Outstanding Doctoral Student Award
Lauren Rocha

Lauren Rocha is the recipient of the 2020 Outstanding Doctoral Student Award. She is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology.

Described by her nominators as an outstanding student and integral part of the department, several of her faculty instructors and mentors say Lauren is a brilliant student, a skilled researcher, and an enthusiastic and engaging teaching assistant. Lauren exhibits exceptional leadership skills and is always willing to help in the department with various committees, teaching, and research responsibilities. She has served as a teaching assistant for six different courses in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, and in her second year as a doctoral student has one peer-reviewed publication in press with four other manuscripts submitted for review.

Lauren currently serves as a graduate assistant for the department's federally funded Tex-CHIP workforce development grant. In this role, she networks with community providers to secure training site placement for our students, recruits panelists for intensive specialized training on integrated care, and serves as a program liaison to the local mental health community. Lauren also maintains an active presence in several local, state, and national counseling organizations. She is an officer in the local Theta Alpha Mu chapter of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) and serves as an editorial assistant for the Journal of Professional Counseling. A testament to her hard work and dedication to her chosen profession is her recent recognition as an Emerging Leader Fellow with the Texas Association of Humanistic Education and Development.

Before becoming an officer in our Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Honor Society, she helped organize a food drive to benefit Izzy's pantry. She participated in Texas Counseling Association Advocacy Day, where she traveled with other students to meet with state legislators on counseling-related issues. As a result of her work in advocacy, she has dedicated her research agenda to the construct of grit and how to foster grit in others. She is passionate about helping others and believes that through her research, she will facilitate the success of children, adolescents, and young adults.

Lauren Rocha was nominated by Dr. Jennifer Gerlach, Dr. Michelle Hollenbaugh, and Dr. Joshua Watson from the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology.