

5-1-2015

USC-bound psychology major among WPA presenters

Sarah Gardner

Dominican University of California, sarah.gardner@dominican.edu

Dave Albee

Dominican University of California, david.albee@dominican.edu

Survey: Let us know how this paper benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Gardner, Sarah and Albee, Dave, "USC-bound psychology major among WPA presenters" (2015). *Press Releases*. 320.

<https://scholar.dominican.edu/news-releases/320>

This News Release is brought to you for free and open access by the Communications and Media Relations at Dominican Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Press Releases by an authorized administrator of Dominican Scholar. For more information, please contact michael.pujals@dominican.edu.

USC-bound psychology major among WPA presenters

The love of the sea and a longing to be in the Navy is now leading Dominican senior Sarah Creely '15 to USC.

As psychology major who joined 28 other Dominican students who presented in the 95th [Western Psychology Association \(WPA\) conference](#) in Las Vegas April 30-May 3, Sarah is taking steps and doing research to make her dream come true.

Witness her senior project: "[Academic Achievement and Intrinsic Motivation in Veterans Continuing Education after Service.](#)" Sarah's goal is to determine whether veterans who served longer in the military are more motivated to pursue higher education and, if already enrolled in a four-year university, are they more motivated to succeed than veterans or non-veterans in a community college.

"My career goal is to be in the military, and this is the start," says Sarah, who has been accepted into the Master of Social Work program at the University of Southern California. "My research thesis shows I'm dedicated to this."

Sarah, who has grandfathers that served in World War II and Vietnam, has a deep connection to the military, yet her admiration and respect for veterans heightened after 9/11. She is amazed by their honor and willingness to sacrifice to help others, and that inspired her to want to help people, too. She picked Dominican and psychology as her path to do so.

"I've always gone to small schools, and this fit me," Sarah says. "I love the [Psych department at Dominican](#). The professors are wonderful and they are willing work with you."

One of them, [Gail Matthews](#), recommended that Sarah complete her field placement through an internship at the Veterans Alliance Club at City College of San Francisco. Sarah met with fellow psychology major Aundray Rogers, an Iraq war veteran who is president of the Alliance Club, and former U.S. Army ranger [Nick Garcia](#), a Dominican psychology graduate now attending the police academy.

When Sarah came to Dominican, she wanted to help soldiers suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Now, after her research and meeting veterans at the Alliance Club, she is considering enlisting as an officer in the Navy with a goal of becoming a Navy social worker or working as a civilian social worker at a VA hospital. The program she will enroll in at USC in Fall 2015 has a military sub concentration.

"Working on my thesis and interning at City College has definitely turned my focus towards specializing in a military career," Sarah says.

Joining Sarah as individual Dominican presenters accepted at the WPA Conference at the Red Rock Resort in Las Vegas were Erika Apel, Eric Baer, Megan Callen, Kayleigh Crow, Victoria Grajeda, Derry Gutierrez, Megan Hall, Dale Howard, Jihye Kim, Kerry Kosta, Annabelle Maginnis, Mustafa Nizami, Minaxshi Odedra, Crystal Pinkston, Liliana Valdez, Cory Vanderpool and Britton Walker.

Dominican students who participated in group presentations with faculty members Bill Phillips, Afshin Gharib, and Emily Newton were Audrey Land, Kaitlin Chipchase, Helen Prusiner, Shaylin Ortega, Paola Mendizabal, Ica Cabral, Jacqueline Germaine-Bewley, Kelly Miura, Aine Fitzgerald, Kimberly Murrietta and Matthew Comandante.