

# PSYCHOLOGY

UC Riverside Psychology Newsletter | Issue 5 | Editor: Rachel Wu, Ph.D.

## Graduate students awards

**Jenna Klippenstein:**

UCR's Graduate Research Mentoring Program Fellowship

**Dulce Wilkinson:** European Association for Personality Psychology (EAPP) Travel Grant

**Kirsten Lesage:**

Dissertation Research Fellowship from UCR Graduate Division

**Seth Margolis and Emily Shih:** Department of Psychology Graduate Student Research Award

**Iman Fegghi:** Honorable Mention for the 2018-19 Department of Psychology Graduate Student Research Award

**Danielle Delany:** Robert L. Solso Research Award by the Western Psychological Association

## Achievements and community engagement

UCR's Department of Psychology has had a number of major achievements in the past six months, including obtaining new external grants, hiring new faculty, in addition to other academic achievements and community engagement. This issue provides an overview of these accomplishments achieved in the past six months.

## New faculty since 2018



[Dr. Aerika Loyd](#) studies how race, ethnicity, gender, and identity inform health and development for Black and Latinx youth and young adults. This work is important because it helps us explain what contributes to health disparities and to understand the factors that promote health equity and positive development in these two groups.



[Dr. Anu Goel's](#) research explores how we process different types of stimuli, such as line orientation and duration. This work is important because many everyday actions, such as playing sports, driving, or even crossing the street, requires proper processing of these stimuli and estimating duration. She uses cutting edge imaging techniques and electrophysiology to examine brain networks involved. Her work informs abnormal sensory processing and deficits in learning and cognition in Autism.

## Graduate student awards (continued)

### Jessie Bridgewater:

Honorable Mention Ford Foundation Fellowship

**Dana Glenn:** Honorable Mention NSF GRFP; National Academy of Sciences Arthur M. Sackler Colloquia Award

**Mahsa Shalchy and Kimia Yaghoubi:** FIELDS fellowships funded through NASA training grant in Dept of Physics

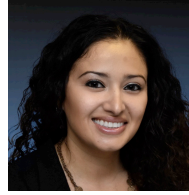
**Pamela Sheffler:** Western Psychological Foundation Student Scholarship Award

**Emily Shih:** (currently a postdoc at UCSF) APF/COGDOP Graduate Student Research Scholarship

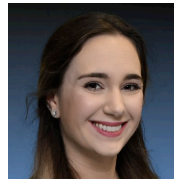
**Angela Sillars:** Frontiers of Innovation Portfolio Project grant from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

**Sofia Stepanyan:** CSUN Teaching Fellowship

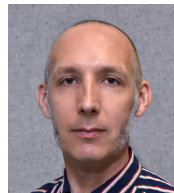
**Brandon Tran:** Meritorious Student Award from Society for Behavioral Medicine



**Dr. Diamond Bravo's** research lies at the intersection of motivation and achievement, cultural resilience in ethnic-racial minority youth, and discrimination. This work is important given gender/racial/ethnic gaps in the US in STEM-related fields, such as medicine. Her recent project involves data collection in Cuba, where there is no gender gap among medical professionals.



**Dr. Annie Ditta's** work unites cognitive psychology research with the scholarship of teaching and learning to develop an understanding of how to improve the educational experience of both students and instructors. The ultimate goals of her research are threefold: 1) to help students develop their critical and creative thinking skills, 2) increase motivation to learn, and 3) to design better methods of instruction for large lecture courses at the university level.



**Dr. Jimmy Calanchini** a social psychologist studying how our thoughts and judgments are influenced by the people and groups around us. Specifically, he is interested in the cognitive processes underlying social judgments, and their implications for society-level outcomes.

## New grants since 2019

**Dr. Cecilia Cheung:** NSF, Riverside Air Monitoring Project (RAMP): A New Curriculum for High School Science.

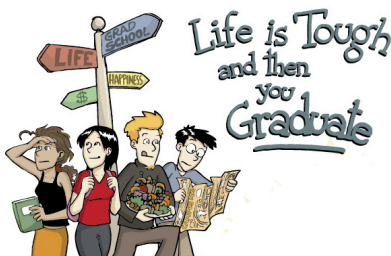
**Dr. Aerika Loyd:** NSF, Museum of Science and Industry, Investigating how museum experiences inform youths' STEM career awareness and interest. This grant will investigate how science museum experiences relate to diverse youths' STEM career interest, and how identity, school, and family inform those interests as well. This work will help us develop more effective programs for youth and contribute to creating more equitable pathways to STEM careers.

## Graduate student features

- **Yeram Cheong** completed her training with the Chancellor's Making Excellence Inclusive: Graduate Division Diversity Certificate Program last June of 2019 under the instruction of Dr. Mariam Lam, the Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer at UCR.



- **Roseanne Rosenthal** feature in UCR News: <https://news.ucr.edu/articles/2019/08/09/earning-her-chances>



**Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky:** John Templeton Foundation, Is gratitude only for the self? Exploring the benefits of recalling, sharing, receiving, and witnessing.

**Dr. Kalina Michalska:** Hong Kong Research Grants Council, Enhancing parents' competency to support the social and emotional needs of young children through a parent-based empathy and compassion intervention; Hellman Foundation Fellowship, Dissociating neural representations of learned threat in pediatric anxiety: a longitudinal investigation.

**Dr. Chandra Reynolds:** NIH-National Institute on Aging (NIA), SES health gradients in late life: Testing models of gene-environment interplay in an international twin consortium; NIH-NIA, Clarifying risk and protective factors for dementia with the interplay of genes and environment in multiple studies consortium.

