usual Consultant duties of meeting with students and providing feedback on their writing, Marviene developed high-quality materials that I will be reusing in the future. For example, she developed a deck for library instruction, a video lecture on creating an efficient workflow for research collaborations (highlighting tools in Google Docs), and a video lecture on using the open-source citation manager Zotero. Marviene has gone above and beyond any other communication consultant I have worked with before in this course! Marviene is also committed to service and has been an active citizen in our Department. She has served as a Peer Advisor, as the Marketing Chair of Psi Chi organizing events and outreach projects, and as one of the Social Justice Book Club student organizers.



## JENNIFER GATTUSO

Nominated by: Professor Erin Godly-Reynolds

During the fall of 2019 I had the pleasure of getting to know Jenn as a student in my Child Psychology course. She excelled as a TA during the following two semesters. While carrying out all TA responsibilities, Jenn was proactive, prepared, and needed minimal oversight from me. On numerous occasions I noticed Canvas Announcements or even a new module that Jenn posted on our Canvas page to better organize information for students. Her work was consistently timely, accurate, high quality, and tremendously helpful to our students. Jenn frequently went above and beyond her assigned responsibilities to think about how to make our course better and then execute her ideas. In addition, I could always trust Jenn to have sensitive conversations with students (e.g., from a paper grade to a personal situation) during office hours and/or via email and then appropriately support the student by making the right decision regarding whether she should handle it completely or have the student follow-up with me. While it may seem simple, this can be a challenging balance as a TA that Jenn has mastered and that I think reflects her maturity, trustworthiness, and strong interpersonal skills. Perhaps most importantly, I was consistently impressed by Jenn's positive demeanor and resilience in the face of adversity. Amidst the coronavirus, these past two semesters have been extremely challenging for everyone, and Jenn has taken it all in stride. I will always be grateful for her hard work and dedication to our students, and I sincerely cannot wait to see all that Jenn accomplishes in her future career.



## JOSH GORDON

Nominated by: Dr. Sara Levens

Josh has been working as a research assistant on my Army Research Office grant team for over a year. Josh joined the team through the Army Education Outreach Program, Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program. Josh is a fantastic contributor to the team and has been a dream research assistant. He has contributed substantially to the project by conducting in depth qualitative analyses, the incorporation of existing and novel theories in unique ways, and data management. Josh is passionate about research and invests himself fully in all project tasks. Seeking to gain all the research experience he can, Josh is conducting an ambitious Honors Thesis project that aims to develop a questionnaire assessing emotion sharing behaviors on social media. Josh will again be participating in the Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program this summer, and I am incredibly excited about the research we have planned for this summer. Josh plans to pursue graduate study in Psychology with the goal of becoming a professor. I know that he will go great places and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of his growth and development.



## **SURASYA GUDURU**

Nominated by: Dr. Hannah Peach

She is a sophomore majoring in psychology and international studies, with a minor in political science. Surasya has served as my Preceptor in PSYC 1101 for several semesters. Preceptors are charged with helping professors create “the best possible pedagogical environment for students through active learning and student-centered approaches.” Surasya has gone above and beyond in her efforts to create an optimal learning environment for our students. She has put in countless hours within this role creating study guides, holding review sessions and office hours, providing encouragement to students, and serving as an academic role model for our class. Showing creativity and leadership, she has also partnered with other preceptors to share resources and brainstorm ideas for incorporating new tutoring techniques into our course. I am continually impressed by her professionalism, organization, thirst for knowledge, and heart for serving (she has such a warm, gracious personality!). It has been an absolute joy to work with Surasya, and I hope to continue working with her until she graduates. I can’t wait to see what big things she accomplishes during her time at UNCC and beyond!



