Undergraduate Research

University of Virginia

Psychology

2007-2008
Undergraduate Research Assistantships

Research assistants (RAs) have the opportunity to work in a variety of psychology labs. As a RA, students learn important skills not easily taught in the classroom, such as learning how to: use technical equipment, interact with participants, code and analyze data, and design future experiments. RAs are typically expected to work 10 hours per week. Doing a research assistantship is strongly recommended for students who are considering a Distinguished Majors Project. Research assistantships are valuable experiences for graduate school, medical school, law school, and other professional schools. In the research labs, faculty, post-docs, and graduate students are available to discuss graduate aspirations and to write letters of recommendations. The following is a list of the available undergraduate research opportunities.

**Implicit Social Cognition Lab**
Brian Nosek

We are examining how conscious or non-conscious aspects of people’s attitudes can influence judgments and behavior. Although attitudes include aspects that they can report, we are particularly interested in the influence of automatic, non-conscious attitudes, especially when they differ from the attitudes people can directly report.

RAs are involved in running experiments, entering and analyzing data, and helping create new studies. Other duties might include data entry, literature searches, article reviews, and study design. RAs also attend lab meetings with faculty and graduate students to gain research experience and expertise.

*Email: Jennifer Joy, jjoy@virginia.edu*
*Web site: www.briannosek.com/labgroup*

**Peer Relations and ADHD Lab**
Amori Mikami

We are conducting several projects in the field of child clinical psychology involving treatments for youth with ADHD and their relationships with their peers. One project examines ways in which parents can help their children to make friends more easily, and tests a psychosocial clinical intervention that trains parents of children with ADHD in these skills. A second project tests the effectiveness of a new medication for adolescents with ADHD, and the effects of medication on their driving performance. Finally, a third project examines ways in which teacher practices contribute to the patterns of peer rejection and cliques in their classrooms, and what happens over the course of the school year to children with ADHD who are disliked.

RAs interview children and their families in laboratory or schools settings. Other RA positions involve coding videos and entering data of parent-child and peer interactions of children with ADHD, and of ADHD teenagers’ driving mishaps, which are taken from small video cameras mounted in their cars. RAs generally begin with videotape coding and data entry positions, and work their way up to the interview positions.

*Web site: http://people.virginia.edu/~am4jd/*

**Child Language and Learning Lab**
Vikram Jaswal

Our research focuses on how children (between birth and 5 years of age) learn about the world, and how learning language changes how they think and reason about objects, events, and people. In particular, we are interested in how language affects and interacts with category development, and how children’s incipient categories can provide a window onto their early theories about the world. We approach these issues from complementary angles, considering the sources of information children exploit in learning new words, the strength of different types of word learning, and the power of language to convey category information—even to children just beginning to produce their first words.

RAs help on everything from the design of a study to the gathering of materials to the running of the experiment and the analysis of the data. Additionally, RAs attend a weekly or bi-weekly lab meeting, where we discuss
both practical and theoretical research issues. RAs interact with children and their parents. It is therefore crucial that you enjoy being around children 5 years of age or younger. You need not have much experience with this age group, so long as you are interested in gaining that experience.

Web site: http://faculty.virginia.edu/childlearninglab

Social Psychology Lab
Timothy Wilson

Our lab invites motivated, sharp, and sociable undergraduates to help us prepare and run studies that explore people’s emotions and thoughts. We study people’s knowledge about their own feelings, behaviors, abilities and personality. Our research focus is on emotional reaction to different events in life, and an individual’s ability to predict his or her own reaction.

RAs are involved in all parts of the research process. Their main responsibility is to run social psychology studies, processing and analyzing the results, and seeing how the results fit social psychology theories. There are also lab meetings where research issues are discussed.

Email: Yoav Bar-Anan, yb3k@virginia.edu
Web site: http://people.virginia.edu/~tdw/

Full Potential Initiative Lab
Brian Nosek

RA positions are available for a long-term study of the development and influence of unconscious math/science and gender attitudes and stereotypes. Below are some of the components of a research assistantship:

1. Interpersonal: interact via phone, email, instant messaging, etc. with participating teenagers and their parents.

2. Administrative: organize and maintain participant information in electronic and paper files; coordinate paper mailings and assembly of research materials.

3. Technical: assist with development of online experimental materials (e.g., find meaningful, but fun, scientific or mathematical exercises for teenage participants).

