

October 2011 Student Representative Profile



Sarah Coupland, Graduate Student Representative

Program:

New York University- Masters of Arts in Psychology with a Forensic Specialization

Research or Clinical Interests:

Sex offending, stalking and harassment behaviours, recidivism, Cluster B personality disorders and substance dependence

Future Plans:

My long-term goals include pursuing a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology with a forensic focus. I hope to investigate methods of better predicting recidivism and to potentially develop more targeted therapies to address barriers to proper reintegration into society.

How long have you been a campus representative?

I only recently became a campus representative in June 2011.

What motivated you to become a campus representative?

Honestly, I feel like I missed out on a lot of opportunities during my undergraduate degree because there wasn't a good system in place to disseminate information about events, talks and seminars to the thousands of students majoring in psychology. It's hard enough being a full-time student without having to keep an eye out for events and opportunities that you might be interested in. Also, I feel like I've had a lot of experience when it comes to different aspects of being a student, from administrative responsibilities (read: applications for funding/grad school/ conferences/etc.) to research challenges (who doesn't love perpetual ethics review and manuscript submissions?) to academic daily life (I like to think of grad school as my personal study into the effects of caffeine on chronic sleep deprivation and concentration). If I can make the journey though someone's psychology degree that much smoother, then being a campus representative was totally worth it.

What you have accomplished as a campus representative?

Given that I am new to being a campus representative; in the first few months of this academic year I've focused on getting students to join CPA and to plan to attend the conference in Halifax.

Any useful tips?

As students, most of us get a ton of spam email from the university and let's be honest, we don't read most of it. As a campus rep, I try to make CPA messages stand out through my sometimes woeful attempts at humour.

What is it like to be a Canadian at an American university?

As I'm sure most Canadians attending university in the States have noticed, you get a lot of questions about Canada. Most people are surprised when they hear I'm not American, and they usually only notice when I slip in a metric reference or unwittingly use a Canadian expression (such as keener or the occasional eh). Most importantly however, is that everyone I've come into contact thus far has a huge respect for Canadians, and especially, the psychological research that comes out of Canada. One professor even went so far as to say, "We might have more crime down here in the US, but you Canadians sure know how to study it more efficiently."

Given this, what are the unique experiences you've had representing the CPA in New York?

New York City has been one of the focal cities in the development of psychology (Adler, Milgram, James, & Skinner all spent time here, to name a few), especially in the psychoanalytic field. Everyone in the Psychology Department at NYU is familiar with the APA, but very few people have considered the advantages of joining the CPA. I am working on organizing a group to attend the annual convention and hopefully to foster some more interest in the process. Having the opportunity to represent CPA as such an integral part of Canadian psychology at an American University is really quite an honour.