CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY | Crean College of Health and Behavioral Sciences

DECEMBER
2025



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY NEWSLETTER

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GREETINGS FROM DR. DAVID PINCUS

Professor & Chair
Department of Psychology

Top 10 First-Semester Achievements in Psychology

In the spirit of an old-school reference that many of my students (and some faculty) may no longer recognize—the *David Letterman Top 10 List*—I want to share my hopes, affection, deep fatigue, and even deeper gratitude for the Chapman University Psychology community.

This reference comes from years ago, long before Letterman became shockingly old, impressively over-bearded, and mostly invisible since he isn't on "Insta," "TokTik," "SnappyChats," or whatever it is you're all looking at on your phones these days. In that same spirit—and with the holidays behind us, a new year ahead, and my excitement for spring—I offer this list of the Top 10 Achievements I witnessed during my very first semester as a department chair.

Are there more important, more professional, or less ridiculous things I could report? Almost certainly. But this list reflects what stood out to me most—moments, people, and small victories that made this semester meaningful and memorable.

One quick note for anyone under age 20: I know you don't really read—and that's cool. Just feel free to skim the first sentence of each item. Oh wait… you're not reading this either, are you?! Hmmmm….?

And with no more space-filling (drumroll here), below is the **Top 10 Psychology Achievements**, as witnessed by your new rookie chair this fall.

10. I didn't ruin everything.
A genuine concern when stepping into a role previously held by Drs. Glynn and Gruenwald, alongside an extraordinary group of full-time faculty and dedicated lecturers. For those high in trait neuroticism like me (hello, friends), you'll understand why inheriting such an abundance of human capital and prior leadership feels like the worst thing ever—almost any imagined future includes me breaking things. By the way, fellow "neurotics," please join me in reclaiming this sadly misunderstood trait. Instead, consider: *big-hearted, over-caring*, or *unsettled by ASMR or very light touch*.

9. A new 4+1 MBA pathway with the Business School.
Psychology + Business: the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup of career paths. Our students can now move from a Psychology undergraduate degree straight into a one-year MBA—exactly how employers like it. This collaboration happened the way all academic partnerships do…by bumping into each other near Beckman Hall. The result is a new **4+1 MBA option** for our Psychology majors, and not only those pursuing a BA degree, because—

8. A BS in Psychology is officially alive.
Yes, along with the BA, we now offer a BS in Psychology—complete with psychoneuroimmunology, hormones (the good and the evil), advanced statistics, and plenty of leadership grit. If this degree thrives (which it will), I will absolutely take undue credit for mostly not getting in the way.





7. Outstanding new full-time faculty.
This year we welcomed Harpreet Kaur, Minju Kim, and Naomi Kline—three incredible additions to our team. No jokes needed here: our streak of hiring exceptional humans continues. I'll keep my "big-heartedness" and mild "ASMR intolerance" in check so as not to jinx anything here!

6. A phenomenal new Administrative Assistant.
Meranthy Meza has been helping the department with all the things I'm bad at, including writing newsletter articles. If you enjoyed this list, thank Meranthy.

5. Our incredible Psychology Ambassadors.
These students have been absolutely crushing it this year—from events to engagement to community-building. Huge thanks to **Nicole Nungaray** and **Tatiana Rodriguez** for guiding and supporting them in making Psychology a better community, here and hopefully beyond.

4. Our first "Pathways to Employment" event.
Thanks to Amy Aldana, our Crean Career Advisor (Marvel name: Career Lord), along with Nicole and Tatiana, for helping students see what lies beyond graduation.

3. An interdisciplinary speaker event—on very short notice.
Partnering with Aaron's longstanding speaker series, we hosted a last-minute panel featuring Professor **Donald Hoffman** (yes, *that* reality-isn't-real guy). When I die, I'm pretty sure I'll be thinking of him—so long as his theory is correct, of course. Otherwise, I suppose I'll just be dead. Google him, watch a video, and you'll get the joke.

2. Popcorn plans (very real).
A new Psychology Interdisciplinary Film Series is coming this spring—and thanks to Professor Hoffman generously donating his speaker fee, we are officially on our way to owning a Psychology popcorn machine! No take-backs. It's real now.

