

PBS Alumni Council Launched

The mission of the Council is to deepen ties between alumni, faculty, and students

To further engage our students and connect with our alumni, the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences is turning to the experts. In May of 2019, the department launched the PBS Alumni Council. The mission of the Council is to deepen the relationships among the department's alumni, faculty, and students, and to provide greater career education and opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

Alumni Council members – four of the founding members are profiled below – make a significant commitment of time and resources to create meaningful connections among alumni to facilitate professional collaborations, identify talented young students to groom for jobs and internships, and to learn about and leverage the cutting-edge research done by PBS faculty and students.

Dr. Vanessa Woods, a PBS faculty member who has coordinated the annual ENGAGE:PBS alumni event is one of three PBS faculty members (along with David Sherman and Diane Mackie) who serve as liaisons to the Council. The ENGAGE events bring PBS students together with alumni who share their experience and provide mentoring. According to Dr. Woods: "The success of the yearly event has highlighted the broad support and interest among alumni for greater connection to the department. I am continually impressed by the alumni I interact with during ENGAGE. After every ENGAGE event, students share with me all of the small ways the alumni provide mentorship, from reading resumes and personal statements to connecting to jobs in online forums."

Founding members of the new Alumni Council include Deborah Bettencourt, Steve Foote, Amy Meyer, and Jeremy Sack.

With many alumni already showing their commitment to the success of the department, the Alumni Council was the next logical step. As noted by **David Sherman**: "There are many ways that alumni have been involved with the department, from attending events like ENGAGE where they lead panels, to making generous financial donations, to contributing Classnotes for Inside Psychology. The Alumni Council is providing an opportunity for the department's former students to magnify all of these contributions and make even more of an impact in the lives of the department's current students."

Interested alumni should contact Dr. Vanessa Woods about participating in the ENGAGE event held every April as part of All Gaucho Reunion, and any alumni interested in getting more information about the PBS Alumni Council are encouraged to contact Dr. Vanessa Woods vewoods@ucsb.edu, Dr. David Sherman sherman@ucsb.edu or Dr. Diane Mackie mackie@ucsb.edu.

We are proud to introduce the founding members of the PBS Alumni Council. Sherman added: "We're grateful to the founding members for their dedication, excitement, and ideas about how to deepen the lifelong connection Gauchos have to the department—where they took classes, made friends, and had life-shaping experiences."

Deborah Bettencourt, B.A., 1989

Deborah moved from Northern California in 1985 to attend the University of California, Santa Barbara. She graduated in 1989 with a B.A. in Psychology and completed a water polo career that spanned two collegiate national championships and All-American honors. Deborah has nearly 25 years of corporate operations experience in the medical device industry. In 2007, she joined Sientra, a medical aesthetics company. In her current position as Vice President of Customer



Experience and Corporate Administration, Deborah oversees Sientra's corporate operations to include global human resources, facilities, and customer experience. On the alumni council, Deborah noted: "I am thrilled and honored to join the UCSB Psychological & Brain Sciences Alumni Council. When I was at UCSB, I was frequently asked, 'What are you going to do with a psychology degree?' I usually responded, 'I don't exactly know yet, but I'm learning about humans and I deal with them every day.' My professional success has been greatly influenced by the connections I have made personally and professionally. I am excited to share my story and connect with the talent at UCSB." For more on Deborah, please see her alumni interview on [page 25](#).

Steve Foote, B.A., 1967

Steve Foote received his B.A. in Psychology from UCSB in 1967 and his Ph.D. in Psychology (now Brain and Cognitive Sciences) from MIT in 1972. He then became a postdoctoral fellow at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) before moving to the Salk Institute in San Diego from 1976 to 1984. He then joined the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry at the UCSD School of



Medicine. Throughout his research career he studied the anatomy, physiology, and behavioral functions of brain noradrenergic, serotonergic, and dopaminergic neurons. He left UCSD in 1996 to join the extramural component of NIMH as Director of the Division of Neuroscience and Basic Behavioral Science. This Division oversees NIMH funding of research grants in these scientific areas. He also had major responsibilities in interfacing the politics and science of autism across the federal government. He is now retired, living in Bethesda, Maryland, and is enthusiastic about participating in the Alumni Council and interacting with students and faculty. A first-generation college

graduate, and a junior college transfer, he especially appreciates the crucial role UCSB played in launching his lifetime passion for the brain sciences.

Amy Meyer, B.S., Bio-Psychology, 1994

Amy earned a B.S. in Bio-Psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1994, and completed the Advanced Human Resources Executive Program at the University of Michigan, Ross School of Business. Amy is Chief People Officer for AppFolio, Inc where she leads AppFolio's human resources functions, partnering with leaders throughout the organization to attract, develop and retain the right people for our growing company across 5 national offices. Before joining AppFolio, Amy was the Vice President of Human Resources at Citrix Systems where she was responsible for the company's human resources business partners, talent acquisition, talent management and all HR aspects of mergers and acquisitions. Amy has been named one of the Top 50 Women in Business on California's Central Coast. With a passion for helping women across all different fields develop their leadership skills, Amy is a mentor to a number of emerging women leaders and looks forward to working on the Alumni Council to provide mentorship for the current UCSB students in Psychological & Brain Sciences as well as recent graduates. About the Alumni Council, Amy said: "I'm excited to participate in the Council to connect with UCSB students in Psychological & Brain Sciences as well



as recent graduates to provide coaching and support in their career search and connect them to local opportunities."

Jeremy Sack, Ph.D., 2005

Jeremy Sack graduated from UCSB with his Ph.D in social psychology in 2005. In 2008, he joined LRW (<https://lrwonline.com/>), a global leader in using research, analytics, deep human understanding, and business consulting models to drive strategy, branding, innovation, communications, and experiences for Fortune 500 companies. After joining as a Research Director, he later founded LRW's Pragmatic Brain Science Institute®, which uses behavioral science to provide companies with a holistic understanding of humans and competitive advantage. He was named President of LRW in 2018. Jeremy was also part of a delegation that advised the Obama White House and cabinet secretaries on how to reduce racial bias in law enforcement using virtual reality. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and son and is looking forward to working on the Alumni Council and advising students on how to transition successfully to their professional careers. Ψ



Members of the new Alumni Council joined students, faculty, and staff at the 2019 ENGAGE alumni celebration.