4. Creative: imagine online activities and promotions to contribute to a sense of excitement and enthusiasm about the project.

5. Educational: learn and educate others about effects of implicit social cognition in the academic domain.

You need not have strengths in all of these areas, but strong qualification and interest in at least one is important, as is willingness to be involved with all of them.

Web site: projectimplicit.net/fpi or for online application, http://www.projectimplicit.net/iscl/fpi_ra_application.php

Reasoning, Memory and Law Lab
Barbara Spellman

Our research investigates the decision-making process. Using computer games and legal paradigms, we explore how people make decisions when there is missing, faulty, or otherwise inadequate information, as well as how decision-making is affected by whether given information is deceptive, reliable, and redundant. We are also exploring how affectively guided decision-making enhances or diminishes the application of personal rights.

RA include gathering materials, running experiments, entering and analyzing data, helping create new studies, and adapting to and managing research issues as they emerge. You will be expected to attend weekly lab meetings and give a 20-30 minute presentation at one of them.

Web site: http://people.virginia.edu/~ert8f/SpellmanLabHome.html
Culture and Well-Being Lab  
Shigehiro Oishi

We are conducting experiments on the following projects: 1) Misunderstanding and understanding in interpersonal perception; 2) Cultural differences in happiness; 3) Residential mobility and its relation to prosocial behavior and consumer behavior; and 4) Physiological measures of well-being.

RA responsibilities include preparing experimental materials, conducting experiments, entering data, coding, and data acquisition. Applicants must be responsible and motivated about doing psychological research.

Email: Minkyung Koo, mk4rn@virginia.edu  
Web site: http://people.virginia.edu/~tdw/

Shared Understanding and Social Identity Lab  
Stacey Sinclair

We are looking for motivated, interested, and enthusiastic RAs. Our research examines how interpersonal interactions and the beliefs we attribute to others, shape our beliefs, feelings and actions—particularly those beliefs relevant to stereotyping and prejudice.

RA responsibilities include conducting experiments, preparing and organizing research materials, recruiting participants, entering data, coding videotaped interaction and/or written materials, and participating in lab meetings.

Email: Amber McCrady, acm6t@virginia.edu

Emotion and Cognition Lab  
Gerald Clore

We are primarily interested in studying the effects of emotional experience on cognitive performance and behavior. Some of our research questions are: 1) Do emotions influence how we perceive our environment and ourselves? 2) Do emotions help us remember? 3) Do happy people think differently than sad people?

The small, cohesive atmosphere of our lab group provides opportunities for RAs to become intimately involved in all aspects of the research process. First-semester RAs are mainly responsible for scheduling participants, running experiments, and working with data. With increasing experience, lab members are encouraged to participate in the development of new research designs and the interpretation of results.

Email: Jesse Pappas, pappas@virginia.edu

Memory Processes Lab  
Chad Dodson

Our research focuses on memory from both a cognitive and a neurological perspective. We recently examined the causes of false memories and the strategies for preventing them.

Applicants should have completed PSYC 101 and at least one 200-level PSYC class. We will give preference to students who have also taken PSYC 305, PSYC 306 and PSYC 215. Primary RA responsibilities include: scheduling participants, leading participants through experiments, coding data, and doing administrative tasks. Experience with Excel and SPSS is desirable, but not required.

Email: Mandy Hege, mandyhege@virginia.edu

Early Development Lab  
Angeline Lillard

We are actively researching 1) how different preschool environments (Montessori and conventional) impact children’s development; and 2) Basic issues in cognitive development, like what children know about pretending, and how much exposure children and adults learn new words.
RAs help recruit participants, test children in the lab and at local Charlottesville schools, and help with coding and data entry. For the preschool study, students who are free at least 2 mornings per week, want to work 10 hours/week for the full academic year, and can drive to local schools to test children are welcome to apply. For studies of basic cognitive development, students will help recruit participants, test children in the lab and at local Charlottesville schools, and help with coding and data entry. There is a weekly laboratory meeting for all researchers. The Early Development Lab is located off grounds on Millmont St.

Email: Prof. Lillard aslzh@virginia.edu for preschool study
Email: Ashley Pinkham amp6f@virginia.edu for lab studies
Web site: http://people.virginia.edu/~aslzh/EDL/EDLFrames.htm

**Community Psychology Lab**
Dickon Reppucci

We are partnered with the Charlottesville-Albemarle Commission on Children and Families (CCF) to provide students with an opportunity to participate in community-based research that has a direct effect on policy—making for local children and families.

