

Jennifer Cook, MS, BCBA, PhD Candidate

Jen Cook received scholarship funds from the ABA Graduate Student Assistance Fund in 2020. She shares below how the funds helped with her dissertation research.



JEN'S RESEARCH

My research evaluates the effect of music on running for experienced runners. Learning why and how runners are successfully able to maintain long-term regimens may support methods for promoting running as a feasible exercise for nonrunners to learn as adults. Running as an exercise has substantial health benefits, including lowering the risk of cardiovascular mortality up to 29 to 50% (vs. nonrunners). Recent government reports indicate about 80% of adults are not meeting national guidelines for regular physical activity.

JEN'S USE OF SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

The ABA Graduate Student Assistance Fund helped with two aspects of my dissertation research.

First, the funds were used to purchase gift card incentives for a large-scale online survey. It can sometimes be difficult to motivate people to respond to surveys, and moreover, to complete them! When I began, I thought a realistic goal was for 100 survey responses, but ultimately, I was able to obtain 555 completed surveys!

Second, I had designed my survey as a recruitment tool for a related follow-up study (also part of my dissertation). From the 555 respondents, only a portion were local to Tampa. Of those, 97 responded that they'd like to be contacted as a possible participant for the in-person study. As a result, the majority of my participants for the experimental aspect came from study respondents. This is especially important because one goal of my study was to use a true representative sample of the population I was studying, rather than the convenience samples used in previous research in the same area. The gift cards widened the potential pool for participants for Study 2. I was also able to use some funds for research materials for that second study.

WHAT JEN SAYS ABOUT THE USF ABA PHD PROGRAM:

USF has a formidable PhD program in ABA, preparing candidates for the teaching and research aspects critical for a career in academia or other PhD-level positions. The program set up, and guidance from my advisor, has been instrumental in promoting and supporting the numerous research projects I have been able to develop or work on with others. A collegial attitude and collaboration across labs, departments, universities, and the community are highly encouraged.

Upon graduation, Jen has obtained a research position with Auburn University. We wish her all the best!



ABA Scholarship Spotlight

Please consider supporting more students like Jen by contributing to the ABA Graduate Student Assistance Fund (#530025). <https://giving.usf.edu/>