

Sana Qaiser

URA Spring 2024 Reflection Blog

As I close out my senior year, I am so thankful to have been a research assistant for HCAP this past semester. As a South Asian and a clinical psychology major, I have always been interested in adding to the growing body of research in my community. HCAP presented me with the perfect opportunity to explore my interests and build my skills in research. In this program, I worked closely with peers to identify stress factors and effective writing strategies to help create a workshop for Asian American high school students to explore their identities, values, and strengths and develop skills to write personal statements for college admissions.

Within this program, I learned more about myself as a researcher. As a psychology major, I always knew research was an option for me to explore, but it was something I often felt scared or anxious to pursue. While taking research classes at Hunter, I felt that I was only good at research skills within the confines of a classroom that provided me with specific topics, curated data sets, and simple tasks. The thought of doing my own research scared me because I didn't feel confident enough in my skills to pursue independent projects. Joining this research program provided me the opportunity to gain research experience outside of a classroom before I graduate, and to know if it was something I could do. During this semester, I learned that research isn't as scary as it seemed and that even when doing research outside of a classroom, you are never alone. This program helped me gain confidence in pursuing research and asking questions when I didn't understand something. The program taught me to love research when pursuing topics I am truly interested in. Research often felt like work you had to do but would never enjoy, but after participating in this program, I learned how much I truly enjoy researching

and using that research to develop programs that can lead to change. I will continue to build and strengthen the skills I gained as I explore post-grad opportunities.

As I graduate this semester, I can leave Hunter feeling accomplished in all that I was able to do. I am proud of the work we did together and I am excited to see the results of the program which will be held this summer. I am grateful to my fellow research assistants and Dr. Linh An, for the experience and opportunity.