Counseling & Student Personnel Services Program

Fall 2014 NEWSLETTER
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BIG News! The University of Georgia is ranked #2 in the nation for graduate programs in student counseling and personnel services. We are proud to be consistently ranked in the top!

New Faculty Member: Dr. George McMahon

George McMahon is a new Assistant Professor at UGA, working primarily with the masters program in school counseling and the doctoral program in counseling and student personnel services. Prior to coming to UGA, George taught in the counseling programs at George Mason and Georgia State University and both the counseling masters program and Combined Clinical/Counseling Psychology Doctoral program at The University of South Alabama in Mobile. He received his BA in Psychology from The University of the South - Sewanee in 1992, and his M.Ed. in school counseling from The University of Virginia in 1996. He worked as an elementary and middle school counselor in New Orleans for four years before returning to school, receiving his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology at UGA in 2004.

George’s professional interests include professional school counseling and school counseling identity, group work in schools, and issues of equity and inclusivity in schools, particularly around the role of privilege in social justice and action. Most recently, George has published on “The Ecological Model of School Counseling”, which deconstructs the industrial model of education and school counseling and provides a theoretical basis for integrating recent calls for advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change in order to promote equitable, sustainable schools-as-systems.

George was born and raised in New Orleans, LA, and will always consider New Orleans “home”, but he and his family are so excited to in Athens. George lives with his partner, Stephanie, their two boys, Thomas (6) and Connor (5) (both boys would want you all to know that they are very fast), their dog Niki, and their two new kittens, Emmett and Otis. When George has spare time, he likes to fill it with football, music, outdoor adventures, traveling, and spending time with people who make him smile.

Introducing the newest cohort!

A new cohort joined the program late Spring 2014. Having survived the rigor of that first summer, this group of ten professionals are well on their way to a successful first year. Read their impressive bios here:
Margie Gill is the Assistant Clinic Director and Adjunct Professor at Brenau University and Executive Director of Tabitha’s House. Her research interests include racial disparities regarding giftedness and special education; sex trafficking; sexuality; ethnic identity.

Sarah Jones is the Assistant Director of First Year Experience at the University of West Georgia. Her research interests include students in transition across P-16 in marginalized populations.

Michael Drew is a Fire Service Consultant. His research interests include HIV/AIDS Prevention and Advocacy.

Ashlee Perry is a school counselor at Clarke Middle School. Her research interests include racial disparities regarding discipline, anti-bullying initiatives, restorative justice practices, college and career readiness.

Peter Paquette is the Assistant Dean & Director of Student Integrity at Georgia Tech. His research interests include Men and masculinities, student athlete identity development.

Tanya Tucker is a school counselor for Habersham County Schools. Her research interests include academic achievement for Latino students.

Tameka Oliphant is a Graduate Assistant at The University of Georgia. Her research interests include resiliency in disadvantaged populations (minority students, students with disabilities); school transitions; school counselors impact on student success.

Falon Thacker is a Residences Hall Director at Georgia State University. His research interests include rural college student first-year transitions.

Claire Davis is a Graduate Research Assistant at The University of Georgia. Her research interests include gender and sexuality studies.

C. Jean So is the Assistant Director of Orientation and Transition Programs and Part-time instructor of Education, University College at Kennesaw State University. Her research interests include exploring self-authorship and resiliency in college students.

Brown v: Voiceless in Ferguson, MO?

In the aftermath of the brutal shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO, I would be remiss in my authenticity if I did not admit that I would like to know what happened. Duelling narratives and multiple accounts about the incident concern me greatly as political theater overshadow the truth and public outcry silenced. I am devastated that a Black, American African male (unarmed) died of six gun shots based on a perceived threat, and wonder if it could ever be me. Am I the exception or will I be next? Regardless of my work and belief in meritocracy; I am still a Black, American African male in a society that frowns upon me for being me. I imagine fear, stigma, and stereotypes influence thoughts and actions of those who choose not to become familiar with the “unknown.”

Of course, Michael and I are not related genetically, but I do feel a sense of community with him. He was a human being and our physical identities mirror each other. I wish I could ask Michael and the officer what happened. Michael is dead and the officer is silently waiting for the conclusion of the investigation. Who will speak for Michael Brown? Who will speak for me? Who will speak up?