RA Duties include: working with CCF staff to compile and summarize information from the web, internal documents, and community partners; assisting with audits of existing practices such that we may better understand how to improve service provision locally; and participating in work groups aimed at understanding and addressing specific community problems. Car transportation is required as CCF is located at 1600 5th Street Extended. An interview, unofficial transcript and resume are required.

Email: Maryfrances Porter, mporter@albemarle.org

**Auditory/Music Perception Lab**
Michael Kubovy

We are interested in auditory perception, specifically in the perception and cognition of music. Our current plan is to conduct several experiments exploring the role of visual information in music perception. Additionally, we are working on an inter-lab collaboration investigating the role of motion and action in rhythm perception. Other projects will likely develop over the course of the semester. We have ordered 2 new sound isolation booths in which to run subjects, and now have the ability to run multiple experiments running concurrently in a sound-isolated environment.

RAs must be responsible and have organizational skills. An interest in music doesn’t hurt either.

Email: hearingmoney@virginia.edu or phone: (434) 243-5534
Web site: http://people.virginia.edu/~mk9y/home.html

**Psychometric Lab**
Karen Schmidt

Our research involves item response theory (IRT) measurement and focus on methodology to enhance construct validity and measuring individual differences. Current and ongoing projects include objective measurement of personality and individual experiences of pain, faking good detection in personality inventory responses, self-efficacy, reasoning and spatial visualization, AIDS knowledge, and international learning experiences in varying age groups.

RAs gain experience in all aspects of the research process, including learning sophisticated statistical and measurement procedures such as multiple regression, item response theory modeling, and structural equation modeling. RAs learn how to search and summarize research articles, create Web design of surveys, doing Web-based data collection, conducting SPSS data analysis (including data coding, transformation, IRT analysis, and graphing), and creating reports and presentations. Reliable, independent, and creative assistance is strongly considered for co-authorship. Interested students should have completed PSYC 305, and preferably PSYC 306.

Email: Prof. Schmidt, kschmidt@virginia.edu
Morality and Positive Psychology Lab  
Jonathan Haidt

We study morality and moral emotions, such as moral disgust, elevation, awe, gratitude, and admiration. We examine how these emotions develop, vary across cultures, and influence behaviors and interpersonal relationships. We also study the moral differences between liberals and conservatives, and how these differences lead to the big moral misunderstanding known as the culture war. Other projects include the benefits of positive emotions in relationships; the psychophysiology of moral emotions, and the creation of a library of positive emotion-inducing videos.

RA duties include running and testing studies, helping to compile and evaluate the video library, analyzing liberal and conservative texts, and helping to generate ideas for future studies of human morality.

Email: Jesse Graham, jgraham@virginia.edu  
Web site: http://faculty.virginia.edu/haidtlab

Early Steps Lab  
Melvin Wilson

The Early Steps Project is a longitudinal multisite (Oxford University, University of Oregon, University of Pittsburgh, and University of Virginia) treatment/control research study designed to provide intervention services for children and their families. Our goal is to determine the effectiveness of a family-centered intervention in reducing the early emergence of risk in young children for aggressive and withdrawn behavior, academic readiness, and future substance abuse.

RAs have the opportunity to work on a large-scale preventive intervention, in the community and at the University. The duties include assisting in family assessment and therapy sessions, childcare, videotaping, and data input. Additionally, we have opportunities to participate in data collection within schools and neighborhoods. Informational lunches on treatment, assessment issues, and graduate school possibilities are available for those who are interested.

We prefer students with a GPA of 3.0, and who can make at least a two semester commitment. RAs must feel comfortable working with young children and open to working with a diverse population. Fieldwork in homes in Charlottesville and up to 2 hours away is the most challenging RA work and is the most significant experience for graduate school.

Email: Ali Reimuller, anr3s@virginia.edu

Program for Anxiety, Cognition & Treatment (PACT) Lab  
Bethany Teachman

The lab studies cognitive processes that contribute to the development and maintenance of psychopathology, with a particular interest in anxiety disorders. We evaluate cognitive processing, including biases in attention, interpretation, and memory that causes harm in anxiety as well as other forms of mental illness. We are especially interested in automatic cognitive processing and in understanding how thoughts that occur outside of our control or awareness contribute to emotional dysregulation.

