Greetings From the Director!

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It has been another fun, hard working and exciting year for our program. One of the biggest events of the past year was the decision to bring in Debbie Thurneck, Psy.D. for a one year visiting professor position to help us fill the gap left by Dr. Bill Walker. Debbie is a recent graduate from our program (’07) and is currently finishing up her postdoctoral training at Virginia Tech’s Counseling Center. She is a wonderful therapist, knows our philosophy very well, and is an exemplar of the kind of psychologist our program tries to produce. She also has very strong organizational skills and because she understands the perspective of students, she will help the program become more efficient and clear in its organization.

A big event last year was our annual trip to EPA. Nine CI doc students and I headed up to Boston where we presented five separate posters on topics as varied as beliefs of Indian primary caregivers, the Justification Hypothesis, the Building Multicultural Awareness Workshop, Biofeedback, and Gender Differences in social behavior. It wasn’t all academic and we enjoyed several evenings of frolicking in the city!

Significant Alumni Transitions

We miss Dr. William (Bill) Ernst as a colleague in the Department of Graduate Psychology! We were fortunate that he taught Neuropsychology at JMU for the past few years. We congratulate him on his new positions as Clinical Neuropsychologist at the Moss Rehabilitation Hospital in Philadelphia, PA and the Director of Neuropsychological Evaluation and Consultation Services LLC.

We welcome Dr. Debi Kipps-Vaughn as a new colleague in the Department of Graduate Psychology, teaching for the School Psychology Program.

A Sample of Student Achievements

- Katherine Luci and Mykal Stanley, third year students, along with Monika Kushwaha, a second year student, presented a poster on the Building Multicultural Competency Workshop at the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology conference in Bremen, Germany
- Andrea Falzone, a third year student, was awarded the 2008 Jonathan Davis Memorial Scholarship for service, research, and interest in the field of suicide prevention
Other major accomplishments for the program include that for the second year in a row we graduated eight doctoral students in May. These students are: Comer Gaither, Kim Overstreet, Ghena Ismail, Jennifer Gilbert, Megan Fiore, Rituma Patel, Jarrod Reisweber, and Chase Levesque.

I am also pleased to report that all four of our current intern year students obtained excellent, APA approved internships. Congratulations to all of them!

The program continues to function well during the fall. Debbie has been a great asset to us, teaching practica and intellectual assessment and helping out with some program changes. Also, the first year students (Rebecca, Jessica U., Jessica S., Molly and Craig) are all doing extremely well in their adjustment here.

All in all, our little community continues to function reasonably successfully. Thanks to everyone for their hard work, compassion and empathy.

Warmly,
Gregg

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On the Move: Updates from the Faculty

INTRODUCING - - - Dr. Debbie Thurneck

Hi all! I was just thrilled when I was offered the Visiting Professor Position for this academic year and am enjoying my new role in the program. My focus this semester has been on teaching Cognitive and Educational Assessment, supervising ISLA cases, and helping out with some administrative /programmatic projects. I look forward to continuing with supervision next semester and teaching additional courses, including Personality Theories.

Most of you know that I am a 2007 graduate of the C-I program. You may not know much about my background prior to JMU, however, so I thought I would share a bit about what attracted me to this profession. Growing up, I was always interested in understanding why people behaved the way they did and what made them unique and different. As a young adult, my passion for understanding people intensified and I became particularly curious about the role that attitudes, beliefs, and values play in the development of relationships. Fueled by my curiosity in people and the world, I studied religion and culture in my undergraduate studies, trying to more fully understand the complexities of what moved people. Still interested in relationships, I then sought a more textured understanding of the influences of early family experiences and relationships on children in my graduate studies in School Counseling. The two years I spent working with children and families in an urban elementary school then served as the impetus for pursuing a doctoral degree. I wanted to be able to be more effective in addressing complex inter- and intrapersonal dynamics and the C-I program was the perfect place for me in developing these skills! As a doctoral student, I developed a clearer awareness of the interaction of biology, personality, and the socio-cultural context and started applying this to my conceptualization of people and systems. These new skills served me well as I completed my internship at WVU’s Carruth Center for Counseling and Psychological Services and my postdoctoral residency at Virginia Tech’s Cook Counseling Center. Now I am a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and am very much enjoying with being back in the program that enriched my life in so many ways!