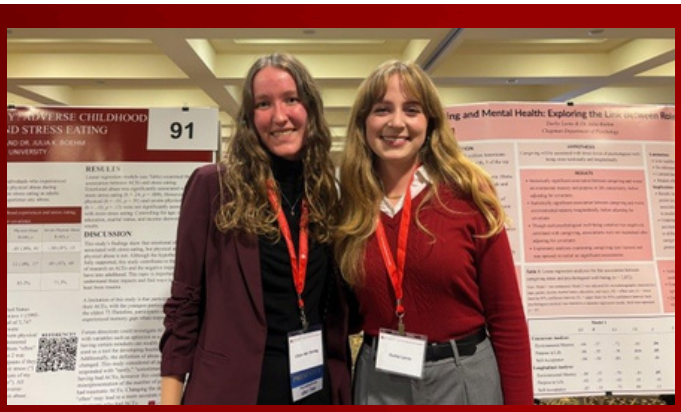
1. Our new Associate Chair, Julia Boehm.
We are incredibly fortunate to have Julia Boehm serving as Associate Chair—one of the best humans on our faculty, even among so many superstars. Julia has been the engine behind nearly every essential task in the department: course scheduling, coordinating faculty needs, guiding students, and making countless critical decisions that require both good sense and impeccable attention to detail. Alongside Nicole and Meranthy, Julia keeps the department running smoothly, and she does it all with patience, intelligence, and a level of calm that I, as a rookie chair, can only aspire to emulate. The next time you hear about her, I hope it's to announce that *she* is taking the reins—so I can fade back into obscurity, quietly analyzing inverse power-law distributions in other people's data. Please take a moment to express your gratitude if you see her. Julia's contributions are enormous, often behind the scenes, and this new rookie chair would never have considered taking on this role without her support.

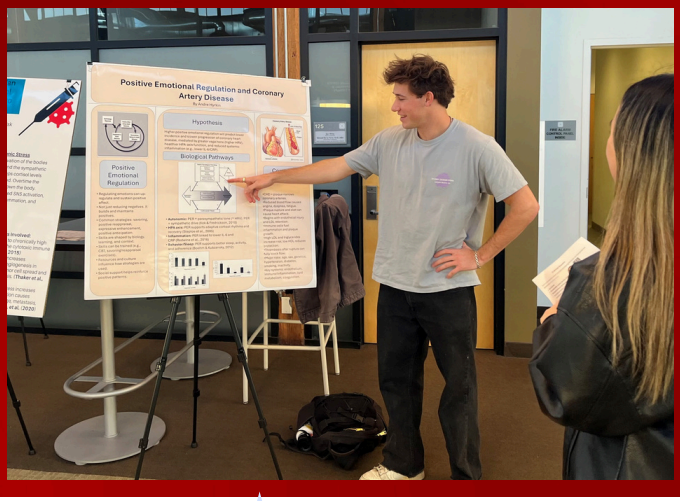
Much love to our community as we head into 2026. I promise to remain just competent enough so that we can be our best.

Dave Pincus, Ph.D.
Professor and Big-Hearted Chair, Psychology

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PAST HAPPENINGS

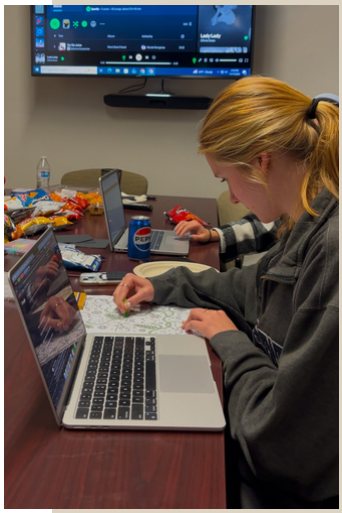




Student Scholar Symposium

December 4th, 2025







Winterfest

November 19, 2025



Psychology Ambassadors - Last Meeting of the Semester

November 17, 2025

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POSTER WINNER:
Maverick Morales



Which faculty member supervises your research?
Dr. Jennifer Robinette

Please provide a brief description of your research project.
The primary focus of this project was, first, to examine if residents living in neighborhoods with greater signs of disorder report poorer psychosocial functioning and, second, to test whether racial/ethnic minority groups show resilience to such signs of disorder. An exciting finding from this research was that racial/ethnic minority groups did indeed show resilience to greater signs of disorder, thereby providing evidence for the existence of unique ways in which such groups endure environmental stressors.