## **ALICIA GUERRA**

Nominated by: Dr. Linda Shanock

Alicia Guerra was a student in my PSYC 2104 Critical Thinking about Research class in the Fall 2020 semester. To me, she epitomizes success in the academics category given that she was an actively engaged, bright student who maintained a positive attitude while also facing numerous challenges outside of class. Alicia not only battled covid late in the summer not long before school started and still was able to start attending classes on time, but her grandmother came down with the virus early in the fall semester and Alicia ran to take care of her despite having a challenging class load this semester. She knew that because she had antibodies, she could step in to care for her grandmother, that way she would protect other family members from being exposed to the virus while providing loving care to her grandmother. In my class, she did all this while still maintaining a good grade in my course, which contains a lot of assignments and thinking exercises. She also picked a very challenging final project topic that includes research literature from behavioral genetics, and although I gave her a chance to change to an easier topic, she chose to stick with the harder topic and is doing a great job with it so far. She is also very positive and growth mindset-oriented! Finally, I would like to note that Alicia has also done all this while often having to use her phone to have good internet capability to engage in class, or go to the library to get quiet, good internet service. She did not let those challenges stop her and earned an excellent grade in my course!



## ZACH HAGANS

Nominated by: Dr. Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling

Zach was a student in my Research Methods I class last fall. I taught two sections of RMI which included over 100 students. Zach stood out from his peers both by his excellent performance in the course (top A student) and by his desire to have a deeper connection with the material and the class. As an example, Zach voluntarily contributed to a discussion board on the Stanford Prison experiment. He astutely pointed out the psychological processes that are generated by the enactment of power differentials and through the wearing of uniforms. His care for humanity and his growing ability to translate what he is learning in the classroom to the social problems of today are inspirational!



## GABBY HALEY

Nominated by: Dr. Kim Buch

She has been a Research Assistant in the Transfer Student Learning Community (TLC) Lab, exploring the factors related to transfer student success. She has also supported the TLC and its students as a Teaching Assistant and has worked as a Peer Advisor in the department. Gabby has been on the Chancellor's Honor Roll every semester. She plans to join Dr. Montanero's research lab in the fall.





## MAKAYLA HANNAH

Nominated by: Dr. Anita Blanchard

Makayla has been on the Dean's list or Chancellor's list every semester at UNC Charlotte and is graduating with a 3.65 GPA average. In addition to being an outstanding student, she is an undergraduate research assistant in the Virtual Identity, Community, and Entitativity (V.I.C.E) lab. She has been key in running research experiments on how people experience entitativity in online meetings. She has also been responsible for checking the validity of over 1500 survey responses from Amazon's Mturk survey system. Makayla's accomplishments are even more impressive in light of additional family challenges in this midst of this pandemic. She has learned to develop a strength within her that has helped her become independent and appreciate the diversity of perspectives from her colleagues here on campus. Makayla's skills include insight into research and into people. She is quiet spoken, but when she speaks everyone should listen. Makayla is not sure they exactly path she will take after college but it is clear her future is bright.



## JOSIE HENDRICKS

Nominated by: Dr. Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling

I was Josie's Professor in Research Methods I. Josie impressed me with her outstanding performance in the class, which included getting the highest overall average (1/51 students). Given her interest in research, her dedication to learning, and her academic excellence, it was clear that Josie should be encouraged to be more deeply involved in scholarship while at UNC Charlotte. Simultaneously, a community project that colleagues and I were working on required some additional and timely consultation. Given an invitation, Josie jumped in mid-semester and further distinguished herself by mastering the creation of a database in SPSS, conducting literature searches, creating dissemination materials, and working collaboratively on a multi-disciplinary community-action team. Her work on this project has been excellent to the degree that she has skills commensurate with beginning graduate students in our Health Psychology Doctoral Program, after only completing Research Methods I. She has a bright future, and I am eager to be part of her continued educational journey. I am honored that Josie will be conducting her Honor's thesis with me in the fall of 2021.



## **MEAGAN HOFFMAN**

Nominated by: Dr. Sara Levens

Megan was a key member of the instructional support team for my Brain and Behavior course in Fall 2020. She was a wonderful TA during a critically challenging time. She regularly went above and beyond in giving detailed and constructive feedback to students on assignments. She was professional and compassionate and significantly contributed to student success in the class. She communicated with me and the other TAs well and was an overall asset. I am grateful to have such a strong and dedicated TA during a semester where extra support was so greatly needed and valued.



