

# Engaging Underrepresented Students in Interdisciplinary Developmental Research Experiences

## Introduction

This project financially supported five undergraduate women who are typically underrepresented in science engaged in interdisciplinary research activities in summer 2024. Specifically, they were involved in research inspired by social neuroscience, family sociology, and developmental psychology to better understand how families contribute to the well-being of teenagers. Students contributed to the Texas Sibling Study, a longitudinal study of families with two teenage siblings. Students actively engaged in tasks including participant retention and scheduling; collecting data using neuropsychology tasks, video-taped behavioral observations, surveys, psychological assessments, and physiological data; conducting data quality checks; transcribing and coding behavioral data; and conducting analyses for their independent research questions.

## Faculty Voice

"This experience has transformed us, empowering us as underrepresented women in science to engage deeply in research and collaborate with families on meaningful projects."  
-- Christy Rogers



## Team

**Faculty:** Christy Rogers  
**Students:** Mikayla Hesseltine, Rey Shatto, Julia Whitson, Gabbey Sloan, Montse Ramirez

## Student Voice

"I aim to gain hands-on research experience, especially in analyzing qualitative data from interviews, and to conduct independent investigations. The lab's blend of psychology and neuroscience, combined with a supportive environment led by Dr. Rogers and the team, aligns with my interests and career goals. Plus, the stipend will cover my summer rent."  
-- Julia Whitson



Student started coding project to assess hostility and warmth between adolescent siblings in chats.

Students independently administer surveys, observations, neuropsych tasks, and heart rate monitoring.

All current students remain in the lab to work with the remaining families in the study.

Transformative Experiences

## Impacts/Results/Products/To Date Progress

Gabbey Sloan received a \$1,000 internal grant to fund her project examining the link between sibling hostility and adolescent well-being. She will present her findings at the TrUE Undergraduate Research Conference in Spring 2025. Our Texas Sibling Study has had excellent family retention, with more visits scheduled for this fall.

**TrUE**  
**Transformers**

My Top 3 Transformative Priorities    Support more than one undergraduate student    Strong potential for continuation post-grant    Intentionally Recruited Underrepresented Students