What inspired you to pursue this project?
Considering that our well-being is heavily influenced not only by our own personal beliefs and feelings, but also environmental factors like one's neighborhood characteristics, understanding and identifying these factors was figured to be critical toward maximizing well-being. Furthermore, given historical differences in exposure to such factors among various racial/ethnic groups, my mentor and I found it important to investigate how individuals of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds differ in their strategies to handle themselves in the face of these stressors.

What did a typical day look like when completing this research?
Much of the early period of this research project involved reviewing relevant literature to form our hypotheses, analyzing data to test the hypotheses, and troubleshooting erroneous code. More recently, a great deal of time has been directed towards writing a manuscript which thoroughly describes this research, examines how our findings compare to similar research from others in the field, and discusses implications that this research has.

What were some of the best part of this research project?
Having the opportunity to observe the ways in which our world functions in the form of raw data has fascinated me ever since I first became involved in research. Moreover, being able to apply theoretical frameworks to make sense of why our data looks the way it did while knowing it can make a real-world contribution to the field felt very rewarding. Not to mention - all of the reading, writing, and analyzing has been a fun challenge!

FACULTY PROFILE

Dr. Minju Kim

PhD in Experimental Psychology

What initially drew you to the field of psychology, and how has your perspective evolved over time?

What fascinates me about Research Methods is how much variety and flexibility there are in systematically approaching questions around us. As a developmental psychologist, I enjoyed designing surveys and experiments to measure various constructs for both children and adults, ranging from analogical reasoning to dance movements. Then as a postdoctoral researcher, I collaborated with educational specialists and faculty in engineering on metacognition in learning. It was both liberating and humbling to see how different methods across different fields can foster a well-rounded perspective around how people learn and grow. Therefore, I aim to share those mindsets and skills with my students in Research Methods. Along with conducting well-designed experiments with academic rigor, I'd love them to take full agency in developing a holistic perspective around their values and interests, by being ready to think outside the box and connect with others around them.



How long have you been part of the Chapman community?

I joined the Chapman community in August 2025. During the past 5 months, I have been truly grateful getting to know my students and colleagues at Chapman. My students are delightful, curious and engaging. It meant a lot for me to see that they feel supported in achieving their growth as a whole person on this campus. My colleagues helped me power through my first semester at Chapman, bringing genuine care and fun to every aspect of life (with the best sense of humor)! I also enjoyed meeting the broader community of Chapman. Shoutout to our colleagues at CETL for their thoughtful workshops, and to our staff members at the Athenaeum who always recharged my energy for afternoon classes!

Can you share a recent accomplishment, whether it be academic or personal?

I am grateful to share a new journal article that was published in *Developmental Psychology* (Kim et al., 2025) in November. My collaborators at Chung-Ang University and I examined the early verb dominance in 70 Korean-speaking caregiver-child dyads. We suggest that the verbal and nonverbal caregiver input plays different roles in the long-term language outcomes, which may provide a window to understanding the better comprehension of verbs early on in Korean-speaking infants. We are excited to share an authentic, sizable, and longitudinal dataset in Korean language, and we hope that it can start conversations on how language learning is a holistic experience, especially with both naturalistic observations and parental report of child language development. Personally, it was a meaningful experience to bring together the cultural and academic community that are central to my heart.
(A DOI link is accessible by anyone! https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0002089

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Riya Mody



Riya Mody graduated from Chapman University in 2022 with a passion for understanding people and technology — a combination that has shaped her path in human-centered design. While double majoring in Psychology and Data Analytics, Riya discovered an unexpected intersection between the two fields that led her to Human-Computer Interaction (HCI). Today, she works as a Product Strategist, applying her expertise to create innovative and accessible technologies.

