The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) is recognized as a premier metropolitan research university. With this standing, it comes as no surprise that our campus is constantly buzzing with new ideas, discovery, and innovation. Led by campus faculty, research is happening in virtually every discipline in order to uncover new knowledge.

Research gives students the chance to work with experienced professors and get direct learning to match classroom learning. As a psychology student, I am starting a research assistant position summer 2015 in Dr. Rennels Baby and Child Rebel Lab. I will be studying how infants and children learn about their social world, and getting experience working with lab procedures, data collection, and other necessary skills that one can only learn in the hands-on setting of a lab. Getting involved in research on campus gives students the chance to apply what they learn in class to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of their discipline. Another such research project on campus is the UNLV Drones and Autonomous Systems Lab.

This month, Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering will be rolling out a brand new lab called Drones and Autonomous Systems Lab (DASL). This lab will be a breeding ground for new technological advancements. Currently, the lab is preparing for an intense robotics competition in Pomona, California. The UNLV team, led by Professor Paul Oh, is working hard with their robot, which, for the competition, must do a variety of tasks such as opening doors, cutting a hole in the wall, and climbing stairs.

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Ms. Christina M. Hixson graduated from high school in Clarinda, Iowa and moved to Omaha, Nebraska to attend business school. She later went to work for Mr. Ernst F. Lied, a car dealership owner in Omaha and in 1960 she joined Mr. Lied in Las Vegas, Nevada as his assistant. After Mr. Lied’s death in 1980, Ms. Hixson became the sole trustee of the Lied Foundation Trust and turned the Lied Foundation Trust into one of the largest foundations in the state of Nevada at that time. Ms. Hixson has a special understanding of young people who, like her, came from a challenging family background and are willing to work hard.

Mr. Ernst F. Lied was born in Columbus, Ohio and attended the University of Kansas for two years, where he played on the golf team. He ultimately graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1927. Mr. Lied became a Buick dealer in Omaha, Nebraska and later his dealership was ranked third in the country for the number of cars sold. Mr. Lied established his charitable foundation in 1972, and upon his death in 1980 at age 74 nearly his entire estate funded the Lied Foundation Trust. Lied Foundation Trust has enhanced the capabilities of many schools and enriched the quality of many lives!
Focusing on Research (Continued)

Inspiring innovation, this lab is making steps in the field, and most importantly, is helping students get hands-on experience in their discipline. One of the primary goals of the lab is to shape future leaders by exposing engineering students to direct experience working with these robots. The future of robotics is here at UNLV, and it allows undergraduates to train with the best professors, work in the lab, and get exposed to robotics technologies.

Benefitting both the students and the fields, UNLV research is paving the way for exciting new discovery, and is building its reputation as a nationally recognized research institution.

MCAT? LSAT? GRE? Please Help!

By: Robert Vargas, Hixson-Lied Success Scholar

For many undergraduates, the bachelor’s degree is major stepping stone in the journey to obtain admittance into graduate program. Professional/graduate school can be in the form of, dental school, medical school, law school, pharmacy school, and many specialized masters programs. According to the United States Census Bureau in their 2012 article by Tiffany Julian “Work-Life Earnings by Field of Degree and Occupation for People with a Bachelor’s Degree: 2011,” individuals who earn graduate or professional degrees can expect to earn more over their lifetime than those with just a bachelors degree. The opportunity to continue learning and earning means that it is important to know the steps it takes to apply. This article sheds some light on the following step: taking a graduate admissions test. Which test you take, varies depending on the type of graduate school you are interested in. As the application pool gets more competitive, it is vital to understand what all these abbreviated exams mean as they can be a defining factor when considering graduate school acceptance. Common tests are broken down as follows:

GMAT: Graduate Management Admission Test - Master of Business Administration (MBA) and several other business programs
MCAT: Medical College Admissions Test - medical school
LSAT: Law School Admissions Test - law school
GRE: Graduate Record Exam - several different graduate programs
DAT: Dental Admissions Testing Program - dental school
PCAT: Pharmacy College Admission Test - pharmacy school

Of course, the first step in deciding which test you should take requires research into several graduate schools of your liking. Some programs, such as veterinary school will accept either MCAT or GRE scores, so be sure to look at individual schools as well, to know which exam you should be taking. Additionally, many graduate schools take applications during the fall, so it is important to plan on taking the exam before you start applying to graduate school, whether that is the summer before your senior year or following graduation. Once you have a set graduate program in mind and an estimated test date, the next step is to learn more about the test and start studying for your big test day.