We are looking for RAs interested in working on studies of cognition and psychopathology. RAs help with recruiting and running subjects, and attend weekly lab meetings to gain general experience with conducting research and the topic area. There are also opportunities for advanced RAs to later develop their own projects.

Email: Josh Magee, magee@virginia.edu  
Web site: http://projectimplicit.net/nosek//bethany/research.html

Child Study Center  
Judy DeLoache
We investigate the development of infants and young children. Most of our projects focus on early cognitive development and we are particularly interested in how young children begin to master the many symbols that are important for thought and communication with others.

We are looking for independent, responsible, and caring individuals to be a part of our research team. RAs work closely with an individual graduate student and the lab coordinator. Their duties include, but are not limited too, transcribing and coding data from taped experimental sessions, preparing stimuli, preparing materials for a participant, running participants, gathering literature for literature reviews, etc.

Email: Kai Van Eron, kv6e@virginia.edu

**Virginia Institute of Development in Adulthood (VIDA)**

**Joseph Allen**

The VIDA Project (formally the KLIFF Project) is a longitudinal study examining the influence of social relationships, autonomy, and attachment processes on psychosocial development. We are exploring how young adults develop and manage friendships with their peers, and how family relationships influence qualities of these peer relationships. Data is collected on several different areas of adolescence and young adulthood, such as the quality of family relationships, friendships and romantic relationships, peer pressure, school achievement, delinquency, and internalizing behaviors. We use a variety of measurement methods, including self-reports, semi-structured interviews, parent-reports, peer reports, and observations of family and peer interactions.

RA tasks include conducting interviews with participants, data entry and checking, transcribing, and other administrative tasks. We train RAs to use computer programs and the protocol for conducting interviews with participants. RAs who work on the project for multiple semesters have the opportunity to take on higher level responsibilities (such as coding data, scheduling participants, and writing a thesis) and may apply for paid positions.

Web site: www.teenresearch.org

**Cognitive Aging Lab**

**Timothy Salthouse**

We study aging of cognitive functioning by administering a wide variety of tasks to participants ranging in age from 18-90+. The tasks assess different types of cognitive abilities, such as memory and spatial abilities. Among the questions that we are interested in are: 1) What are the proximal determinants of age-related effects on cognition? That is, are some aspects of cognitive functioning more fundamental than others with respect to age-related influences? 2) How are age-related influences on cognitive variables organized? 3) What factors moderate the effects of aging on cognitive functioning?

RAs are primarily responsible for administering tests to participants in the project, in addition to answering phone calls, scheduling appointments, scoring tests, and entering and checking data.

Email: Janani Sundar, js4dm@virginia.edu

**Perception Lab**

**Dennis Proffitt**

Our research involves visual perception of spatial layout and the environment. What people consistently see is not what is really out there. When we are not outside, we use our room-size virtual reality system in many of these experiments. We investigate how the perception of space can be affected by the internal states of the body. We are interested in topics such as: 1) How effort/energy can affect how long distances appear and how steep hills look, 2) How fear affects the perception of height, 3) How sports performance affects the perception of the size of goal related targets (i.e., do baseballs look bigger if you are hitting well?) Another area of research involves functional brain imaging with cutting edge technologies: we’re helping to develop a new functional near-infrared device (which is similar to fMRI). We are using it as a brain-computer interface, and it will allow people with complete paralysis to communicate with the outside world using only their thoughts.
We seek fun, motivated RAs to help with various research projects. RAs attend weekly lab meetings, do data entry and analysis, and run experiments that could require the operation of virtual reality equipment, projection screens, and devices that measure physiological potential. Experiments are performed in rooms within Gilmer Hall as well as in outdoor fields around grounds.

Email: Jon Zadra, zadra@virginia.edu
Web site: http://faculty.virginia.edu/perlab

Personality and Genetics Lab
Eric Turkheimer

Our research interests are divided into two main areas of study: behavioral genetics and personality assessment. From a behavioral genetics standpoint, we attempt to understand and predict adolescent externalizing behaviors such as risk-taking and substance abuse using genetically informed designs and sophisticated statistical models. Our interest in personality assessment is to explore new methods of personality disorder measurement and classification using both self- and peer-report.

RAs will have the opportunity to gain valuable research experience. Their integration into the lab consists of working alongside graduate students and faculty on ongoing projects as well as new research ideas that may develop. Typical RA duties include data entry and analysis, literature searches, and information gathering. While not mandatory, strong quantitative skills are recommended.

