

The Department of Psychology at the University of Kentucky

This two-page document was created by current Latino members of the Department of Psychology and is intended to highlight some key features of the department, the university, and the Lexington community that may be of interest to Latino applicants to our program. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact David Acevedo (acevedo@uky.edu), a fourth-year graduate student in the Clinical Psychology program, Jay Castañeda (jaycastaneda@insightbb.com), a fifth-year graduate student in the Clinical Psychology program, or Dr. Raul Calderon (rcald2@uky.edu), a NIDA post doctoral fellow in the Behavioral Sciences program.

The Department

The Department is divided into two broad areas: Clinical Psychology and Experimental Psychology. The Clinical program is APA-approved and is targeted at training empirically-based clinical psychologists. While there are excellent opportunities available for students who wish to enter clinical practice, the clinical program does seem particularly suited to train students who plan on academic careers. The Experimental program houses five areas of Psychology: Cognitive Psychology, Social Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Behavioral Neuroscience and Psychopharmacology, and Animal Learning, Cognition, and Behavior. Our Department boasts a very strong faculty and rigorous training programs, and it has been favorably reviewed in national rankings. As one example, each year the National Institutes of Health (NIH) publishes a report ranking public and private universities in terms of the amount of grant money it has awarded for research. NIH grants are highly competitive so the amount of grant funding faculty are awarded from NIH is one indication of the quality of research going on in that department. Our department currently ranks 11th in these rankings. The fact that our Department has fewer faculty members than most of the universities on the NIH list speaks highly of the quality of our faculty and the level of research productivity in our Department. For more specific information on the Department and the areas of specialty that are available, log onto <http://www.uky.edu/AS/Psychology/graduate/>.

Opportunities for Latino Graduate Students at UK

As of 2002, Latino students constitute roughly 1% of the student body at UK. This proportion has been growing steadily over the past 10 years. The university in general and the Department of Psychology in particular seem interested in creating an environment that is welcoming to Latino and other ethnic minority students, and that ensures continued growth toward accurate representation in the student body. Significant progress in this direction has been spurred by the Lyman T. Johnson Fellowships. These fellowships provide funds for ethnic minority students to attend graduate school at UK. Information about this and other fellowships targeted at diverse and underrepresented groups can be found at <http://www.rgs.uky.edu/gspecfund.html>.

Graduate courses focused on issues of diversity and multiculturalism are offered through the department such as PSY 710, a topical seminar on multicultural therapy. Additionally, one of our faculty, Dr. Tamara Brown, is currently developing the curriculum for a graduate course tentatively entitled "Issues in Psychological Research and Practice Among US Latinos." This course should first be offered during the 2004-2005 academic year. In addition, clinical graduate students who have an interest in working with Spanish-speaking populations can do so at the department's Jesse G. Harris Jr. Psychological Services center.

Lexington

Lexington is located in the center of the Kentucky Bluegrass region, and has been ranked as one of the nation's 20 safest cities. Lexington supports a variety of cultural attractions such as an opera, a ballet, and a philharmonic orchestra. The Singletary Center for the Arts, on the UK campus, serves as a bridge between the University and the Lexington community and hosts recitals by faculty members, students, and guest artists and plays and concerts throughout the year. In addition, Lexington's Opera House is nationally recognized as the most intimate theater in the country to host Broadway touring companies. And sports fans can enjoy either

cheering on any of Lexington's professional sports teams and the UK Wildcats. Horses are synonymous with Kentucky, and Lexington proudly boasts the title of "Thoroughbred Capital of the World." Surrounded by rolling hills and horse farms, Lexington is known for its natural beauty and offers a wide variety of activities for outdoor enthusiasts. Students enjoy activities ranging from spending a day at Keeneland Race Track to hiking at the Red River Gorge. The website for the Lexington Visitor's Center is <http://www.visitlex.com/>, and a website that provides various facts about Lexington that might be of interest to you is <http://www.visitlex.com/quick/facts.html>.

Latino Life in Lexington

Although some community leaders have estimated that there are about 35,000 Latinos in the area, the Census Bureau reports a population of a little over 8,500 Latinos in Lexington. While the exact number may be a matter of debate, one fact is undeniable: Latinos make up a rapidly increasing proportion of the Lexington population. With growing numbers has come a burgeoning community and political life. Currently, there are two separate community organizations that attempt to represent local Latino interests, the Kentucky Consortium for Hispanics/Latinos, and the Hispanic Association of Lexington (www.ahulex.org). Two different Spanish-language newspapers, "La Voz" and "El Mundo," cover events occurring in the regional Latino community. There are a variety of local entertainment and cultural venues that cater to Latino tastes including night clubs, concert venues, restaurants, and sports leagues. In addition, a number of local centers of worship offer services in Spanish. Latino students who have children and would like them to grow-up in a Spanish-speaking environment can enroll them in the Fayette County Public Schools Spanish Immersion Program.

Profiles of Latino Members of the Department

The coupling of the university's efforts at creating a welcoming environment for students of all ethnic backgrounds and the excellent training provided by the department has attracted a number of Latino professionals. This section highlights some of the current Latino faces in the department.

Dr. Raul Calderon, a NIDA post doctoral fellow, came to the University of Kentucky from the Stanford School of Medicine where he first began his research on minority adolescent health issues. His work involved community-based intervention programs in social and cardiovascular epidemiology. He came to the University of Kentucky to focus his research on the prevention and treatment of substance use and abuse in high risk adolescents. He is currently investigating the role that psychosocial stress plays in the etiology of substance use and the relationship of psychosocial stress to other health risk behaviors in Hispanic adolescents.

Jay Castañeda, a fifth-year graduate student in the clinical psychology program came to UK after attending the University of Texas at Austin. His current goal is to attain a tenured faculty position at a Liberal Arts College. He is currently working on his dissertation which centers around understanding worry and the physiological effects of worry on feared response to socially anxious situations.

David Acevedo, a fourth-year graduate student in clinical psychology, came to UK after attending the Universidad de las Américas (Puebla, México) and Aquinas College (Grand Rapids, Michigan). His current goal is to attain a tenured faculty position at a research university. To that end he is currently pursuing two different lines of research. The first, focused on the scientific study of ethnic minority mental health, is being conducted in collaboration with his advisor, Dr. Tamara Brown. The second, focusing on the developmental study of ADHD, is conducted under the supervision of Dr. Elizabeth Lorch and Dr. Richard Milich.