Thanks to everyone for making me feel so welcome! Feel free to drop by my office anytime!

Debbie
Dr. Tim Schulte

Note: With CAPS and ISLA growing Tim’s position as Director was made full time. Congratulations Tim! While no longer officially a C-I core faculty member, we are fortunate that Tim continues to supervise and mentor students and will be teaching a summer course in Psychopharmacology.

Hello! The Interprofessional Services for Learning Assessment (ISLA) continues to grow in providing services to help students meet their academic goals. This past year ISLA was pleased to welcome Dr. Collene Slipka, staff psychiatrist at the CSDC as part of the Triage and Case Planning Team. Matt Trybus from Disability Services has also joined the ISLA Triage Team. Together with the other members of the Triage team we are able to provide a comprehensive and interprofessional approach to helping students with their learning needs. Current disciplinary representation through the ISLA process includes clinical psychology, counseling, school psychology, psychiatry, exceptional education, communication sciences and disorders, and disability law and policy. ISLA also continues to develop case management services to assist students implement ISLA recommendations and provide support with organization and study skills.

Cheers,

Tim

Dr. Anne Stewart:

Note: Anne was selected to receive the 2008 APT Service Award for outstanding organizational service to APT or its Foundation for Play Therapy or its chartered branches that significantly develops, promotes, or advances the value of play, play therapy, and credentialed play therapists. The Association for Play Therapy honored and presented this award to Anne at the Saturday morning mixer during its Oct. 14-19 Conference at the InterContinental Dallas Hotel in Addison, Texas. Congratulations Anne!

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this issue of the DOCument finds you and your families well. This communication seems a bit like a holiday letter and I do believe we have much to celebrate. Our program continues to clarify its identity and unique contribution to the field as it provides support for its members’ professional growth and development.

I have been able to publish three book chapters this year on the topics of supervision, resilience and play-based interventions with children and families. Harriet, Sharon Lovell and I conducted the 2nd JMU Leadership Academy and, as president of the Virginia Association of Play Therapy, hosted over 35 hours of play therapy training across the state, including evidence-based treatment for children and teens experiencing trauma, testifying in court, and working with children with autism. Partnering with colleagues and students, I conducted over 35 conference and workshop presentations this year at the state, national and international levels.

We are continuing to develop and integrate interprofessional-international experiences into the CI program with local and global activities. CI students serve as facilitators for the HHS class, Ethics in Healthcare: An Interprofessional Approach, and the Center for Service Learning’s training in self-reflection.

I am working on an interprofessional mine risk education grant from the US Department of State and the government of Jordan. We are collaborating with a Jordanian NGO to assess mine-related knowledge and behaviors and conduct an expressive arts intervention to convey mine risk education information and promote community resilience.

Lennie and I are continuing our research of the narratives from faculty members at Virginia Tech, following the tragic shootings. My research with caregiver-child interactions continues to develop, most recently being explored with military families. Emily Akerson and Cheryl Talley and I are expanding the BMCW to train more faculty and to determine meaningful measures of the impact of the training.

I look forward to hearing from you! Anne
Dr. Harriet Cobb

Hello Esteemed Alums, Colleagues, and Students!

I hope everyone is doing well these days. My focus this past year has been on contemplating potential future directions of professional psychology in the context of our dynamic world. (See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMcfrLYDm2U for a wow experience). While appreciating our history and definitely enjoying the present, I am excited about how we psychologists can help shape our future through continued innovations in training and practice.

In thinking about the relationship between our program’s values and our professional lives, here is a Blueprint for your consideration …

A combined-integrated philosophy + critical thinking + creativity/flexibility + self-awareness + ethics/humanity + appreciation of diversity + “a little help” = Meaningful Work for a Lifetime

We’re still here if you need “a little help” as you move through life transitions.

Warm thoughts,
Harriet

Dr. Craig Shealy

Greetings everyone!