Unfortunately, there is reality in knowing that people die because of their race (or skin tone); disability; ethnic heritage; age; gender; sexual identity; relationship status; lack of privilege; religion; or socioeconomic status. Real life is not a reality show. It does not allow me or anyone to turn the T.V. off when discomfort challenges us to be real and authentic about who we are and how we think about each other.

“I am so thoughtful-ly reminded that I am no different than Michael Brown, except I have a voice to speak about social injustices that plague our communities.

- Nathaniel Brown

I am so thoughtful-ly reminded that I am no different than Michael Brown, except I have a voice to speak about social injustices that plague our communities. Social Justice in the Counseling and Student Personnel Services program at the University of Georgia is always scholarship and professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies and practices, such that disadvantageous marginalized groups gain increased access to the tools of self-determination (Goodman, Liang, Helms, Latta, Sparks, & Weintraub, 2004). As a future Ph.D. Counselor Practitioner-Educator Change Agent, I am required to speak up and advocate on behalf of those who are unable to speak for themselves. In doing so, I am committed beyond my educational experience to take reasonable action to eliminate systematic oppression in the forms of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, nationalism, and other biases.

Ultimately, I think it is much more about what I do rather than what I say that will gain more respect and trust of diverse populations seeking counseling or advocacy support. Therefore, the conversation about difference should never become indifferent if we are to make a difference and help save the life of those plagued by fear, oppression, and excessive force.
In an effort to streamline services at the extended campus, Ben Hall, the Library Manager, is now offering some new services this year for UGA Gwinnett Campus students—namely, Writing Center and Career Center support.

**Writing Center** – Students still have the option to make online appointments with Writing Center consultants at main campus (visit uga.mywconline.com for more info), however, students can now schedule face-to-face writing consultations with me. My role in these sessions is to help students become better writers through collaboration and by providing them with the tools and resources they need to evaluate their own writing. In other words, I don’t proofread entire papers, I don’t give answers, and I won’t write your thesis for you, but “...I can look at areas where you are struggling and provide you with advice and resources to improve your writing.”

Ben Hall, Library Manager, UGA Gwinnett Campus

**Career Center** — As far as career support, I can critique your résumés and cover letters. I am also coordinating some events with Career Center staff on subjects like networking and interview techniques. Be on the lookout for more information about these opportunities through the UGA Gwinnett Campus newsletter and the UGA Gwinnett website.

Getting to Know Your Faculty

I love SNL, even though I don’t watch it all that often, because I have so much respect for a show that has launched so many really funny people’s careers, but also that it has been a constant source of political and cultural satire for almost 40 years—that’s amazing.—Dr. McMahon

The Big Bang Theory - I like the humor and "smartness" of the show. It makes me laugh.—Dr. Griffith

It’s hard to choose just one—I have several, for different reasons, but if I have to choose...Homeland - complex characters, complicated storylines with twists & turns, amazing acting.—Dr. Dean

What is your favorite TV show and why?

I’m not a huge fan of TV (prefer movies!), but my partner and I have enjoyed binging on Call the Midwife. We loved the feminist bent. I haven’t watched the last season of Orange is the New Black, but I am a major Laverne Cox fan because of her social justice take on media with regard to trans women of color. All time fave show is definitely Lost.—Dr. Singh

There are 2; one drama (Scandal) and one reality (Top Chef).—Dr. Cooper

I enjoy watching murder mysteries like Dateline. Reminds me of reading my Nancy Drew books back in the day.—Dr. Daigle

Deadliest Catch is a tv show I first watched with my father almost 10 year ago. I believe it embraces and depicts some of most important personal traits, perseverance, cooperation, and fortitude.—Dr. Haskins

Modern Family—It shows the way the world is, the way it should be and it makes me laugh.—Dr. Jackson

I prefer my news from Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert, love Scandal for the plot twists, am addicted to the Property Brothers on HGTV, and love all British mystery series with special affection for Benedict Cumberbatch’s Sherlock.—Dr. Paisley

Dr. Jamie Brown, Dr. Anneliese Singh, Dr. Rodney Pennamon, Dr. Christy Land, Dr. Jolie Daigle, Dr. Diane Cooper, Dr. Jamie Brown

Summer Graduation 2014

Upcoming Conferences:

- National Multicultural Summit in Atlanta, GA — January 14-16, 2015
- Georgia Gay-Straight Alliance Summit at Agnes Scott College – February 7, 2015
- UGA Diversity Conference at UGA Gwinnett – February 27, 2015

ACA in Orlando, FL – March 12-15, 2015