

Psi Chi Past-President's Message

"Do Your Best Because That Is All You Can Ever Do:" Making the Most of Psi Chi and Its Affordances

R. Eric Landrum, PhD
Boise State University

The titular phrase in quotations did not originate with me, but it is one that I have used many times in my life; not only with students, but also as a father raising children, and also as part of self-talk during difficult times during my own life. My daughter Allison (age 27) is far enough into her own career that, when supervising her own employees, she tells me that she hears herself saying this. She remembers that (a) it seemed like such a cliché to hear it from her father so many times growing up, and yet (b) it is perfectly appropriate in so many life situations, both personal and professional.

The second part of the title, concerning affordances, is a topic that I have given talks about and also written about before (see Landrum, 2018). In psychology, the idea of affordances comes from the study of animal behavior, in that an animal establishes a favorable behavioral repertoire to adapt and survive in its environment; said another way, the environment provides affordances (Gibson, 1977). In my 2018 article, I presented the idea that the discipline of psychology has career affordances for its majors; that is, there are inherent career opportunities and limitations when a person chooses to major in psychology. Organizationally

speaking, I believe that Psi Chi provides affordances to its members, advisors, and to the discipline. The key question is this—are we making the most of the opportunities afforded to us? That is, are you doing your best to make the most of your Psi Chi experience?

Now for an interesting twist (I hope). This is not going to be the retrospective that you might expect about the organization, but a brief retrospective about how (at least) one person might have come close to “doing their best” in making the most of Psi Chi’s affordances—me. I do not offer this example as bragging or boasting, but in appreciation of the enduring support and contribution that Psi Chi has made to my personal development and professional career. I want to document for you what you can achieve when you truly leverage the opportunities available to Psi Chi members.

I became a member of Psi Chi on December 13, 1983, and received my Psi Chi certificate at Monmouth College in Monmouth, Illinois (which is framed in my home office even though the certificates are much fancier now). I was honored to serve as my chapter’s President during my senior year at

Monmouth (1984–1985), and during that same year, I leveraged another opportunity afforded to me by Psi Chi—I made my first conference presentation at a regional convention. I gave a 12-minute talk during the Psi Chi session of the 1985 meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA) at the Palmer House in Chicago. For any of you who have been to MPA at the Palmer House, you can just imagine that first thrill I experienced in that historic landmark presenting research as if I were a psychologist. That confidence is but one of the many gifts Psi Chi has given to me over a professional lifetime (I doubt that I realized at the time that the moderator of my paper session was the Psi Chi National President whose signature was on my membership certificate).

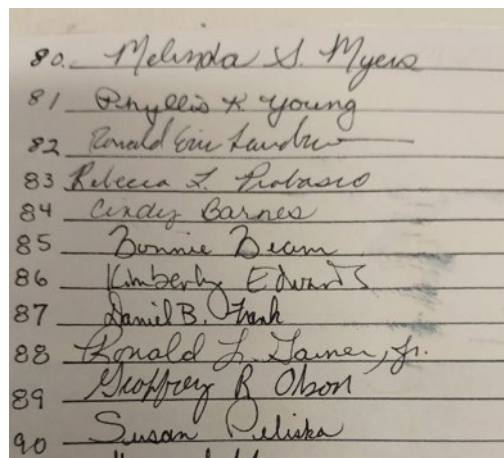
As I continued to reminisce about making the best of Psi Chi affordances, I employed this strategy: I searched for “Psi Chi” throughout my CV, with 108 hits. My involvement with Psi Chi continued after becoming a faculty member at Boise State University, which was manifested in a variety of ways:

- I served as the Boise State Psi Chi chapter advisor for 7 years.
- I have reviewed many times for Psi Chi convention submissions and grants and awards applications.
- I served for 2 years as the Psi Chi liaison to the Society for the Teaching of Psychology.
- I served for 3 years as a steering committee member for the Psi Chi Rocky Mountain Region.
- I served as the Psi Chi Rocky Mountain Regional Vice-President (2009–11) and hosted RMPA Distinguished Lecturers Albert Bandura (RMPA Denver, 2010) and Elizabeth Loftus (RMPA Salt Lake City, 2011).
- I have delivered 23 invited addresses/talks at Psi Chi statewide, regional, or national meetings.
- I have published four times in the *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*, with my first publication appearing in Volume 2 in 2001.
- I have published 13 times in the *Eye on Psi Chi* (many of these with dear friends Scott VanderStoep and Mitch Handelsman), with my first piece appearing in Volume 6 in 2001.
- I served for one year each as President-Elect (2016–17), President (2017–18), and Past-President (2018–19).

Did I do my best? Hard to say. Did I make the most of the opportunities afforded to me by Psi Chi? To be honest, I am hard-pressed to think of another individual who has benefitted more from Psi Chi than I have. Psi Chi has supported my intellectual and professional development beyond my wildest dreams. During my presidential year, I was able to launch, with the support of the Psi Chi Board of Directors and the Central Office staff, the first-ever Presidential Initiative—Help Helped Me. I hope to continue to contribute to this effort long after I am no longer a member of the Board. If you are truly interested in doing your best, I gently challenge you to look to Psi Chi: if you carefully examine the opportunities afforded to you, you might discover your own pathway to remarkable success, just as Psi Chi has allowed me to discover. And I will be thankful forever, and forever attempting to pay it forward.



