

SPRING NEWSLETTER

On behalf of the steering committee we wanted to say thank you for another great year of service and unrelenting dedication towards constantly improving our department to make it inclusive, equitable and a space that values all.

End of the semester picnic!

Location will be Tudek park pavilion 1

Date May 6th, 2022

Time 5-8pm

Potluck sing-up: tinyurl.com/BRIDGE22picnic

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APRIL 2022

BRIDGE Involvement

Committees

Steering - José, Esha, Sara

R&R - Sus, Marisa, Eliana, Sara

Social - Katsumi, Esha, Metzli

Social media - Clin, Tianyi, Sara

Thank
you!

Interested in getting more involved
with BRIDGE next academic year?

Scan and complete this survey

<https://forms.gle/8VQnCGh4JNRJGYYX9>



APRIL 2022

BRIDGE Events

JOIN US!

STUDENT PANEL

PSYCHOLOGY GRAD STUDENTS
SPEAKING TO THEIR EXPERIENCES

VIRTUAL Q&A

Who: Any accepted prospective student who has questions about life in grad school

Where: <https://osu.zoom.us/j/94622646315>

You can submit questions ahead of time <https://forms.gle/Dx86G9XtX54HY0UP>

Tuesday 22TH
March 2022
5-6pm EST




BRIDGE



Social Night: Bowling on April 8th!

Bring your socks and get ready for Rock n Roll theme night at Northland Bowl & Recreation Center!

Where: Northland Bowl & Recreation Center (off N Atherton St)
When: 08:00 PM
Cost: \$4.50/game + \$3.50 for shoes



BRIDGE
A Diversity Action Alliance

Let's celebrate the end of the semester with a

POTLUCK PICNIC

MAY 6 • 5-8PM

Tudek Park - Pavilion 1
425 Herman Dr., State College
Sign up - tinyurl.com/BRIDGE22picnic



GRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCES

WHAT PSYCHOLOGY GRAD STUDENTS WANT OTHERS TO KNOW...

AIM OF THIS INFOGRAPHIC

This project was born out of the Recruitment and Retention committee of BRIDGE (the Psychology department's Diversity Alliance group). Our aim of collecting and sharing this information was as a retention effort with the hopes that fellow graduate students may not feel alone in their struggles in grad school, can share ways they have overcome difficulties, and have the chance to increase awareness of the diversity of graduate student experiences. This information is based on responses from 21 students from across the department.

FINANCES

Some students have struggled financially through grad school [4]

Stipends don't provide adequate nor sufficient financial support [2]

Stipends vary widely and there is discrepancy in amount [\$23,000-\$30,000].

The way stipend funding is allocated can be compounding privilege with more privilege [1]



SOCIAL LIFE

"My personal/social life is not my own anymore" [2]

Being an international student can be lonely, isolating, and overwhelming.

"The pandemic has made grad school really isolating" [2]



VARIANCE

Experiences in grad school vary by lab and mentor [3]

"I wish that faculty would attempt to keep an eye on how students are doing even if they are not their primary advisor. I feel like my time at Penn State would have gone a lot smoother if another faculty would have reached out, even if it was just with some small encouraging words."



EXPECTATIONS

It can be hard to live up to expectations that are placed on us and it feels impossible to take breaks.

"It's exhausting. There is tons of burn out and very little pay."

There is immense pressure [2]

Feeling disempowered to change our circumstances because 'that's just how grad school is'



THERE'S MORE TO ME THAN GRAD SCHOOL

"I wish they knew that what they see of me is only the tip of the iceberg of my life. As a first gen college student from a low income background, I had to overcome a lot of barriers, and I am still financially responsible for many of my family members...That doesn't just go away because I decided to go to grad school..."



"Students are not robots. We are also dealing with and balancing our personal life (financial situations, health, mental health, etc.)"

Grad students wear many hats and are asked to juggle everything simultaneously [3]

CAREER OPTIONS

"I am not sure a research or a clinical career is right for me, but no one is helping me figure out what other options there are even when I ask"

"I'm leaning away from a research/academic career..."