Email: Derek Ford, dcford@virginia.edu

Sign Communication, Autism, and Psycholinguistics Lab
John Bonvillian

In recent years, our laboratory group has developed a simplified system of manual signing for children and adults who are mute or who have severe speech difficulties. Now we are starting to teach these signs to children with autistic disorder. In another project, we are conducting preliminary analyses of various historical texts as part of a linguistic fingerprinting study.

We expect to need assistance after January, 2008 in teaching our simplified signs to low-functioning youngsters. Some knowledge of sign communication or experience working with exceptional children would be helpful.

Email: Prof. Bonvillian, jdb5b@virginia.edu

The Human Dynamics Lab
Steven Boker

Our research that explores how people coordinate their movements and facial expressions during conversation.

RAs will be involved in all parts of the project including learning to use state of the art computer software that tracks the body movements and facial expressions. The fall semester will involve training in the laboratory methods and using the motion tracking software. In the spring semester the RAs will be involved in running a teleconferencing experiment. We are looking for motivated students interested in the psychology of social interaction as well as the technical aspects of laboratory science in psychology. The project is in collaboration with researchers at Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon, Notre Dame and the University of East Anglia in the UK, so the RAs will also have a chance to meet faculty and graduate students at other institutions. Priority will be given to students who are interested in committing to at least two semesters.

Email: Prof. Boker, boker@virginia.edu

Behavioral Neuroscience Lab
Cedric Williams

Our research is focused on identifying the mechanisms by which neuroendocrine hormones released during meaningful or emotionally arousing events influence the brain to encode memory for these types of experiences...
more effectively. The experiments conducted in this laboratory utilize neurochemical and behavioral techniques to examine the functional relevance of the anatomical and chemical connections between various brain areas during the memory storage process. An understanding of how meaningful or arousing events influence neural activity in specific anatomical regions will provide a model of how the brain transforms representations of everyday experiences into permanent memories.

Email: Prof. Williams, clw3b@virginia.edu

Neural Development and Organization Lab
Peter Brunjes

Our lab is involved in probing a number of issues surrounding the organization and development of sensory systems in the brain. Sensory systems are useful models for examining how the brain works: they often have clear cut circuitry, and it is relatively simple to manipulate the amount and type of information processed by the system. Our work centers around the olfactory system, which offers a number of unique features that make it an excellent model for studying the development and organization of the brain. Most of our recent work centers on studying the basic organizational features of the system, including understanding how odors are encoded in the olfactory cortex, and whether these representations change with olfactory experience.

When first joining the lab, research assistants are usually responsible for participating in one aspect of an ongoing project as they are trained in various laboratory techniques. Once proficient, they often have the opportunity of developing more independent projects, many of which have become distinguished majors thesis projects.

Email: Prof. Brunjes, brunjes@virginia.edu

Visual Development and Plasticity Lab
Alev Erisir

Postnatal development of the brain is characterized by a plastic stage during which abnormal sensory stimulation can lead to life-long changes in the organization of visual cortex. Our lab aims to understand the biological mechanisms that enable this plasticity. What makes some young neurons lose their ability to respond to alterations in the sensory environment at the end of a critical period? What are the mechanisms by which the critical period of developmental plasticity is initiated, and terminated? Is there a change in the neurotransmitter receptor function in the visual cortex that can signal the onset or the offset of this period? Using anatomical techniques including immuno-electron microscopy, tract-tracing and confocal microscopy, we aim to reveal the changes that occur in visual system connectivity and glutamate receptor localization during and after the critical period of visual plasticity.

Upon joining the lab, RAs are assigned to an ongoing project. At the initial stages of the training, RAs learn tissue preparation techniques, light and electron microscope use and digital image analysis. Typically after several months of active contribution, RAs start formulating a project that they may use as their graduation thesis. Attending our regular lab meetings is also recommended. At least two semesters of commitment is required.

Email: Prof. Erisir, erisir@virginia.edu

Neuroimmunology and Behavior Lab
Lisa Goehler

In addition to making us just feel tired and yucky, being sick also influences our moods and our ability to think clearly. This comes about because the immune system is able to signal and interact with brain regions that ultimately contribute to affective and cognitive functions, such as memory. But how, exactly, can the immune system signal the brain? Does aging influence the way the brain responds to sickness? Can anything be done about the fatigue, depression, and anxiety that can accompany chronic disease such as cancer, autoimmune disease (multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis) and heart disease?