Above: Dr. Landrum receiving his Psi Chi Certificate at Monmouth College (IL) in 1983.



Left: The scroll that Dr. Landrum signed (#82) when he was inducted. Thank you to current Monmouth College faculty member Dr. Tara McCoy for the sleuthing it took to uncover this record.

References

- Gibson, J. J. (1977). *The theory of affordances*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Landrum, R. E. (2018). Affordances and alignments: Continuing challenges in advising undergraduate psychology majors. *Teaching of Psychology, 45*, 84–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628317745462>



R. Eric Landrum, PhD, is a professor in the Department of Psychological Science at Boise State University (Boise, Idaho), receiving his PhD in cognitive psychology from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. He is a research generalist with an eclectic taste in research topics that broadly encompass the improvement of teaching and learning conditions. Dr. Landrum has over 425 professional presentations at conferences and published 3 edited texts, 23 books/textbooks, 29 book chapters, and has published over 85 professional articles in scholarly, peer-reviewed journals. He has worked with over 300 undergraduate research assistants and taught over 18,000 students in 26 years at Boise State. In 2014, APA President Nadine Kaslow presented Eric with an APA Presidential Citation in honor of his work in advancing the teaching of psychology. He is a member of the American Psychological Association, a fellow in APA's Division Two (Society for the Teaching of Psychology or STP), served as STP Secretary (2009-2011) and STP President (2014). He is also a member of the Association for Psychological Science and was named a fellow in 2018. During 2016–2017, Eric he served as President of the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (RMPA). He is immensely grateful for each and every opportunity Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology, has afforded him. Email: elandru@boisestate.edu | Twitter: @ericlandrum

"You See Race, But Do You
Want to Talk About It?"

Science at the Lincoln Park Zoo

Why You Should Care About
the History of Psychology

eye ON PSYCHI

spring 2019 | vol 23 | no 3



**Underemployment and
What to Do About It?**

WWW.PSICHI.ORG

SPRING 2019 | VOLUME 23 | NUMBER 3

EDITOR

Susan Iles
susan.iles@psichi.org

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Bradley Cannon
bradley.cannon@psichi.org

DESIGNER

Lauren Surmann
lauren.surmann@psichi.org

Published by Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology. Founded September 4, 1929, at the Ninth International Congress of Psychology, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Member of the Association of College Honor Societies. *Eye on Psi Chi*, ISSN 1092-0803 (print) and ISSN 2164-9812 (online), is published quarterly by Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology. All contents ©2019 by Psi Chi. The publication schedule follows the academic year: fall, winter, spring, and summer. All opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors and/or Psi Chi.

EDITORIAL OFFICE:

Psi Chi Central Office
Street Address: 651 East 4th St., Suite 600 | Chattanooga, TN 37403
Telephone: +1-423-756-2044 | Fax: +1-423-265-1629
Email: psichieye@psichi.org | Website: www.psichi.org

Permission must be obtained from Psi Chi to reprint or adapt a table or figure; to reprint quotations exceeding the limits of fair use from one source, and/or to reprint any portion of poetry, prose, or song lyrics. All persons wishing to utilize any of the above materials must write to the publisher to request nonexclusive world rights in all languages to use copyrighted material in the present article and in future print and nonprint editions. All persons wishing to utilize any of the above materials are responsible for obtaining proper permission from copyright owners and are liable for any and all licensing fees required. All persons wishing to utilize any of the above materials must include copies of all permissions and credit lines with the article submission.

Advertisements that appear in *Eye on Psi Chi* do not represent endorsement by Psi Chi of the advertiser or the product. Psi Chi neither endorses nor is responsible for the content of third-party promotions.

PSI CHI Board of Directors

SOCIETY PRESIDENT

Melanie M. Domenech Rodríguez, PhD
president@psichi.org

PAST-PRESIDENT

R. Eric Landrum, PhD
pastpresident@psichi.org

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Regan A. R. Gurung, PhD
presidentelect@psichi.org

EASTERN REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

Marianne Fallon, PhD
easternvmp@psichi.org

MIDWESTERN REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

Lindsay Root Luna, PhD
midwesternvmp@psichi.org

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

Leslie D. Cramblet Alvarez, PhD
rockymtnvmp@psichi.org

SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

Darren Bernal, PhD
southeasternvmp@psichi.org

SOUTHWESTERN REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

Shawn R. Charlton, PhD
southwesternvmp@psichi.org

WESTERN REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

Elizabeth Campbell, PhD
westernvmp@psichi.org

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Martha S. Zlokovich, PhD
martha.zlokovich@psichi.org

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------|--|
| APA | American Psychological Association |
| APS | Association for Psychological Science |
| EPA | Eastern Psychological Association |
| MPA | Midwestern Psychological Association |
| NEPA | New England Psychological Association |
| RMPA | Rocky Mountain Psychological Association |
| SEPA | Southeastern Psychological Association |
| SWPA | Southwestern Psychological Association |
| WPA | Western Psychological Association |

39



42



10

28



18