DIVERSITY

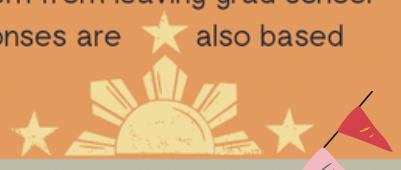
Experiences of bias and microaggressions towards diverse students [2]

"The program seems to want diverse individuals for the sake of saying that they have them, then continually fails to support them...and rarely holds individuals accountable. There's not a day where minority students feel adequately supported"



SUPPORT THROUGH GRAD SCHOOL

We then asked students when they have faced difficulties during their time at Penn State and if they have experienced moments in which they considered quitting, what has kept them from leaving grad school and what has kept them here. These responses are also based on N = 21.




WHAT HAS GOTTEN YOU THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

PEERS

Supportive cohort mates makes all the difference.

Other peers in the program and guidance from supportive and genuinely nice fellow graduate students [3]



MENTORS

Having one's primary mentor and other mentors working to remove students from difficult situations without burning bridges.

Supportive and kind mentors [7]

"Support from my mentors is what initially led me to choose Penn State and has been a big part of my decision to stay."

Reassurance that your mentor is approachable when needs arise.

SUPPORT SYSTEM

A strong familial and friend support system is crucial

Support that goes beyond the primary mentor/advisor helps create a more supportive environment.



RESEARCH

I am passionate about my research [2]

The importance of the work and research being done.

Additional academic/fellowship programs that reignite passion and provide outlets to form new connections.



INTERNAL DRIVE, PERSEVERANCE

The time already spent working towards the degree and not wanting to waste time [2]

Desire for the degree [3]

"...I have wanted this for so long" "I want my phd. I've come too far to not get it"

Not having other options or plan B, and having come so far are also major reasons that students have persevered through graduate school.

SUGGESTIONS

- So what can we do better....
- Accountability
 - Change the culture of resistance against feedback and pointing out need for change
 - Faculty support beyond mentors and advisors
 - Viewing success of a graduate student that goes beyond academics and research that includes their wellbeing and career goals.



Statement on State High events

Recommendations

As our department has made increased commitments to center Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, an important part of these ongoing conversations is acknowledging our ethical obligation as professional psychologists to engage in advocacy and social justice efforts. Our belief is that our role is that of [citizen psychologists](#)—a term coined by the APA to emphasize an ethical mandate to not only provide quality, culturally-informed care to clients but also actively advocate for social justice. Such advocacy is an essential part of building [multicultural competence](#) by actively engaging with our communities to improve the lives of marginalized group members that we serve through whatever means available to us. Critical to these endeavors is building awareness of ongoing issues of systemic injustices faced by our own community members and taking an active part in improving our communities.

Therefore, what is our role as members of the State College community and psychologists dedicated to social justice?

- Knowledge: Inform ourselves of the whole story and recognize that State College is not immune to racial injustice; it is happening in and affecting our immediate community.
- Support: Those who are able can support the family [financially](#) for the legal fees that have arisen as a consequence to how the school and police responded.
- Advocacy: We can join in existing community efforts to challenge the unjust criminal charges placed on the Black student by signing petitions to drop the charges [here](#) and [here](#), and add your name to the letter written by PSU faculty to the school district [here](#).
- Prevention/education: Simply raising awareness is not enough to prevent such incidents from happening again. We need to strive toward being an Anti-racist community, but what does that really mean? [Learn more through Anti-racism resources.](#)

Scan code for full statement



BRIDGE IMPACT AWARDS

To be announced during the end of the year Department celebration on May 3rd at 3:30pm in the Hintz family alumni center.

Impact award winners will be featured in the Display case in Moore



STUDENT AND FACULTY FEATURES

*We had two sets of faculty and student features in our social media and display case this semester to highlight important diversity related work in our department and the minds behind it. These included **Sreelakshmi Pushpanadh** and **Anna Zhou**, and **Rodrigo Cardenas** and **Dawn Witherspoon**.*