Lots of big news for IBAVI! In a partnership with MacNeil Lehrer Productions, the International Beliefs and Values Institute (IBAVI) is in the process of producing the video series, "Making Sense of Beliefs and Values: A World of Views". I am enjoying my role as Editor-in-Chief of a new journal with Springer Publishing--"Beliefs and Values: Understanding the Global Implications of Human Nature." In addition, IBAVI will be hosting a 2009 conference, "Sustainable Visions and Values: Calling the Global Academy to Action." I am so pleased that Dr. Devi Bhuyan ('07 alum) continues to collaborate with us. IBAVI recently honored Dr. Akwasi Aidoo with the Sustainable Visions and Values Award for his exemplary work as Executive Director of Trust Africa. Trust Africa is an organization that seeks to strengthen African initiatives in supporting democracy, fostering enterprise, and maximizing resources. I remain excited about the opportunities psychologists have to make meaningful contributions toward addressing global issues.

Please stay in touch,
Craig
Greetings from Dayton, Ohio! I am currently doing my predoctoral internship at Wright State University, with a rotation in Pediatric psychology at the Children's Medical Center. In addition, I have a rotation at the Ellis Human Development Institute working with children and families in the community. My duties include co-teaching a Rorschach course, supervising doctoral psychology students, and conducting assessments and therapy for a wide range of clients.

I have to say the emphasis our program has on self reflection and having an integrative theoretical orientation has prepared me well for the variety of issues seen in a community mental health setting. Finally I want to say good luck to the third years with the application process, hello to all the 2nd years- I miss you! Welcome to all the newcomers to our program.

~Dara Zafran

It is hard to believe that I have already completed a quarter of my Pre-doctoral Internship! Time flies when you are having fun in Chocolate Town, USA. The Milton Hershey School, comprised of over 1600 “at-risk” students from Pre-K through 12th grade, is keeping me busy. As an intern, I am working across elementary, middle, and senior divisions. I am completing evaluations, meeting with students for therapy, and consulting with teachers, houseparents, and sponsors.

So far, the experience has been great. Milton Hershey School was the perfect match, aligned with my previous training and professional development. I have never been this busy in my life…but I love what I am doing!

~Danielle Budash
I am currently on internship for the Oklahoma Health Consortium. I am working with students at Counseling and Testing Services at the University of Oklahoma, conducting neuropsychological evaluations at NeuroResources in Oklahoma City, and next semester will also be at Integris Jim Thorpe Rehabilitation Hospital conducting assessments for the Brain Injury division.

The C-I program helped prepare me for this internship by teaching me how to do a comprehensive and thorough psychological evaluation, as well as how to focus on process, reflection, and integrating knowledge. They really want the best for us, and prepare us well! :)  

~ Parisa Montazeri

I'm currently a Psychology Intern at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in White River Junction, Vermont and an Intern at the Center for Human Development at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. I provide individual therapy, group therapy, and psychological assessment services to Veterans and their families in both inpatient and outpatient settings. Interns at the medical center also work closely with the National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, which is located on the hospital grounds.

Veterans seek treatment for a wide range of presenting concerns, the most common of which are anxiety, depression, substance abuse disorders, PTSD, traumatic brain injury, and dementia is a concern for many older veterans. I am fortunate to be able to work alongside psychiatrists, primary care physicians, social workers, medical residents, and clinical researchers. There are lots of opportunities for clinical training, including time limited dynamic psychotherapy, cognitive processing therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and numerous psychological assessment procedures. The internship has proven to be both challenging and rewarding and offers numerous opportunities for growth and learning.

~ Neal Rittenhouse
This fall semester of my third year in the C-I program has been a busy one (e.g., internship applications, dissertation proposal), yet also highly rewarding! In the spring, I was honored to be the 2008 recipient of the Jonathan Davis Memorial Scholarship for service, research, and interest in the field of suicide prevention. Since then, I have been working with Dr. Jane Wiggins of the Central Shenandoah Valley Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative; we have been using evidence-based wellness and suicide prevention curricula to teach middle school students how to keep themselves mentally and emotionally well, how to look for signs of depression in themselves and others, and how to link to appropriate resources (i.e. trusting adults) when necessary. I am also spending two days a week at the Mary D. Ainsworth Child-Parent Attachment Clinic, observing intensive attachment evaluations, as well as working on an NIH-funded research project examining the contribution of caregiver variables in the behavioral and emotional functioning of maltreated children in foster and adoptive care. I am learning so much this semester while completing very meaningful work, and I look forward to seeing what the future has in store with regards to internship placement next year.  