After graduation, Riya worked as a Data Analyst, translating complex data into clear insights through dashboards and human-centered research. Wanting to deepen her skills, she pursued a Master's in HCI at Carnegie Mellon University, graduating in 2025.

Looking back, Riya reflects on how Chapman's Psychology program helped her think critically about human behavior and its applications in technology. "I'm always thinking about the people who will be using the technologies I build," she says.

One pivotal experience was her work in Dr. LouAnne Boyd's lab. Riya reflects, "Not only did I get to nerd out on numbers, but I also got a taste of how important ethical research is within impacted populations. Each participant had unique accessibility needs, and we made sure everyone was accommodated. This experience cemented my passion for assistive technology."

Mentorship was another highlight of Riya's Chapman journey. "I never imagined I would have the opportunity to work with not just one, but two incredible mentors," she says. "Dr. Boyd and Dr. Berardi guided my research, helped me develop technical and analytical skills, and opened doors I didn't even know existed. Their support was crucial in shaping my journey and giving me the confidence to take on challenges I might not have otherwise attempted."

Riya encourages current students to embrace curiosity and step outside their comfort zones: "The skills you're learning in psychology are applicable in so many fields — from technology to art to finance. Build strong relationships with professors, classmates, and mentors. Your connections will shape opportunities you didn't even know were possible."

Outside of work, Riya enjoys junk journaling, thrifting, and practicing Bharatanatyam--a classical Indian dance form. Reflecting on her Chapman years, she says, "I miss the sense of community — being surrounded by passionate, curious people gave me the confidence to take risks and explore my interests."

FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Recently Published Manuscripts

- **Kim, M.**, Mun, J., Kim, G., Jeon, S., & Choi, Y. (2025). Systematic reexamination of early verb dominance: Verbal and nonverbal characteristics of caregiver input and their contribution to long-term language outcomes. *Developmental Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0002089
- Mogilski, J. K., Miller, G., Jonason, P. K., Grunt-Mejer, K., Varella Valentova, J., Balzarini, R., Rodrigues, D. L., Sheff, E., Al-Shawaf, L., Csajbók, Z., Thomas A. G., David-Barrett, T., Giosan, C., Kruger, D. J., Ley, D., Lehmiller, J., Schechinger, H., **Moors, A. C.**, Ciaffoni, S., Kennair, L. E. O., Whyte, S., Štěrbová, Z., Bártová, K., Witherspoon, R., Żemojtel-Piotrowska, M., Prokop, P., Zeigler-Hill, V., Schmitt, D., Saribay, A., Lipnicka, M., Goláňová, I., Hampikian, E., Costello, W., Gottlieb, L., Cascalheira, C. J., & Larva, M. (in press). How do people maintain consensual non-monogamy?: An international development and validation of the Multiple Relationships Maintenance Scale (MRMS). *Archives of Sexual Behavior*.
- Cannoot, E., **Moors, A. C.**, & Chopik, W. J. (in press). Associations between Big Five personality traits, facets, and sexual fantasies. *PlosOne*.
- Masterson, A., Mahar, E., **Moors, A. C.**, Campbell, J., Dours, N., & Gesselman, A. N. (2025). Monogamy in question: Predictors of perceived shifts in attitudes toward monogamy and consensual non-monogamy during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 34(2), 300-312. https://doi.org/10.3138/cjhs-2025-0002
- Selterman, D., Bowen, J., Datwani, R., & **Moors, A. C.** (2025). Moral judgement toward individuals in consensually non-monogamous relationships as a function of moral foundations and disgust sensitivity. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 54(6), 2117-2125. https//doi.org/10.1007/s10508-025-03178-3

Grants Received

- **Amy Moors** - Organization for Polyamory and Ethical Non-monogamy (OPEN), Academic Research Fellowship (inaugural recipient); Role: Principal Investigator; $7,500 (12.5% indirect)

Awards Received

- **Vincent Berardi** - Awarded Professional Statistician (PStat) designation by the American Statistical Society

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