Health Psychology Ph.D. Program Newsletter
Summer 2016

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Health Psychology Ph. D. Program
http://healthpsych.uncc.edu/
10th Anniversary Celebration!

To commemorate our 10-year anniversary, the Health Psychology Ph. D. Program hosted an anniversary celebration on May 5th, in the Harris Alumni Center at UNC Charlotte. At this event, we will celebrate what we have accomplished over the past decade. Various faculty members, current and former students, and university and community partners joined the celebration. I want to thank the planning committee (Alyssa Vela, Cara Blevins, Marie Hayes, Meredith Griffin, and Paisley Lewis) and all of the students, faculty, and staff who contributed to making this a successful event.

Program Meeting for Fall 2016

Time: 11:00 AM
Location: Colvard 3120
September 16, October 21, November 18th, and December 2nd.

HPGSA Update

It’s been another exciting year for the Health Psychology Graduate Student Association. This year, with immense help from our Treasurer, Paisley Lewis, we were able to support several outstanding events, including the Southeastern ECO Conference organized by Vice President, Jackie Tynan, the HP interview day and social organized by Social Chair, Kirk Szczepkowski, and the Health Psychology 10-year anniversary celebration on May 5th.

One of our favorite initiatives each year is our involvement with the Greater Enrichment Program at Merry Oaks Elementary School. Organized by our Philanthropy Chair, Nicole Hilaire, our graduate students have volunteered there every month, planning fun, healthy, and educational afterschool projects for the kids. Among the activities this year were kid’s yoga, optical illusions, and celebrating Earth Day!

This was also the inaugural year of the Graduate Student Mentoring Program, which was created to welcome incoming students and match them with advanced HP doctoral students for social and academic support. I am very lucky to work with such great students who really care about this program.

We’ve enjoyed seeing you at our coffee hour and look forward to another year of serving our students.

Sara Sagui
HPGSA President (2015-2016)

Congratulations to the members of the HGPSA Executive Board for 2016-2017!!

President: Nadia Jafari
Vice president: Jessica Taylor
Secretary: Oliva Riffle
Congratulations!!!

Graduates

Congratulations to Jenna Ray (general), Jessica Groleau (clinical), Maysa DeSousa (general), Katherine Roof (general), and Virginia Johnson (community) for successfully completing the Program and receiving a doctoral degree Health Psychology.

From Left to Right: Jenna Ray, Jessica Groleau, Maysa DeSousa, and Katherine Roof. Fall 2015
Internship Placements

Congratulations to our four advanced students who applied and matched for internships this year. Each student matched to one of their top choices and will be completing health psychology-related internships at nationally renowned sites.

Abigail Hardin: University of Washington, Behavior Medicine and Neuropsychology
Linda McWhorter: DuPont Children's Hospital, Pediatric Psychology
Michelle Rodriguez-Diaz: University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital, Outpatient Behavioral Health/Hispanic focus
Noy Phimphasone: West Haven VA (Connecticut), Clinical Health Psychology

Student Awards

Congratulations to Cara Blevins for winning that Outstanding Graduate Poster Award from 2nd Annual Veteran’s Health Conference at UNC Charlotte. Cara was also recognized for Outstanding Service to APA Division 19-Military Psychology. Cara was also awarded the The Mind and Life Institute Summer Research Institute Fellowship Award, the UNC Charlotte Dorrie S. Fretwell Professional Development Award, an APA Outstanding Poster Award (Division 56: Trauma Psychology), and an APA Student Travel Award (Division 19: Military Psychology). Finally, Cara has been nominated for the P.E.O. International National Doctoral Scholar Fellowship.
Congratulations to **Spencer Fix** for winning the Francisco J. Varela Award for Contemplative research from the Mind and Life Institute.

Congratulations to **Jaimelee Behrendt-Mihalski** for being the inaugural recipient of the UNC Charlotte DRRaM Graduate Fellowship and for being named the National Student Representative for SCRA (APA Division 27) for a 2-year term.