~Andrea Falzone

I am completing a year-long internship in neuropsychological assessment at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center in Fishersville. I am also working hard on my dissertation research, a qualitative analysis of a program for survivors of torture in Northern Virginia. I greatly enjoyed participating in the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology conference in Bremen, Germany, this past summer, along with Mykal Stanley and Monika Kushwaha. Ein prost!  

~Katherine Luci
This semester has been crazy and exciting – I'm working on getting my dissertation underway, and internship applications are still going out. I was able to go to the APA convention over the summer and presented (along with Caitlin) a poster for the Peace Division on juvenile justice practices and ethical considerations for psychologists. I also love being able to teach intro to psychology classes – it gives me such a high! Overall, a great second year so far!

~Jenna Holt
I am currently in the process of exploring my dissertation topic, which will focus on the benefits of social-emotional learning on young males at risk for dropping out of high school and/or college. There are a couple of venues where this project may head, and I am excited to explore my options for it!

~Monika Kushwaha

I started group work along with another counseling student at the senior center in Westover. I have discovered a new meaning and purpose in my career working with this population......there is so much fun and enthusiasm around. I never thought it would be so enriching and meaningful....and the feeling that you get at the end of the day....is just so serene.

~Chitra Iyer

I'm currently engaged in the internship application process and really understanding how stressful that can be. I have applied to a number of hospital sites for adults with severe mental illness and sites dedicated to serving a rural population. I am also in the process of putting together my dissertation proposal and will focus on analyzing the fit between Gregg's Unified Theory and several prominent integrative psychotherapies.

~Jason Stout
What Superpower would you want to have?

Craig Asselin – Initially I was torn between having the ability to make it form one end of Harrisonburg to the other without hitting a red light and the power to always find “prime parking”. I quickly realized that it would make more sense to have the ability to teleport wherever I want. That way I can avoid traffic lights, expensive airline tickets, jet lag, and never finding parking!

Rebecca Lahaie – The super power that I would like to have is the ability to manipulate time. This power would allow me to slow time as needed, making it possible to stretch out joyful moments with my family and friends. It would also provide more opportunities for relaxation and exploration of my interests. I bet it would even come in handy with regard to meeting some of those pesky deadlines... Overall, I think the super power of time manipulation would come in quite handy.

Molly Reams – I would like to be able to control the weather like Mother Nature. Then I could make each day sunny and 75.

Jessica Spaeth – I would like to be able to fly. I think it would be fascinating to get the 'bird's eye view' of the world. I love to travel and I think that being able to fly would allow me to see the people I have met from different places around the world more easily and more frequently. I think if I was able to fly, I would also be able to see my family more often as we are all so spread apart. They are a big part of my life and I wish we could see one another more frequently. Being able to fly also means more freedom, to defy gravity seems like such an awesome power and I think it would be really amazing!

Jessica Umhoefer – I’ve always thought it would be great to have the power to read peoples’ minds. I suppose that is why I am interested in psychology – to see how people think and what makes them tick.
Leadership Academy 2008
The third annual Leadership Academy coordinated by Sharon Lovell, Harriet Cobb, and Anne Stewart was held on December 5th. Leaders from mental health organizations, and education and medical settings participated in a stimulating day of presentations from Cara Meixner, Ph.D. on Zen and the Art of Leadership; Marsha Mayes-Bernard, M.S., on Creative Renewal; William Hawk, Ph.D., on Paying it Forward: Ethical Models for Leaders; and John Glick, M.D., on Rubber Chicken Soup in the Workplace. Several doc students assisted and participated in the workshop. (Ask them about the Big Underwear activity sometime!)

Multicultural Workshops
During both the Fall and Spring semesters, C-I students during their first and second year serve as facilitators in Building Multicultural Competency Workshops (BMCW). Students prepare for this experience during their Doctoral Seminar class and work with Emily Ackerson, Anne Stewart, and Cheryl Talley on the objectives of this workshop. These workshops are targeted toward undergraduate students in the health disciplines, particularly nursing, social work, and psychology. The BMCW is one of many efforts of the C-I program to support diversity and interprofessionalism.

Donations:
As you well know, the cost of completing dissertation research can be quite high, especially participant costs for incentives and outcome measures. Following in your footsteps, our students continue to produce quality dissertations. Donations to support their research would be deeply appreciated! Make your checks payable to JMU C-I Doctoral Program. Thank you for all of your contributions both past, present, and future!

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~Thank you!!