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Member Spotlight: Samantha Moran

AUTHOR

Samantha Moran

Doctoral Student, Department of Family Science
University of Maryland, College Park

Why did you decide to choose developmental science as a course of study or career?

Early on I knew I wanted to work with children and young adults in some capacity in my career. I always saw myself in a school counselor/guidance counselor role. Though my career trajectory has shifted over the years from clinical to a more research driven path, the broader school environment has remained a core focus. My current graduate studies are grounded in a foundation that recognizes 1). how pivotal the developmental period between early childhood and early adulthood is, especially for sexual and gender minority (SGM) populations, and 2). how the school environment is centered in these developmental processes.

Is there a mentor or mentors who have been instrumental to your studies and career path so far, and, if so, who and how?

My Ph.D. advisor Dr. Jessica Fish has been instrumental to my success as a graduate student and early career researcher. Dr. Fish's mentorship style not only provides me with endless support and guidance, but also a level of trust that instills the confidence needed to succeed independently. Under Dr. Fish's mentorship I feel calm and grounded while also excited for the wealth of opportunities and collaborations I foresee in my career. I feel very grateful to be welcomed into her incredible network of scholars who support me through every step of the way.

I am also very fortunate to receive guidance and mentorship from Dr. Bishop, who has welcomed me as a collaborator in their post-doctoral fellowship work. Dr. Bishop has opened my eyes to the joys and possibilities I can anticipate post graduation, and has been instrumental in helping me develop my program of research and identity as a young scholar.

What advice would you give to a prospective graduate student thinking about beginning their Ph.D. studies in the developmental science field?

Don't put yourself in a box! Come into your program with an open mind and a willingness to explore different research methods, applications, and topics. You might be surprised with what you become passionate about.

What is your best SRCD memory?

Meeting colleagues, SOGIE Caucus members, and future collaborators at the 2023 SRCD Meeting in Salt Lake City. I loved how welcoming and eager the SRCD community is in supporting and uplifting young scholars like myself.

Why did you join the SOGIE Caucus and how does it facilitate connection among members all year long?

I joined the SOGIE Caucus to be better connected to and supported by scholars who also seek to amplify the voices and experiences of SGM individuals and communities. The SOGIE Caucus facilitates connection through strong mentorship and collaborations that continue long after conferences and other official meetings. It is so special to feel genuinely cared for and guided by scholars outside of my own program and home university. I feel like I have people in my corner all over the world!