The focus of the work in this lab is on understanding the neurological mechanisms that allow things like inflammation, infections, or chronic disease to influence our behavior. We combine anatomical techniques including
functional neuroanatomy (using immunohistochemistry) immuno-electron microscopy, neuronal tract-tracing and confocal microscopy, with behavioral approaches to assess the kinds of ways that different immune challenges interact with the brain.

RAs joining the lab work initially on ongoing projects, which allow them to learn the various techniques we use and become familiar with the issues involved in the work we do. RAs are encouraged to get involved with many different aspects of lab. Attending our regular lab meetings is also recommended.

Email Prof. Goehler, goehler@virginia.edu

Child Development in Contemporary Families
Charlotte J. Patterson

Our studies focus on issues related to sexual orientation and human development. What are the experiences of children and youth with lesbian and gay parents? How does sexual orientation influence family life? How are the answers to these questions affected by the legal and public policy climates in which children, youth and families live? These are some questions under study in our lab.

In one current study, we are working with adoptive families and their young children. Parents may be lesbian or gay couples or they may be heterosexual couples, and we are studying the development and adjustment of children as well as modes of family functioning in these families. We welcome enterprising and dependable research assistants, especially those who would be able to participate in home visits with families, most of whom live in Washington, DC, or in suburban Maryland. Having transportation and/or a place to stay in Washington, DC, Northern Virginia, or suburban Maryland would be advantages. Other research duties that could be performed at UVA include reviewing literature, data entry and analysis and other administrative tasks.

Email Rachel Farr, farr@virginia.edu

Early Childhood Lab
Curry School of Education
Rachel Keen

We are interested in the development of cognitive and motor skills in infants and children. For example, how do children’s problem solving skills change as their motor abilities improve? We use several different experimental methods (e.g., video recording, motion analysis, eye-tracking) to examine children’s behavior.

RAs are involved in every aspect of research, including data collections, data coding and analysis, subject recruitment and scheduling, and literature searches. RAs meet regularly with lab members. Note: RAs must commit to 2 semesters in the lab and must have taken or be currently enrolled in a course on child development.

Email: Prof. Keen, rachelkeen@virginia.edu

Social Development Lab
Curry School of Education
Sara Rimm-Kaufman

We are conducting a series of studies on elementary classroom environments and the extent to which they contribute to children’s self-control, social skills, and achievement. As one example, starting in January, 2008, we will be initiating a large scale, experimental study involving 24 inner city schools. Specifically, we are examining the effectiveness of an intervention called the Responsive Classroom (RC) Approach. The RC Approach offers teachers a set of principles and practices to build their capacity to manage behavior and teach in the classroom. Do these practices really improve teachers ability to engage children in learning? That is the exact question that we plan to answer.

RAs in our lab observe and code videotapes of elementary school classrooms in order to better understand classroom social processes, especially during mathematics instruction. RA-ships in our lab offer an opportunity to learn a lot about elementary school classrooms. In addition to observing classrooms, we need help with data entry, basic descriptive data analysis, and other miscellaneous tasks. Research assistants must be clear-thinking,
responsible, reliable and detail-oriented. Further, we require at least a one year commitment to the lab. Research assistantships start January, 2008.

Email: Tom Fruscello, twf4t@virginia.edu
Web site: www.responsiveclassroom.org

Center for Advanced Study of Teaching & Learning
Curry School of Education
Robert Pianta

Our research focuses on children’s experience at preschool: their interactions with teachers, peers, and instructional tasks. Studies include the development of an observational tool to measure school readiness, and an investigation into children’s word learning from storybook reading sessions.

We are looking for energetic, highly motivated students to perform a wide variety of tasks, including: contacting local schools, classroom observations and assessment, transcribing and coding data, data entry and analysis, literature review, organizing meetings with local childcare professionals, and preparing materials for the readiness web site (no technical experience needed). Morning availability is required, and access to reliable transportation is preferred (for classroom visits).

Email: Olivia Lima, lima@virginia.edu
Web site: http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/CASTL/

PeerTalk Lab
Curry School of Education
Tina Stanton-Chapman

Our project focuses on developing effective interventions for children with language delays and problem behavior in Head Start settings. The interventions use storybooks and thematic toys to teach children the following skills: initiations, turn-taking, sharing, and obtaining a peer's attention.

