INFORMATION SHEET FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH DR. NESTOR TULAGAN

ABOUT NESTOR TULAGAN

I'm a developmental & educational psychologist. I earned my PhD in Education (specializing in Human Development in Context) from the University of California Irvine's School of Education—which is consistently ranked among the best graduate school of education in the US (2024 rank 11 by US News and World Report). As an early career scholar, I've won competitive, funding projects from the National Science Foundation (NSF), including the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship and the NSF SBE Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. I have published in top-tier journals relevant to my research, including Journal of Research on Adolescence, Applied Developmental Science, Developmental Psychology, and Educational Psychology Review.

I grew up in Manila, Philippines until I was 10 years old and immigrated to the United States, where I spent my teenage years in San Diego, California. As a long-time student at the University of California, I also received my BA in Psychology and Social Behaviors, MA in Education, and postdoctoral training at UC Irvine. In my leisure time, I enjoy digital painting, spending quality time with my partner Jonah and our dog Hero, hanging out at local coffeeshops, playing board and video games, doing bar trivia, going to comedy and drag shows, and attending plays and musicals. Rochester has been such a satisfying place to engage in these interests!

Visit my website: www.NestorTulagan.com

ABOUT MY LAB

I direct the Families, Achievement Motivation, & Identity Research Lab, affectionately called the FAM&I Lab. Broadly, the FAM&I Lab studies the experiences and development of historically, racially/ethnically minoritized adolescents in home and education contexts. Specifically, my lab studies:

a) the ways in which teens develop and sustain achievement motivation, racial/ethnic identity, and gender identity.
b) the extent to which families and cultural values support these developmental dimensions, especially at the face of developmental risks (discrimination, socioeconomic disadvantage, school-based negative experiences). And
c) the extent to which these factors predict later educational and career choices as well as overall wellbeing (e.g., life satisfaction, optimism, self-determination)

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The FAM&I lab focuses on strengths-based frameworks to highlight the cultural assets minoritized families and teens possess and to leverage these assets to promote positive youth development. I use culturally grounded models of family academic socialization to study expectancy-value motivation among Black and Latinx/e adolescents (e.g., Starr, Tulagan, & Simpkins, 2022), as well as the integrative model of minority child development (Garcia-Coll et al., 1996) and community cultural wealth model (Yosso, 2005).

My work uses variable-centered and pattern-centered approaches. I focus on regression techniques, econometric models, and especially structural equation modeling (SEM). I use the SEM framework for psychometrics (factor analysis); complex, relational processes (including moderation); developmental change (latent growth curves); and pattern-centered approaches (latent profile analysis, latent transition analysis). My studies also use in-depth, qualitative approaches (e.g., interviews), and I hope to integrate these methods in future mixed-methods projects.

MY MENTORSHIP PHILOSOPHY
The mentorship philosophy in my lab aims to foster a training environment for burgeoning scientists that maximizes the potential of diverse scholars. My mentorship and student advocacy include three key elements: (a) developing working relationships with mentees that are inclusive of diverse perspectives and collaborative; (b) scaffolding training so that mentees move toward mastery and independence; and (c) building mentees' community cultural wealth by connecting them to institutional resources, research collaborations, and other potential mentors that all scientists need to navigate academia.

Developing Working Relationships that are Inclusive of Diverse Perspectives, and Collaborative
I aim to design training plans with thoughtful consideration of the cultural and developmental needs of diverse scholars. Reflecting my own research, I am committed to thinking through conceptual and theoretical issues regarding culture, diversity, equity, and social justice when engaging in intellectual discussions with mentees, with the aim towards students' understanding of the diversity in human development and psychology. I position my mentees as important cultural assets and collaborators to the research and outreach work. In our research projects, I encourage my mentees to use their cultural knowledge to inform the content of data collection materials and the interpretations of our data findings. I also encourage students to share relevant theories regarding developmental and cultural processes that they know of and are interested in for their work. As a mentor, I aim to establish a culture of collaboration in research, encouraging mentees to work together and make connections in and outside of the lab.

Scaffolding Training toward Mastery and Independence
In keeping with my lab's mission toward cultural understanding, diversity, equity, and social justice, I make consistent efforts to ensure that my mentees are in a learning context that

empowers them toward research. In the lab, I help my mentees cultivate competence and autonomy in research methods by systematically scaffolding their research skills and individualizing their learning through one-on-one, hands-on demonstrations and exemplars of research tasks (e.g., creating surveys, cleaning data, interviewing parents, coding, writing). We focus on completing research tasks together as a team and gradually work towards each mentee working more independently in collaborative research. Throughout their training, I focus on building not only students' mastery of research skills but also their confidence in these skills by actively encouraging and cultivating positively reinforcing professional relationships with each student. In my interpersonal approach to scaffolding, I aim to be consistently warm, collegial, and responsive while also having high expectations that mentees should aim to accomplish.