As a biology major hoping to get into medical school, I have looked into the features of the MCAT. An important part of this journey is looking into what sections are covered on the exam and the lengths of each. For example, the MCAT is a four part exam that takes about seven hours.

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MCAT? LSAT? GRE? PLEASE HELP! (CONTINUED)

This differs with the GRE that has six parts but takes about 3 hours and 45 minutes. With such long exam times, it is important to begin studying each section in detail. One recommended tip is taking a practice exam to discover your strengths and weaknesses in advance. Brainfuse, which is offered through the Academic Success Center (ASC), can be accessed via webcampus and offers practice exams to analyze your progress and what areas need focus on. Another site is kaptest.com by Kaplan Test Prep. To assist you in your preparations, UNLV Libraries, and other public libraries, offer rentals of test prep books, which are beneficial when studying. Should you need help in a specific area, there are sites such as Khan Academy and Brainfuse that offer free videos and tutoring on subject areas that can end up on your exam. One important tip when using preparation materials is to pay attention to the strategy offered on how to answer questions.

While preparing for an exam can be stressful, the most important thing to remember is to stay calm and use the resources that are there to assist you. Applying to graduate school is a lengthy process; however, understanding the admissions process and preparing for these exams is important in strengthening your graduate school application to get you that acceptance letter.


Taking Advantage of Campus Resources

By: Nestor Chaidez, Hixson-Lied Success Scholar

I recently went to the UNLV Writing Center for help on the final assignment for my Composition 102 class: an 8-page research paper. At the Writing Center, students are given flexible instructions on how to improve their papers in one-on-one sessions. The staff member who helped me was very professional when addressing my questions. She was knowledgeable of the subject and had evident experience in teaching and helping students. She advised me to ensure that I was following the assignment guidelines accurately by e-mailing or meeting with my professor. Additionally, she was polite when offering suggestions on my paper’s structure and/or content.

The Writing Center is not a place that revises grammatical errors. In a typical session, the student reads their paper out loud in order to hear if their writing is comprehensive. At this step, the staff member will provide suggestions on word choice, organization, and perhaps point out misspelled words. By helping students revise their own papers, they are training them to notice their own mistakes. The Writing Center does not merely skim through students papers and hand them back with written corrections; their philosophy focuses on improving the students’ overall writing skills.

Another free campus service I recommend using is tutoring. For instance, math can be a complex subject and become hard to understand. Fortunately, there are plenty of opportunities to learn and improve. There are various locations on campus that provide tutoring services including: ASC’s tutoring services, which cover many disciplines, are on the second floor of the Lied Library; the Center Desert Complex, which includes the Writing Center and the Math Center; and the ASC’s Engineering tutoring in TBE-A (Room 207L), where you can find tutors focusing on challenging courses like Physics I, II, and III and Calculus I, II, and III. These are free and effective services that are available to students for personal academic improvement.
By: Sarah Mirjavadi, Hixson-Lied Success Scholar

In a 2011 survey (2011 Interpersonal Violence Survey: UNLV Faculty/Staff), 15% of UNLV students, faculty, and staff indicated they had been sexually assaulted at least once in their lifetime. The survey sample population included different genders and ages. A quarter of the sample had experienced an emotionally or physically violent relationship. One out of five of them had been stalked and 48% to 63% of the sample reported that they knew someone who had experienced assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking. Unfortunately, only 33% of the survey sample claimed they used support services. Many victims find it difficult to discuss their experience with interpersonal violence. For that reason, the Jean Nidetch Women’s Center (JNWC) promotes a comfortable and confidential environment. Their purpose is to help those who have experienced or are currently experiencing interpersonal violence.

What is interpersonal violence? Interpersonal violence consists of all types of physical, emotional, and sexual violence including intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Males and females both experience interpersonal violence. Interpersonal violence can be caused by family, friends, and/ or strangers. It is difficult to escape and/or recover from those situations without assistance and counselling.

JNWC’s mission is to create “a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders through programming, services and advocacy for the UNLV community” (JNWC UNLV Website, 2015). To accomplish that, they offer advocacy for all types of interpersonal violence. The Campus Advocacy Resource and Empowerment (CARE) advocates are students who work very hard to ensure that anyone seeking service is comfortable and know they are not alone. Not only do they provide face- to- face advocacy, but they have a 24- hour, free, confidential hot-line. Advocates listen to victim’s stories and provide insight, counseling, informational brochures, and other resources. CARE advocates provide assistance with referrals for medical care, counseling, or therapy for those who want further evaluation. Filing criminal or civil charges, university conduct charges, applying and filing for Protection Orders, and No Contact Orders, are more areas advocates help with. Advocates can even help with applying for County Compensation and/ or Victims of Crime Compensation.

