NABA Student Representative

Candidate:
Finley W. Aavatsmark

Candidate Bio

Finley Aavatsmark is currently a 3rd year master's student in the University of Nevada, Reno's Behavior Analysis Program under the advisement of Dr. Bethany Contreras. Finley received their Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Middle Tennessee State University in 2021.

Finley began conducting research in behavior analysis in 2018, with a focus on skill acquisition with autistic adolescents. In 2020, Finley became a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) and began working in-homes, clinics and schools across middle Tennessee before transitioning to work primarily with disabled children in schools.

In Reno, Finley has worked as a teaching assistant at UNR teaching PSY 101 under Dr. Ramona Houmanfar's Structured-Pace, Personalized, Interactive and Networked (SPIN) System of Instruction, provided early intervention services in a clinic and trained undergraduates through UNR's Spectrum Learning Center under Dr. Bethany Contreras, worked as a consultant in Washoe County School District through Behavioral Education and Consulting Services under Dr. Matthew Lewon, and as a teaching assistant for the Global Institute of Behavior Analysis under Dr. Laura Barcelos Nomicos.

Finley's current research focuses on social validity, with an emphasis on increasing social validity from the consumer's of behavior analysis, including research that promotes anti-ableism and neurodiverse-affirming practices while minimizing partial representation from the autistic community.

What is your experience with generating and managing schedules?
I served as the Director of Concessions and Director of Volunteer Services from 2014-2019 at Heartland Soccer Club: Nashville Youth Soccer Associations where I was in charge of recruiting and scheduling volunteers on a weekly basis throughout soccer season. More recently, I have maintained 2-3 graduate assistantship positions at a time at UNR and have had to generate and manage schedules for myself and my undergraduate trainees. All of my experiences have utilized Excel to generate schedules.

Why do you want to join the NABA Board?
Being enrolled in UNR's Behavior Analysis program, I feel a strong sense of pride in the legacy of Dr. Linda Hayes and her foundational role in the roots of NABA, UNR's BA program, and the presence of behavior analysis in Nevada. Additionally, I am passionate about fostering community engagement and contributing to initiatives that bring diverse networks of behavior analysts together to advance our field. Joining the board would be an honor and an incredible opportunity to give back to a conference that has been so influential to me.

What would you like for NABA to do that it isn't already doing?
I would love to see NABA's accessibility grow. This could include offering scholarships for students or professionals from underrepresented groups, especially those who need to travel for attendance (e.g., from Vegas to Reno or vice-versa).

Candidate:
Sydney Morgan

<u>Candidate Bio</u>

My name is Sydney Morgan, and I am currently enrolled as a master's student at the University of Nevada, Reno. I am enrolled in the Online Academy for Behavior Analysis (OnABA) offered by the Global Institute for Behavior Analysis (GIBA). I am on track to graduate with a Master of Science in Behavior Analysis in May of 2025. I also completed my undergraduate studies at UNR. In May of 2022, I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish.

I have a passion for education and teaching and am constantly looking for opportunities to learn more and share what I know.

As I am developing my master's thesis, I am focusing on learning about the literature available regarding academic procrastination and exploring the connection between mental health and academic performance among graduate students. In my practical training through the graduate program, I work with my supervisor to design and host study sessions for other students who are also enrolled in OnABA. Additionally, I have worked with my supervisor to learn about how to be an inclusive instructor and create a learning environment that encourages and supports diverse learners. At this time, I have hosted a total of four study sessions to help students prepare for their final in a Principles of Behavior Analysis course, which is one of the introductory courses in the program. I have also hosted a Relational Frame Theory (RFT) study session, covering basics of RFT, which was offered to the entire program in the Summer of 2024. For each of these sessions, I have designed all of the content, including powerpoints, pre/post tests, feedback surveys, interactive games, and more. I truly enjoy any opportunity to create educational content, engage with new peers, and support students in mastering course content.

I would love the opportunity to be able to use these skills to serve as a board member representing Nevada's diverse behavior analytic community. I would use this position as a means of connecting NABA with a wider audience and communicating behavior analytic research with the wider population. I truly appreciate the opportunity to be considered for this position, so thank you again for your consideration!

<u>What is your experience with generating and managing schedules?</u>
I have a lot of experience with both generating and managing schedules. At my current place of employment, I designed almost all of our employees' work schedules. Additionally, I created new office hours for our clinic due to changes in staffing. As I discussed in my bio, I have also held multiple study sessions for other graduate students, and I am in charge of scheduling these sessions at times where most students are available to attend. On a personal level, I work full-time and attend graduate school full-time, so I have to be focused on managing my own schedule to make sure I complete all the tasks I need to each day.

<u>Why do you want to join the NABA Board?</u>
I enjoy being actively involved in my community, especially when it comes to topics I am personally interested in. Also, I have been trying to find opportunities to meet more people within the field, and unfortunately, this has been somewhat difficult for me to facilitate so far. Being on the NABA board would allow me the opportunity to not only be actively engaged myself, but I would also be able to create those opportunities for others. Additionally, I would like expand my professional skill set, and I believe NABA

would allow me opportunities to do so. I have always enjoyed working in a collaborative environment, so being a board member would offer another place where I am able to do so.

What would you like for NABA to do that it isn't already doing?
One area that I would like to focus on is expanding NABA's reach, especially when it comes to involving more students who are interested in behavior analysis. In my personal experience, I would not have known about NABA if I did not have a mentor and professor who shared the information about NABA with me. After attending and volunteering for the NABA 2024 conference, I spoke with some of my peers who expressed that they were unaware of NABA and would have liked to have attended the conference. With that said, I would love to be a voice for NABA to reach this audience. I would also like to create more opportunities for community events throughout Nevada. Many of my peers in my cohort, as well as other students in the program, have expressed interest in finding opportunities to meet and connect with other people in the field. I would hope to be able to create opportunities like this, as well.