**Dr. Khaleel Razak:** Department of Defense (DoD), Developmental acoustic exposure as a novel approach to treat fragile X syndrome; DoD, Natural Resources Support Pollinators, Edwards AFB. The first grant will test the hypothesis that early developmental, but not adult, acoustic exposure reduces auditory hypersensitivity in Fragile X Syndrome, the leading known



*Photo credit: Anand Varma*

monogenic cause of autism spectrum disorders. The second grant will provide insight into evolutionary mechanisms of pain tolerance in terms of adaptations at the level of voltage-gated ion channels in sensory neurons.

**Dr. Aaron Seitz:** NSF, Understanding subtle non-social facial expressivity to boost learning and computer interaction; NIH, Potential for placebo effects in cognitive training.

**Dr. Rachel Wu:** NSF CAREER Award, Investigating the impact of learning new skills on cognitive development and motivation for functional independence in older adulthood.

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## Council on Undergrad Research

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The department has taken on an ambitious project, led by **Dr. Rebekah Richert**, to transform the undergraduate psychology curriculum to better prepare students for the next steps in their academic and non-academic careers. This 4-year project, supported by the Council on Undergraduate Research and the National Science Foundation, provides the opportunity to revamp the curriculum to provide a better understanding of research and scientific thinking. We will implement changes over the next few years and collect data, with the help of a new Assistant Professor of Teaching, **Dr. Annie Ditta**, to determine best practices and ways forward.

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## Rosenthal Graduate Student Award

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To honor **Dr. Bob Rosenthal's** contributions to Psychology in general and to the department, the Rosenthal Graduate Student Award was established this year. Each year, this monetary award will be presented to the most outstanding graduate student researcher in our department. The awardee will receive a \$500-\$1000 check in addition to a plaque or certificate. To contribute to this fund, please visit: <https://psychology.ucr.edu/giving-opportunities/>

**Dr. Tuppett Yates:** NIH-National Institute of Child and Human Development, Children's academic competence in contexts of risk: Longitudinal relations with sleep and physical health in adolescence.

**Dr. Eddie Zagher:** NIH-National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke R01, Cortical feedback modulation of sensory processing during selective detection. The goal of this grant is to determine the cellular mechanisms by which cortical feedback pathways modulate cortical circuits during goal-directed task performance. A hallmark of mental health is the ability to have selective and goal-directed interactions with our surroundings rather than constantly responding to extraneous stimuli. Studies in this grant will help us understand why genetic mutations and cellular perturbations lead to altered cognitive processing in human neuropsychiatric disease.

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## New faculty awards

**Dr. Howard Friedman** was awarded a 2019-20 Edward A. Dickson Emeritus Professorship. He is using the funding to study societal, cross-cultural, and inter-generational comparisons to help understand what it means to be healthy.

**Dr. Kate Sweeny** was elected to be a Fellow in the Association for Psychological Science, Society for Personality and Social Psychology, and American Psychological Association Division 8.

**Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky** was awarded the Christopher J. Peterson Gold Medal from the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) at the organization's biannual conference in Melbourne, Australia. The Christopher J. Peterson Gold Medal honors an IPPA member who exemplifies the best of positive psychology at the personal, professional, and academic levels. This award is named after Christopher Peterson, a beloved IPPA Fellow, professor, scholar and pioneer in the field of positive psychology. Dr. Lyubomirsky also was awarded a Distinguished Research Lecturer Award from the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences.

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## Media and Public Engagement

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- **Dr. Megan Robbins:** Study busts gossip myths, BBC World News, live television interview on Newsday, June 2019; [NPR](#); [Time](#)
- **Dr. Rachel Wu:** Learning as an older adult, [NBC News](#), [Scientific American](#)
- In November 2019, **Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky** will be attending the first of a series of meetings at the Vatican for a project called, "Leveraging the Synergies of Faith, Ethics, and Science for Happiness, Well-Being, and Sustainable Development"—an initiative hosted and managed by Monsignor Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences, in partnership with the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and Columbia University.

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## Upcoming talks

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- **Dr. John O'Doherty** (Cal Tech): February 6, 2020, 3:30-5:00pm, "The construction of value"
- **Dr. Tiffany Yip** (Fordham): April 30, 2020, 3:30-5:00pm, "Identity, Discrimination and Sleep: The Development of Ethnic/Racial Minority Adolescents"

**Dr. Dan Ozer** was named Faculty of the Year by the graduate students in the Psychology department.

**Dr. Cecilia Cheung** received a Society for Research on Child Development (SRCD) Early Career Award from the Asian Caucus, an American Educational Research Association-SRCD Early Career Fellowship in Middle Childhood Education and Development.

**Dr. Tom Sy** received an Academic Senate Distinguished Teaching Award.

**Dr. Eddie Zagha** was selected to be a member of the Biological Psychology section of the Faculty of 1000.

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## Upcoming Conference

The Developing Belief Research Conference will bring together top scholars to present cutting-edge, cross-cultural research on how religious and moral beliefs develop. Scholars interested in developing religious and moral beliefs are invited to attend and participate in active dialog about this development. NOV. 15, 8 AM-6:30 PM, Alumni & Visitors Center.

[www.developingbelief.com](http://www.developingbelief.com)

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## Donate to UCR Psychology!

*Donate to one of the existing funds to promote and sustain excellence in Psychological Science and well-being.*

[UCR Psychology Research](#), [Rosenthal Graduate Student Award](#), Austin & Helen Riesen Senior Psychobiology Award, UCR Psychology Department (workshops, infrastructure, etc.), Ross D. Parke Annual Lecture on Children's Social-Emotional Development Fund, Stella R. Arambel Memorial Award (excellence in Psychological Science), University STEM Academy-USA Program, [Guardian Scholars \(helping emancipated foster youth in higher education\)](#). [Click here for more information.](#)



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