Congratulations to **Jessica Taylor** who was accorded an honorable mention by the National Science Foundation (NSF) for her application to the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Receiving this honor is a significant national academic achievement.

Congratulations to **Sara Sagui** for being named the Outstanding Student Research and the Outstanding Student Teaching Assistant by the Health Psychology PhD Program. Sara was also awarded a student travel award from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology to attend their 2016 annual meeting.

**Faculty Awards**

**Ryan Kilmer** was awarded the 2016 Provost’s Faculty Award for Community Engagement.

**Margaret M. Quinlan** was awarded the Bonnie E. Cone Early-Career Professorship in Teaching (2015-2018).

**Andrew Case** was recognized by the American Evaluation Association for an Exemplary Evaluation for “Consumer Researcher Driven Evaluation of Services at a Community Mental Health Center.”

**Faculty Achievements**

**Andrew Case**: Received a two-year loan repayment award from the National Institutes of Health.

**George Demakis** was named to the Clinical Advisory Committee for Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, the country’s largest mental health service plan. The Board meets quarterly and helps determine clinical policy and procedures for the many mental health practitioners that work with/or bill through Cardinal.

**Ryan Kilmer** was elected President of the American Orthopsychiatric Association. Founded in 1924, Ortho is a membership organization of professionals from psychiatry, psychology, social work, sociology, nursing, and law who are concerned about the application of mental health research to the creation of humane social policy, the improvement of mental health practice in a manner consistent with human rights, and the prevention of mental health problems.

**Virginia Gil-Rivas** was selected as Member at Large of the Board of Directors of the American Orthopsychiatric Association.
**Magaret M. Quilnan** (co-producer) of *Creative Abundance*. Feature-length documentary produced by L. M. Harter, E. Shaw, & **Margaret M. Quilnan**. Athens, OH: WOUB Center for Public Media. First released documentary in series entitled *The Courage of Creativity*. The series explores connections between art and well-being. Creative Abundance profiles the efforts of Patty Mitchell and Susan Dloughy, activists working alongside individuals with disability who embrace an asset-approach for organizational innovation and social change.

**Publications**


†Gil-Rivas, V., & †Kilmer, P. R. (in press). Building community capacity and fostering disaster resilience. Journal of Clinical Psychology.

Hanges, P.J., Scherbaum, C., & †Reeve, C.L. (2015). There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than DGF. Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 8, 472-481.


† Denotes Health Psychology Program faculty/auxiliary faculty
* Denotes Health Psychology Doctoral Student
Presentations


*Award recipient- Outstanding Division Poster


*Sagui, S. J., *Blevins, C. L., & †Levens, S. M. (2016). Don’t worry, be happy: Longitudinal changes in positive affect predict behavioral health outcomes. Thematic Flash Talk accepted for presentation at the Society for Affective Science Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.


† Denotes Health Psychology Program faculty/auxiliary faculty
* Denotes Health Psychology Doctoral Student
2015-2016 Student Cohort

**Drew Gadaire**

BS in Psychology from Davidson College

Community Concentration

Drew is interested in youth development in marginalized populations and community factors/interventions that may improve outcomes for at-risk youth. Drew is also interested in education and the healthy development of immigrant youth.

**Erin Godly-Reynolds**

M.Ed. in Sport Administration from Wingate University, 2011
B.A. in Psychology and Dual Certification (Childhood Education/Special Education) from Marist College, 2008

Community Concentration

Erin is interested in the prevention of childhood obesity and Type II diabetes; mother and infant wellness, specifically breastfeeding duration and rates in minority populations; utilizing program evaluation and implementation science to address challenges in educational and healthcare systems; and access to free and appropriate education for all children, including children with special needs and children from low SES households.

