

Florida PSYCHOLOGIST

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The Value of Student Membership: Supporting the Future Generation

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The Value of Student Membership: Supporting the Future Generation

By Rita M. Rivera, MS, FPAGS Chair

As we wrap up the most successful student poster reception in the history of FPAGS, I want to invite all faculty members, academics, professionals, and mentors to continue supporting FPA's student division. Through several initiatives, such as participating in FPA's annual convention, developing publications for our organization's magazine, actively participating in social justice groups, and leading efforts to increase the scope of practice in the state, our student members help advance and diffuse psychological knowledge.

The value of student membership needs to be recognized, and we can start by supporting our student members. The following are some recommendations for faculty members, academics, professionals, and members interested in supporting the future generation of our profession.

1. Consider serving as a mentor for students. Lack of guidance and support may lead to feelings of isolation, inadequacy, and helplessness which, combined with a lack of first-hand experience, may result in imposter syndrome. These factors can make students less likely to engage in extracurricular projects and initiatives, such as research endeavors and participation in professional organizations. Often, students cannot find mentors who can answer their questions, connect them with professional organizations,



and help navigate challenges in the pursuit of higher education. Mentorship is a significant resource that can provide a safe space for students to acquire guidance and knowledge. Also, if you are a mentor who identifies as an individual from a minority or underrepresented group, consider offering advice to students from these communities. It is very common for students to experience a lack of representation in their academic institutions; having a mentor they identify with can help them become more confident in their academic and professional development.

2. **Foster environments conducive to learning.** Trainees

and interns may experience high levels of anxiety tied to that sense of perfectionism and desire to achieve what they may consider an ideal evaluation in their academic and clinical performance. It is essential for faculty members and supervisors to normalize feelings of inadequacy and have honest conversations regarding clear expectations and responsibilities. Supervisors may also help students experience fewer imposter feelings by providing constructive criticism, normalizing mistakes, and sharing their own learning experiences.

3. **Invite and connect students with professional organizations.** Trainees and students experiencing

low self-esteem or imposter syndrome may feel undeserving of leadership roles. They may also feel nervous or reluctant to communicate with other professionals outside their institutions and joining professional organizations in their field. It has been noted that when students are encouraged by their faculty, mentors, and advisors to join these organizations, they are more likely to join and participate in initiatives conducive to professional growth. Encourage students to join their state organizations (such as FPA) and other psychological institutions (e.g., APA).

Without a doubt, the past year has been challenging for all of us. However, it is worth highlighting how students have persevered and continue participating in scholarly

work. Students' commitment to their professions and fields of study is inspiring, and it drives the success and future of psychology. Students are the next generation of professionals in the field; they are the future of psychology and have proven to be capable of meaningful contributions that impact and shape the profession. Let's secure a bright future for psychology and mental health by supporting the outstanding work of our students and trainees.

Author's Bio:

Rita M. Rivera, MS, CTP, is pursuing a Psy.D. in clinical psychology at Albizu University in Florida. She is chair of the Florida Psychological Association of Graduate Students (FPAGS), student ambassador for APA Division 15, student

representative for APA Division 49, and co-chair of several working groups of the APA's Interdivisional COVID-19 Taskforce, including the Higher Education working group. Rita is also a writer for APA's Society of Counseling Psychology-SCP Connect Team and her Psychology Today blog, "Physio & Psych." Her areas of interest include fields that explore the relationship between physiology and mental health. Rita has clinical experience working with Hispanic patients and high-risk populations both in the United States and in her home country, Honduras.

New Members

As of July 1, 2021

BAY CHAPTER

Zahra Abouzied - Student
Sandra Baskharon - Student
Cynthia Caia - Student
Lisa Costas - 1st Year Member
Kevin Crosswell - 1st Year Member
Madison Dobreff - Student
Evin Janik - Student
Kelly Pires - Student
Diana Rodriguez - Student
Taylor Severance - Student
Meara Thombre - 1st Year Member

BROWARD CHAPTER

Cailyn Caskey - Student Affiliate
Monica Freissle - Student
Janette Rodriguez - 2nd Year Member

CALUSA CHAPTER

Brenda Apagueno - Student
Jennifer Oseroff - Affiliate Member
Michael Rodriguez - 1st Year Member
Veronica Steller - Student
Susan Welnel - Semi-Retired

CAPITAL CHAPTER

Olivia DeAngelo - Student
Pamela Hughes - Student
Daniel Krizan - Student
Martha Mason - Regular Member
Sara Staley - Student
Hannah Warshowsky - Associate Member

LOWER WEST COAST CHAPTER

Ginger Martin - 1st Year Member

MIAMI-DADE-MONROE CHAPTER

Jennifer Pechenik - Regular Member

NORTHEAST CHAPTER

Bruce Kristol - 1st Year Member
De'Von Patterson - Regular Member

OUT OF STATE

Breeda McGrath

PALM CHAPTER

Vincent Barbieri - Student
Jennifer Starke - Student Affiliate
Naomi Tarlow - Student

PINELLAS CHAPTER

Deborah Muench - 1st Year Member
Lily Sarfaraz - Student