## **DAVID JACKSON**

Nominated by: Dr. Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling

David was a top student in my Research Methods I class last fall, earning an A for the semester. Clearly, David is academically talented; he is also naturally curious and has a passion for critical thinking. David was the only student in his section to bring outside material to the class to discuss and consider. In particular, he was curious about the emerging research related to COVID-19, transmission mechanisms, and vaccine efficacy. David applied what he was learning in the classroom to what he was reading in the news and vice-versa. This is type of student who makes teaching a joyous endeavor; his questions and viewpoint invigorated the classroom and this professor. David has a talent for research that I hope he continues to foster as he obtains his education at UNC Charlotte!



## SAGHAR KHOLGHI ARRIS

Nominated by: Dr. Sara Levens

Saghar, “Sarah”, was a TA for my Brain and Behavior course in Fall 2020. I originally reached out to her to join my TA team in Spring 2020, while she was unavailable that semester, she took the initiative to reach out to me the following semester to see if I needed help. She was a great TA during a challenging time for faculty and students.

She always offered to do more and connect with students to support their success. She was professional and compassionate and significantly contributed to student success in the class. She offered to help whenever she could and communicated with me and the other TAs in the class well. I am grateful to have had such a strong and dedicated TA during a semester where extra support was so needed and valued by students.



## JORDAN PARODY

Nominated by: Dr. Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rholing

I nominated Jordan Parody for the Students of Distinction academic category. Of note, Jordan was a strong A student in my Research Methods I course. She is bright and did an excellent job of applying in-class material to new situations. However, for me, Jordan stood out from her peers in two other vital ways. First, Jordan is a discerner. I trusted her attention to detail with regard to the accuracy of assignments, test questions and correct answers, and my ability to manage the virtual environment. The skill of precision and the ability to communicate through follow-up are requirements for a top-notch scientist and professional; Jordan demonstrated these. Second, Jordan is a caring, team-focused, class participant; she took part in numerous optional activities to further her understanding of psychology and to increase her connection to UNC Charlotte. These qualities are also vital for future professional success. I was honored to have Jordan as a student early in her professional journey and look forward to hearing of her continued academic success!



## ANGEL ROGERS

Nominated by: Dr. Anita Blanchard

Angel currently has a 3.69 GPA and is the TA for several undergraduate psychology courses. She is also a research assistant in the Virtual Identity, Community, and Entitativity (V.I.C.E) lab. She has been key in running research experiments on how people experience entitativity in online meetings. She has also helped create new research measures on copresence and status satisfaction. Angel's honor's research looks at copresence and entitativity from a large study of employees in virtual meetings. Angel's leadership in the lab and as a teaching assistant has been outstanding. She can be trusted to work hard, find inconsistencies, and, most importantly, develop creative solutions. She is a role model for what we are looking for in our teaching and research assistants.



## SYDNEY ROUX

Nominated by: Drs. Alexia Galati & Steven Rogelberg

Sydney spent time in my lab in Summer 2020 as a research scholar, through a competitive program supported by the Office of Undergraduate Research. Sydney worked cohesively with another summer scholar and a graduate student on the transcription, quantified discourse analysis, and data analysis for an existing dataset. This project examined the impact of task goals on the coordination of language use of collaborating task partners. Despite the challenges of that summer, given the COVID-19 pandemic and national events, Sydney was always on top of her work, producing a strong manuscript as the outcome of her research experience. Given her demonstrated strengths as a student, I invited Sydney to serve as a TA for a new course I was preparing to teach in Fall 2020. Sydney's contributions as TA were tremendous: she helped me develop rubrics and grading guidelines, disambiguate instruction prompts as I created new assignments, and altogether manage the delivery of a new online course. Sydney's efforts, as the sole TA no less, were instrumental for running two sections of that course smoothly.

Sydney is an amazing undergraduate student – she is brilliant, highly motivated, and so so on top of things. She has engaged in research from nearly day one as a student. It started with Charlotte Research Scholars and now she is working on a research project geared to understanding work factors that may enable or constrain authenticity for women of color at work. Karoline Summerville, one of our doctoral students working activity with Sydney, just raves about the quality of her work and how much she enjoys working with her. Sydney is just of those rare individuals whom you meet that you know instantly that this person is special. Sydney is special.