**Meredith Griffin**

BS in Psychology with Highest Honors from UNC Chapel Hill

Clinical Concentration

Meredith is interested in the hookup culture on college campuses, online mobile dating application use (i.e. Tinder), and romantic relationships.
Marie Hayes
BA in Psychology from the University of Albany (SUNY)
Clinical Concentration

Marie's current research interests are the application of technology to the prevention of disease through interventions promoting positive health behaviors, primarily in populations that are otherwise non-treatment seeking, or hard to reach.

Alyssa Minnick
BA, Psychology, Dickinson College, 2011
M.S., Clinical Psychology, Loyola University of Maryland, 2013
Clinical Concentration

Alyssa’s research interests are eating disorders, obesity, weight loss maintenance, social and interpersonal factors (e.g., fat talk) that contribute to body dissatisfaction and disordered eating incorporating technology into treatment

Sydney Park
BA in Psychology with a minor in Biological Sciences at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee
Clinical Concentration

Sydney is interested in executive functioning and emotion regulation

Brittany Price
BA in Psychology and BS in Animal Science from North Carolina State University
Clinical Concentration

Brittany is interested in stress, health disparities and physiological markers of stress.
Lydia Roos

Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the College of Charleston
General Concentration
Emotional trauma, health behaviors, and yoga, and their effects on stress reactivity, immune function, and the neuroendocrine system.

New Health Psychology Faculty

Victoria Scott

As a community psychologist, I work across settings and ecological levels (e.g., individual, program, organizational, community) to promote collective wellness using strength-based approaches. I have a background in clinical-community psychology and business, and particularly enjoy projects that involve interdisciplinary collaboration. My interests relate primarily to capacity building and the processes involved in spreading capacities across systems to elevate social impact. I am passionate about working with health care systems and community organizations. Currently my colleagues and I are working with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement on the Spreading Community Accelerators through Learning and Evaluation (SCALE) Initiative, a national effort to enhance the readiness and capabilities of communities for healthy outcomes. My research team is also collaborating with the Kennedy Forum and Morehouse School of Medicine to develop an instrument for measuring and improving the readiness of organizations for integrating behavioral health and primary care. Additionally, we are working in partnership Palmetto Health and the University of South Carolina School of Medicine-Columbia to study the impact of frontline nurse engagement in quality improvement activities. With a commitment toward bridging the gap between research and practice, we are continuously working to bring the fruits of our research into to hands of practitioners.
Andrew Case

My research focuses on the psychology of marginality and resilience with specific attention given to the experiences of African Americans and Black immigrants. Through one line of inquiry, I examine marginality as a social-structural determinant of health and life outcomes, identifying the specific pathways through which minority status adversely impacts physical and psychological health in adults and educational attainment and justice system-involvement in youth. Through another line of inquiry, I examine how individuals collectively resist marginality and enhance their wellbeing. I use the Counterspaces Framework to identify settings (e.g., churches, cultural organizations) and the setting processes within them (e.g., narrative identity work, social support) that foster resilience to racial marginality. To better illuminate the transactions between these settings and the persons who participate in them, I routinely employ context-sensitive approaches and methodologies including PAR/CBPR, participant observation, document analysis, and interviewing. As a community psychologist I hold a deep commitment to transformation; ultimately, I seek to use my research and consultation activities to enhance the social-structural conditions that precipitate favorable outcomes for racial/ethnic minority individuals within health, education, and justice systems.

Upcoming Conferences

American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology
Chicago, IL
June 9-12, 2016

International Regional Stress and Behavior Conference
Miami, FL
June 22-24, 2016

American Psychological Association Annual Convention
Denver, Colorado
August 4-7, 2016

Integrative Medicine for Mental Health
Washington D.C.
September 29 – October 2

American Evaluation Association
Atlanta, Georgia
October 24-29, 2016
Southeastern ECO Conference
Atlanta, GA (Georgia State University)
October 21-22

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies
Dallas, TX
November 10, 2016

International Society of Behavioral Medicine
Melbourne, Australia
December 7-10, 2016