Aside from advocacy, students are encouraged to volunteer and get involved with CARE. JNWC provides a peer education program to bring awareness so students can decide to help end interpersonal violence. The JNWC also has internship and scholarship opportunities for those who want to get involved.

The JNWC has supplies for reproductive needs. Condoms, tampons, and pads are available for anyone and can easily be found in the office. There are also lactation rooms for mothers who need a place to nurse their children.

Even though the name of the building may sound like it is only for females, it is not! Males and people of all gender identities are welcome to come seek services because people of all backgrounds experience interpersonal violence. Best of all, this resource is absolutely free and a good place to use when needed. It is available to all students, faculty, and staff.

JNWC is located in the SSC A building, room 255. They are open from 8AM-5PM, Monday through Friday. To reach the care line call 702-895-0602. To get involved email at unlvcareline@gmail.com or call 702-895-4475.

Facebook: facebook.com/UNLVJNWC
Twitter.com/JNWC_UNLV
A Senior’s Perspective

By: Garrett Wilson, Hixson-Lied Success Scholar

I started attending UNLV in 2011 at age 18. It’s now 2015. That makes me 22 and technically a senior. With that, I suppose I’ve accrued some wisdom during my tenure as an undergraduate. What if I had the ability to somehow travel back in time and provide my younger self with some sage wisdom regarding “how to college?” What would I say? Would my younger self think I’m some sort of android doppelganger trying to replace him? Probably. However, operating under the assumption that the encounter is civil, I may have a thing or two to say.

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Younger Garrett skated through UNLV’s free speech area on a longboard. A portal opened up in front of him, causing him to lose control and bail into the grass near the Central Desert Complex. I, Older Garrett, stepped through the portal and helped Younger Garrett up. The conversation that followed is transcribed here:

Younger Garrett: Hey, man. You nearly— whoa. You’re like me, man. Isn’t this like a paradox or something? Am I going to disappear?

Older Garrett: No, young one. I don’t have time to go into detail about how I’m defying the laws of time and space, but I am here to provide you answers to the great mysteries of the future. In regards to college, at least.

Younger Garrett: How did I get so fat?

Older Garrett: Young one, you err— urgh, I can’t do this. You ruined it. Just so you know, that really hurts. You know what? I’m not going to tell you anything. You can just get fat. What do I care?

Younger Garrett: Hey, man, don’t be so rash. I’m sorry.

Older Garrett: That’s ok. I love you, and I forgive you. First off, you can get rid of this.

OG takes the board and breaks it in half with his inhuman strength.

Younger Garrett: Not cool, dude. That board was like 160 bucks.

Older Garrett: In your sophomore year, you hit a rock and do a front flip into the pavement. Everyone laughs and no one helps you up.

Younger Garrett: Oh, thanks for the lookout I guess. What else you got for me?

Older Garrett: Uh. That was the main thing I guess. You get pretty good grades and make cool short films. So, big ups on that. I’m applying for grad school at the moment. You’re welcome… if we get in.

Younger Garrett: So that’s it? Nothing at all? How am I supposed to avoid being fat? You’re kind of leaving me hanging here dude.

Older Garrett: Stop it with the fat thing, man. I’m sensitive. Whatever. You’re on a college campus. Food is accessible everywhere. Don’t date [name redacted]. You’ll get too comfortable and lose sight of who you are.

Younger Garrett: Ok, done. I won’t… Why you still fat?

Older Garrett: I don’t know, man. I don’t have all the answers! Look at your social groups. Network more. Maybe someone will teach you crossfit. Wait a second… Networking. Get out of your bubble, man! Look at me! I really just came into my own this last semester! The more you collaborate with people, the more you learn about your own work! I did it! Mission accomplished!

A large portal amasses behind Older Garrett.

Older Garrett: Before I go, remember to see your Academic Advisor at the ASC! You need Philosophy 102, not 101 for your pre-requisites! Remember meeaaaa!

Younger Garrett: Oh, cool. A whirlwind of fire and electricity leave a crater in the ground in front of Younger Garrett.

Younger Garrett: Gnarly, man.