## AUTUMN SCARBOROUGH

Nominated by: Drs. Jordan Lyerly & Erika Montanaro

I first met Autumn in my Research Methods II class last Spring, where Autumn's passion for research was readily apparent. Since then, I have worked with Autumn as her honors thesis advisor where she is studying how the framing of social media messages about Black Lives Matter is associated with social media responses. Over this past year, I have seen Autumn further develop her research skills and have been really impressed with the work she has done on her thesis. In addition to being a great writer, Autumn's passion around her research interests of social justice and social media have been inspiring to me. She is also very proactive and takes challenges and setbacks with a smile on her face. She is a pleasure to work with and I am honored to have been her advisor this past year!

I have only known Autumn for a short while but she has been a positive force for change for me and the department during that time. She has served as one of our first social justice TAs in the department and has used this position to hold faculty accountable as well as laying the foundation for structural change. Autumn has worked diligently on the monthly social justice newsletter, which highlights work by and for traditionally underrepresented communities in psychology. She has also been instrumental in the development and dissemination of a climate survey to assesses student experiences in the department. It can be incredibly daunting as an undergraduate student to voice concerns and suggest areas for improvement to faculty, specifically as it relates to issues of social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and Autumn has done so with aplomb. I truly believe Autumn has made a lasting impact on the department and will go on to do so for the field of psychology.



## CHELSEA SIMCOX

Nominated by: Dr. Alexia Galati

In my Research Methods II course in Spring 2020, Chelsea was an incredibly engaged student. During the in-person phase of the semester, I could see her colorful markers laid out on her desk, ready at her fingertips to code and organize course content! Chelsea is one of the strongest writers I've come across at the undergraduate level. Her communication competencies were clearly evidenced in her term paper for RMII. For her term project, Chelsea and her project partners examined the association between religiosity and life satisfaction, forming cogent hypotheses based on the literature, identifying appropriate validated inventories to quantify these key constructs, and conducting a carefully designed study. Given her research and writing skills, I encouraged Chelsea to apply for the competitive summer research scholars program supported by the Office of Undergraduate Research. As a research scholar in my lab in Summer 2020, Chelsea worked cohesively with other lab members to complete transcription, coding, and data analysis on a project examining interpersonal coordination, and produced an excellent independent report. Beyond being a stellar student, Chelsea is a persevering, highly independent, and well-rounded person. Outside the classroom, as a dance and yoga instructor, she explores ways of instilling confidence in others and applies holistic approaches to improving their wellbeing.



## **MIANA, UENO**

Nominated by: Dr. Ryan Kilmer

My nomination is based on my experience with Miana during fall, 2020. The fall semester brought some noteworthy challenges – it was the first full term during which we were all remote due to the pandemic and, of personal relevance, it was my first time having to design and teach a fully remote class. Miana was in my Psychology of Adjustment course and, because of her performance, she stood out from the beginning. I so appreciated the fact that she took the class seriously, was engaged, and, quite frankly, put in the time to prepare for our exams, quizzes, and writing assignments. Her performance was regularly at the top of the distribution. In fact, on exams, some of her written answers could have served as the key! In the end, she earned the top final grade in the class. I wanted to acknowledge Miana for excelling academically and for reflecting such a strong commitment to her education during a trying time.



## **DHANNA VARGAS**

Nominated by: Dr. Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling

Dhanna was a student in my Research Methods I class in the fall. She stood out from her peers in that she was one of the few students who obtained an A on every single exam, including a difficult final and an optional department cumulative test of learning. She clearly understood the material and mastered the academic challenges. She has outstanding academic potential which continues to impress me!



# KIRA WEISENBACH

Nominated by: Dr. Erika Montanaro

She has served as one of our first social justice TAs in the department. From the very beginning, Kira has had a keen eye for making structural change and pushing our department to create more inclusive and equitable spaces for all of our students and staff. She has taken the lead on creating a teaching repository for faculty in hopes of making it easier to incorporate social justice perspectives into the classroom regardless of content area. Kira has also been essential in combining resources with accountability. This is daunting given the power differential between students and faculty and Kira has navigated this space with an enviable self-assuredness. She has also been key in the creation of a monthly social justice newsletter and the department climate survey. I know Kira hopes to further refine her skills in creating structural changes related to social justice and DEI within organizations in an I-O master's program. I have no doubt that Kira will be successful in her future endeavors and cannot thank her enough for the work she has done for our department.