The scaffolded training in my lab consists of:
- One-on-one meetings to provide each lab member guidance and advice on their program of study, program milestones, research projects, and professional development.
- Biweekly lab meetings focused on (a) presenting research work and getting feedback and (b) checking in with lab members' overall flourishing in the lab, doctoral program, and Rochester. (These meetings will be alternating throughout the semester).
- Weekly working sessions to provide lab members a dedicated and shared time and space to work on writing, data analysis, and homework. These working sessions will be for two hours during Fridays.
- On-the-field work that includes research tasks (data collection of interviews and surveys)

Building Connections to Institutional Resources

One of my primary responsibilities as a mentor and advocate is to be a hub for resources for my mentees—resources including funding sources, professional development and training, community partners, research collaborators, and networks of other mentors. Building my mentees' community cultural wealth is one powerful way to ensure that they successfully navigate academia, just as it has benefitted me in my own training. I aim for students to learn about how to search and apply for fellowships, grants, and awards (e.g., National Science Foundation's graduate research fellowship and postdoctoral research fellowship). I also work to help my students learn how to build sustained and respectful partnerships with community research sites (e.g., schools, centers) from writing a correspondence letter to proposing community outreach efforts that is optimally useful for the communities we work with. Finally, it is important to me that my mentees meet other researchers in the field to encourage them to start collaborations and build relationships with other potential mentors (*your training takes a village and should not be confined just to my lab!*). So, I aim to connect my mentees to colleagues in the field by introducing them virtually or in-person (e.g., conferences, colloquia, existing collaborations).

Ultimately, my mentorship goal is to ensure that scholars have fundamental theoretical and research skills that they can leverage to benefit the next phase of their careers.

QUALITIES I LOOK FOR IN PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Training under my mentorship is primarily focused on research, with a secondary focus on community outreach and translational work. **I'm especially interested in training students interested in pursuing a research-intensive career in developmental and educational psychology within a university, research center/institute, think tank, non-profit organization, and the like.**

Students at any level who are accepted in my lab should have overlapping research interests or approaches to my expertise including some, if not all, of the following:

- Developmental processes in domains like:
  - Achievement motivation
  - Racial/ethnic identity
  - Gender identity/expression, and
  - their intersections
    - e.g., How is one's racial/ethnic identity *integrated* in one's achievement motivation? How does one's racial/ethnic identity and gender identity/expression interactively predict achievement and wellbeing?
- Strengths-based theories that focus on the extent to which social contexts (e.g., families, educators) both <u>promote</u> development and <u>protect</u> against negative experiences and risks (e.g., discrimination, socioeconomic disadvantage, etc.).
- Cultural theories that highlight the assets and resilience factors (e.g., cultural values and practices, community cultural wealth) of families and adolescents
- Quantitative (variable- and pattern-centered) and qualitative approaches

For doctoral students, trainees accepted to my lab should be well-versed in leading independent projects and guiding undergraduate and masters-level research assistants (RA) in fundamental research procedures. Doctoral students should be able or prepared to:

- Generate their own research ideas independently.
- Learn and be open-minded about different theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches – so that they stay intellectually curious and avoid getting stuck in their thinking.
- Work collegially and collaboratively with others.
- Demonstrate humble expertise when teaching others and authentic engagement when being taught by others. *No arrogance needed*.
- Problem-solve challenges and be okay with "feeling stupid" (Schwartz, 2008) during the research process. *Training in research and academia is largely about resiliency and persistence*.

- Communicate challenges they face that impacts their academic and professional development.
- Travel to research sites and collect extensive survey and interview data from adults and youth.
- Help substantively in writing IRBs, conference submissions, reports/articles, and grant applications.
- Manage RAs in different research tasks with patience and understanding.

DECIDING WHETHER TO TRAIN UNDER MY MENTORSHIP

Prospective students should reflect upon the following questions to assess the match between their goals and my work at the FAM&I Lab.

Research Fit
- Can you reiterate your research interests and how you see yourself working with Dr. Tulagan in conducting a specific research project?
- What theories related to developmental psychology and education are you interested in?
- What research methods are you interested in?

Preparation
- Have you had any experiences in leading your own research study?
    - If YES: What was it like leading your own research? Did you enjoy it? Do you see yourself in a career doing that type of work?
    - If NO: Regarding your research interest, what specific research questions are you thinking about? How would you go about answering those questions?
- A potential part of being a researcher is guiding and managing your own research assistants. What experience do you have in mentorship? Would you enjoy it and see yourself in a career doing that type of mentorship?

The Future
- *What is your career goal? Does it involve a career focused on research **and** community outreach in the fields of developmental psychology, educational psychology, human development, and/or family studies?*
- *How do you see research training as useful to you and your career?*