Nathan Mather Bio Statement

Azusa Pacific University, Psychology major/ Spanish minor

Graduating May 2015

Research Experience: Nathan has been part of Dr. Priscila Diaz’s Cultural Diversity and Social Development Lab for two years. He has contributed to her research regarding attitudes toward Mexican immigrants by transcribing data and engaging in lab group discussions. Nathan conducted a correlational survey study under the guidance of Dr. Rachel Castaneda, examining the relationship between stress and depression among college students. He helped Dr. Alex Yu with a literature review on his research on apostasy among young religious Americans. Nathan’s most extensive research project has been his study of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians among Christian college students, which he has conducted with guidance from his research advisor, Dr. Priscila Diaz. He presented this research at his university’s Common Day of Learning and will also present at the Western Psychological Association and Association for Psychological Science conferences in May.

Future Plans: Nathan plans to apply for PhD programs in counseling psychology in order to further his studies in LGBT ally identity development and to become a licensed psychologist.

Q&A

Q: How did you get involved in research?

A: I was an economics major until my junior year of college. Once I realized that I wanted to study psychology instead, I knew immediately that I wanted to be part of a research team. Dr. Diaz was studying attitudes toward Mexican immigrants, and I was intrigued by this topic. I had just come back to the U.S. from a semester in Costa Rica and I saw a great importance in studying U.S.-Latin America relations. Since then, my interest in research has developed into my form of protesting social injustices.

Q: What led you to this topic?

A: I am gay, and I attend a conservative religious school. There are discriminatory policies and oppressive social systems in place, and I have seen these negatively impact LGBT students. In order to bring light to the negative attitudes that perpetuate discrimination, I decided to conduct an empirical research study. I am thankful that I was able to present my findings on campus and that these findings were well received.

Q: What has the process of working on this research/paper been like for you?

A: It has been empowering. It has also been a lot of work. I feel so accomplished for having completed such a large project, and I don’t think I would have been able to do it without having such a strong passion for the topic.

Q: What advice would you offer to other undergraduates interested in conducting research and publishing their work?

A: Research is an amazing experience to learn more about the field of psychology. Professors will tell you that you should do research if you want to get into graduate school, and that is true. But you can’t be extrinsically motivated if you want to enjoy your study. When picking a research question, make sure it is something you are genuinely curious about.