RA duties include transcribing intervention session tapes, scoring of standardized assessments, completing treatment fidelity checklists and social validation measures, and observational coding.

Email: Kristen Jamison, kjamison@virginia.edu
Web site: http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/CASTL/

Beliefs, Behavior & Belonging Lab
Curry School of Education
Marie Shoffner

We are currently collecting data from 5th, 7th and 9th grade students on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) interests, goals and behaviors. We are also collecting data from the students’ parents and their math and science teachers. Our central hypothesis is that perceptions, student engagement, sense of belonging, and peer, teacher, and parent supports play a crucial role in STEM interests and choices at critical points in students’ educational and career trajectories. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies will be used to test our central hypothesis.

We are looking for motivated, energetic, committed students to perform multiple tasks, including: contacting local schools, negotiating data collection with local schools, administering surveys, conducting focus groups and interviews, transcribing data, data entry, and data analysis. At least one half day availability is required during K-12 school hours, and some time is required for team meetings. Access to reliable transportation is preferred.

Email: Ellen Markowitz, emzee@virginia.edu
Web site: http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/CASTL/

Laboratory of Cognitive Neurodynamics
Department of Neurological Surgery
William B. Levy
Our laboratory studies the biological bases of cognition and behavior using computational models. A large, and continuing project is to understand hippocampal function with simulations based on neurons and synapses. Another project seeks to understand the role of memory in PTSD and its symptoms, particularly hyper-reactivity and poor sleep. This work is building models of the brainstem systems controlling sleep and the peripheral stress reactions.

Reading courses are available for students who seek a strong background before entering the lab. Occasionally enough such work can culminate in a small review article which can be submitted for publication. Laboratory research consists of computer simulations and data analysis. Student who do exceptional research work during the year can qualify for a paid summer research position.

Email: Prof. Levy, wbl@virginia.edu

Center for Behavioral Medicine Research
Department of Psychiatric Medicine
Daniel Cox

We are currently conducting two studies investigating factors that affect driving safety. The first study investigates the effect of stimulant medication on driving performance for young adults with ADHD. The second is a survey project aimed at investigating the driving risk of adults with Type 1 Diabetes.

We are looking for a RA who would join our research team, interested in working on both studies. Responsibilities would include data collection and entry, correspondence with subjects, as well as a variety of administrative duties. Additionally, we are looking for a male research assistant who would test male subjects late in the evenings in our driving safety laboratory investigating long term benefits and rebound effects of ADHD medication.

Email: Maggie Davis, mtd5m@virginia.edu.

Integrative Medicine Projects
Department of Medicine
Justine Owens

Recent research projects are: a) mindfulness-based stress reduction, b) psychological factors in healthcare outcomes, c) acupuncture treatment efficacy and mechanism of action, and d) mapping and nurturing the path of wisdom in physicians and patients. This last project is a study of physicians who have made serious medical errors and chronic pain patients who have successfully managed chronic pain. The premise of this study is that physicians and patients who have successfully faced major life challenges are exemplars of finding wisdom out of adversity. All of our projects share a common interest in the measurement of stress and the development of life skills and treatments for successful stress management. We are working on a standardized medical evaluation of accumulated stress (allopathic load) using measures such as heart rate variability (HRV), EEG beta/theta ratio, cortisol, and immune function, toward the integration of alternative medical treatments into the conventional health care system.

RAs participate in projects at various stages from grant proposal, patient recruitment, data collection, literature review, data processing, manuscripts and presentations. RAs help build a database and Web site for a new non-profit.

Email: Prof. Owens, owens@virginia.edu

The Cognitive and Clinical Neuropsychology Lab
Department of Neurology
Scott Wylie

We have openings for 2-3 research assistants, particularly students with research interests in cognitive science, neuroscience, or psychological science. The research focuses on the measurement of executive cognitive processes, such as decision-making, reward based learning, and top-down control of action, in patients with neurodegenerative disease (e.g., Parkinson’s disease, Huntington’s disease, and Alzheimer’s disease).
RAs participate in administration of cognitive tasks to patients, data entry, lab meetings, journal club, and data analysis/discussion. The positions are unpaid, but provide opportunities to obtain research experience. We hope to attract students who are interested in at least a 1 year commitment. Research assistants should also be personable and comfortable in a patient setting.

Email: Prof. Wylie, saw6n@virginia.edu.