#### SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSAL

**Title: Enhancing Motivation, Self-Efficacy and Response-Efficacy through Regulatory Fit**

**1.** Approximately 150 students from Texas State University will be recruited to voluntarily participate in this study. Participants will be freshmen and sophomores enrolled in undergraduate psychology courses. Approximately equal numbers of males and females will be recruited with the expected age range to be between 18 and 25. An even distribution of race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status is expected. There are several patient inclusion criteria: Participants must be 18 and older, literate in English, and have no language reading or comprehension disabilities (e.g. dyslexia). The rationale for studying this group of participants is to determine how regulatory fit (i.e. experienced when individuals use means of goal pursuit to match their regulatory focus, or the distinct motivational system that regulates goal-directed behavior; Individuals feel right about what they are doing, or want to do, and their engagement in goal-directed behaviors is strengthened) affects intention to eat a healthy diet, self-efficacy (i.e. one’s perceived ability to perform a behavior successfully) and response-efficacy (i.e. one’s belief about the effectiveness of a behavior) in a group that is particularly vulnerable to becoming overweight and obese.

**2.** Participants will be recruited by the researcher in their undergraduate classes. During class time allotted to the researcher by the instructor of the course, the researcher will explain, briefly, what the study is examining. Students will be informed that the researcher has been gathering data to investigate the factors associated with successful healthy behavior initiation, specifically healthy eating, and failed healthy behavior initiation. The researcher will then pass out a sign-up sheet on which students will write down their name, academic major and school e-mail address. Participants will then be e-mailed a time to meet the researcher in room 212 of the psychology building. They will be tested in groups of 5 or 10. Participants will be required to sign a consent form distributed by the researcher at the beginning of the study. They will be informed that the researcher has been gathering data to investigate the factors associated with successful healthy behavior initiation, specifically healthy eating, and failed healthy behavior initiation. The participants will also be told that the researcher is interested in learning about students’ impressions of other individuals’ experiences and also in their own level of adjustment to college life. Consent forms will briefly describe to students the purpose of the research and reassure them that the information obtained during the study will be kept confidential and that their names will not be released (see attached consent form). Each participant will be assigned an ID number to remain anonymous; this ID number will be listed at the top of all of their surveys. Completed consent documents will be stored at Texas State University in a locked cabinet in the Psychology Department; 2 months after completion of the study, they will be destroyed. No one other than the researchers will have access to the documents. Students will also be informed that they will not be penalized if they chose not to participate in the study and will be free to withdraw at any time.

**3.** After reviewing and signing the consent form, participants will complete the General Regulatory Focus Scale (Lockwood, Jordan & Kunda, 2002) intended to assess their regulatory focus (see attached survey). Once completed, participants will then be asked to review information about healthy eating presented as either gain-framed messages (benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables and less fat) or loss-framed information (costs of not eating a diet high in fat and low in fruits and vegetables). After reading over the information, participants will be exposed to either a positive or negative role model. First, participants will read a one-page sign-up sheet that includes blanks for name, phone number, gender, and academic major. The sign-up sheet will have been filled in by hand, supposedly by a participant in a previous study. The name and phone number will be blacked out in marker, as though to preserve anonymity of the bogus student. Again, participants will be exposed to someone who is matched to them on gender and academic major, and the role model will also be someone who is farther along in school than the participants (e.g. beginning their senior year in college). The page following the sign-up sheet will be a self-description, seemingly written by the same person. In the positive model condition, the model will describe healthy eating behaviors and the positive experiences associated with it. In the negative model condition, the model will describe experiencing difficulties as a result of not eating healthily (See attached for example paragraphs). Finally, a 21-item questionnaire will be distributed to the participants to assess intention to eat a healthy diet (Peng, 2009), self-efficacy (Peng, 2009) and response-efficacy (Schwarz & Renner, 2000) in regards to healthy eating (See attached questionnaire).

**4.** No potential risks are thought to occur as a result of participating in this study. Participant’s intention, self-efficacy and response efficacy in regards to eating a healthy diet will be measured through questionnaires. However, participants may feel uncomfortable with confidentiality issues or answering some questions if they have a pre-existing eating disorder (e.g. anorexia) or have issues with their body weight (e.g. obesity).

5. In order to combat the aforementioned issues, the participants will be reminded that the data obtained will be strictly confidential. Only the researchers will have access to the data, the data will be under strict control, and the research data will be identified only by ID number. The data for each individual will be entered in a data file under their ID numbers so it will be impossible to connect the information obtained to the participant. If participants are negatively affected by answering questions on the surveys regarding healthy eating (e.g. they have body weight issues such as bulimia), information about counseling services will be provided. One such service is the Texas State Counseling Center. Mental health services at the Counseling Center are free to registered students, though the number of sessions allowed may be limited. Finally, participants will be assured they can terminate their participation at any time if they feel discomfort with taking part in the study.

6. The potential benefits of this research for the participants include the extra credit offered as a result of participating in the study. Another potential benefit is that the participants’ knowledge and awareness of the risks and benefits of eating/not eating a healthy diet is improved. Finally, a potential benefit could be that as a result of the information presented, participants’ intention to eat a healthy diet and self- and response-efficacy in regards to healthy eating increase, and this may lead to a positive health behavior change. Benefits of this study to society in general will include greater insight into the predictors of unhealthy eating and help to inform the design of interventions to improve eating behaviors.

7. As a result of participating in this study, students will be offered extra credit in their undergraduate psychology courses. Extra credit for participation in the study is equivalent to 1 point in 100 of the final grade. Students who choose not to participate in this study will have the alternative option of writing a short essay on a topic of the instructor’s choice.

8. The benefits of this research outweigh the risks because the problems of unhealthy eating and obesity are significant issues in today’s society. Participants volunteering to take part in this study and complete the survey questions will help in the long run to improve our understanding of psychosocial factors associated with unhealthy eating. Thus, findings from this study will benefit researchers studying these issues by adding to the research literature in this area.

1. Texas State University, Department of Psychology will be used as the site for this study. Approval for this study will come from the Office of the Graduate College at Texas State University.
2. As a Health Psychology graduate student on the research track, I am interested in researching factors that affect attitude and behavior change and development in regards to health behaviors. This study is specifically looking at healthy eating. I hope my research can contribute to this particular field of psychology, specifically in regards to tailoring obesity prevention programs to individuals’ needs. This project is also intended to fulfill the requirements for the master’s degree thesis in Health Psychology. My supervisor for this study is Dr. Kelly Haskard-Zolnierek.
3. Accepted proposal by the thesis committee is attached.
4. N/A. This is the first time this research has been submitted for IRB review

13. Graduate student Vanessa Errisuriz will have access to the data as will her thesis committee (Dr. Kelly Haskard-Zolnierek, Dr. Maria Czyzewska and Dr. Randall Osborne, all from the Department of Psychology, Texas State University).