



# EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST MONTHLY MEMO

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR (DR. NAOMI EKAS)

I can't believe that it is almost time for Thanksgiving break! The weather feels like it is summer, yet I bought a turkey this weekend. The semester has gone by quickly and our faculty have been busy in the classroom and outside. Several of our faculty were awarded grants to conduct exciting research and others have been publishing books and been in the press.

Our students have been doing remarkable things as well. Many presented research at the TCU Research, Scholarship & Creative Activities Showcase and others are heading to international conferences this month. These activities highlight the student-centered nature of the department and how committed our faculty are to ensuring TCU students have opportunities to participate in research that will help them in their post-graduate careers.

## INTRODUCING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR DR. QINXIN SHI

The Department of Psychology welcomes one of our new faculty members, Dr. Qinxin Shi. Dr. Shi began at TCU in January and has been busy teaching graduate and undergraduate courses and setting up her research lab. Dr. Shi completed her undergraduate degree in China and her PhD at Texas A&M. She also did postdoctoral training at the University of Utah and Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C. We caught up with Dr. Shi and asked her a few questions!



**What are your current research interests?** I study youth and emerging adults' mental health from a multidisciplinary perspective by integrating EEG, digital phenotyping, and intensive longitudinal designs to uncover the processes underlying short-term fluctuations and long-term developmental changes.

**Are you working on any exciting projects right now?** I am currently developing two projects: (1) Examining whether neural markers of self-regulation can be used for the early identification of children's mental health and academic challenges beyond the traditional questionnaire measures and standardized testing, and (2) investigating the heterogeneity in the dynamic interplay among adolescents' afterschool and bedtime social media use, sleep quality, and mental health and well-being.

**Why were you interested in joining the faculty here at TCU?** I'm thrilled to be part of the TCU faculty. The existing EEG lab is a perfect match for my research and the location offers wonderful opportunities to work with children and adolescents in the community. Most of all, I've loved the welcoming, supportive spirit of the department and the enthusiasm of the students – it already feels like the right place to grow as a scholar and educator.

**What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?** Outside of work, I love painting, relaxing with YouTube videos of families planning their travels, and listening to podcasts during my drives.

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## TCU FACULTY AWARDS AND HONORS

Dr. Uma Tauber and her colleagues (including TCU faculty Justin Lunningham and Lesca Hadley) received funding from the Virginia Center on Aging Alzheimer's and Related Diseases Research Award Fund.

As a follow-up to the last newsletter, Dr. Cathy Cox's research team was awarded \$20,000 through the Duke Veteran Transitions Research Fund to study feelings of isolation in veterans. You can read about it [here](#).

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## TCU PSYCHOLOGY IN THE NEWS

Dr. Sarah Hill recently published her second book, [The Period Brain](#) and has spent the last month promoting her book and research on several podcasts, including [Diary of a CEO](#) and the Gabby Reece show.

Bao Han Tran, a graduate student in the Psychological Sciences PhD program, was recently interviewed by the International Society for Science of Existential Psychology. Check it out [here](#)!

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## TCU PSYCHOLOGY PUBLICATIONS

Dr. Michelle Chen recently published research in an American Heart Association journal that was selected as the lead paper in the issue. Dr. Chen and her colleagues found that emergency department patients faced increased risk of an acute hypertension-related emergency if they had recently experienced violent crime in their neighborhoods. Additionally, patients living in neighborhoods where violent crimes were more common faced higher risk of a hypertension-related emergency department visit following instances of neighborhood violent crime. [Doi.org/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.125.012192](https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.125.012192)

Logun Gunderson, a graduate student in the Psychological Sciences PhD program recently published a study where he used a genetic rodent model of autism to determine whether auditory processing skills vary depending on when sounds were presented. They found that these rats struggled to respond when the sound was presented randomly, suggesting this candidate-autism gene plays a role in determining an individual's reliable on predictability in learning. [Doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0315883](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0315883)

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## TCU PSYCHOLOGY IN THE COMMUNITY

Dr. Nur Cayirdag recently gave several talks for educators. In a Brightroot teachers' workshop, Dr. Cayirdag shared strategies for working with today's Generation Alpha students, who learn and behavior differently from other generations. In another workshop, with mentors working with middle school homeschool students, Dr. Cayirdag discussed how mentors can support home school students by setting clear boundaries and building trust.



## UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Michael Wrucke received a \$1500 Psi Chi Undergraduate Research Grant for his project titled "Exploring the Anxiety Acceptance Paradox: Effects of a State of Surrender on Anxiety Sensitivity."

Melissa Brillhart and Talia Chachkes, graduate students in Dr. Hill's lab, recently proposed their master's thesis. This is a critical first step in their graduate careers! Congratulations!

Kayla Rabb, a graduate student in Dr. Danica Knight's lab, recently presented research at the Society of Police and Criminal Psychology in Anaheim, CA. Her research found that police officers with higher emotional intelligence and intellectual humility were more likely to show trauma-informed attitudes, suggesting that building these skills could improve how officers interact with the community.