Jenny Penney Oliver. As an advocate for social justice, a well-loved mentor and colleague, and a passionate coordinator of the Counseling and Human Development Services PhD program, Dr. Oliver touched the lives of everyone around her—students and faculty alike. Her obituary, (included below) was published in the Athens Banner-Herald on June 14, 2013 is a reminder of all the amazing things JPO did in her life:

On June 12, 2013, at the age 58, Jenny died after a one-year battle with lung cancer. She is survived by her husband of 33 years, J. Steve Oliver, and her sister, Melinda Hamrick, of West Jefferson, N.C. Jenny was born on May 15, 1955, in Wilmington, N.C., and came home from the hospital to the place that would be her hometown: Wallace, N.C. She was the daughter of the late Charles Brantley Penney and Dovie Logan Penney. She graduated from the Wallace-Rose Hill High School in 1973 and matriculated to North Carolina State University in the following fall. At NCSU, Jenny majored in psychology, and in her senior year, she was honored with the Psychology in the Community award given to one graduating senior of that program to recognize outstanding effort. This was just the first of many awards that would recognize her incredible sense of responsibility for the community in which she lived.

After graduating from NCSU in 1977, Jenny was employed as a psychologist assistant at Broughton Hospital, a psychiatric hospital in Morganton, N.C. On June 23, 1979, she married Steve Oliver and began a life that included more education and travel. In the early 1980s, she and Steve moved back to the Raleigh area, where Jenny ultimately received a Master's of Adult & Community College Education degree at NCSU, while also serving as the residence hall manager for the International Living & Learning Community of Alexander Hall on the NCSU campus.

After a move to Athens in 1983, Jenny was employed by the UGA Vice President of Student Affairs to work in the Office of Judicial Programs. Many of the students with whom she worked in that program remained friends until her death and have cited her as a powerful inspiration for their own sense of community involvement. In 1986, Jenny and Steve moved to Manhattan, Kan., and new employment at Kansas State University. In her work at KSU, Jenny began to put her intense focus on issues of multicultural education and diversity. Working there as part of a Ford Foundation-funded project to examine the nature of multicultural education found in schools of the western U.S., she traveled extensively and developed partnerships with school districts in such diverse places as Yakima, Wash., and the Navajo and Hopi Indian reservations of Arizona. This work, along with her life-long interest in issues of equity and diversity, stimulated the dissertation that ultimately resulted in her receiving a Ph.D. in the area of Counselor Education & Educational Psychology from Kansas State University in 1991.

In 1990, Jenny and Steve returned to Athens, where Jenny served as the assistant to the Dean of the UGA College of Education through much of the 1990s. Ultimately, she held a faculty position in the UGA COE Counseling and Human Development Services PhD program, Dr. Oliver touched the lives of everyone around her—students and faculty alike. Her obituary, (included below) was published in the Athens Banner-Herald on June 14, 2013 is a reminder of all the amazing things JPO did in her life:

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Life after the program... a concept my cohort peers and I found ourselves discussing often when in need of a study break. We fantasized at length about what it would be like to live without the pressure of project due dates, paper deadlines and (of course) the ever-lingering dissertation process. That fantasy became a reality for me in May of 2013 after 3 years. My doctoral experiences gave way to full professional and personal transformation. Unlike many of my cohort peers, I did not enter the program with clear career or research goals. I was new to the profession of school counseling and had thought little about what the program would offer me (aside from a raise in salary!). However, I was in love with the ideas of social justice and advocacy and wanted to learn more—and that I did. I threw myself into the doctoral process head-first. I increasingly began to see the importance of research, engagement in professional associations, and attending professional conferences. Admittedly, I was fatigued after graduation. Completing a doctoral program in three years while working full-time requires significant effort! However, I was connected with my professors and CSPS friends to develop various professional presentation and publication ideas, including preparing manuscripts for my dissertation for publication. Several months after graduation, I began contemplating the significance of impacting future generations of counselors through counselor education. Ultimately, I applied for a Tenure-Track Assistant Professorship at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. Throughout the job search process my CSPS friends and faculty championed me and helped me prepare for my interview, which was an intense experience and I was thrilled when the Dean at Kutztown University offered me a position. Ironically, as I reflect on what has changed most for me over the last several years, my mindset is still likely the most altered component! I am still in consistent contact with many of my cohort peers (and several current CSPS student and recent graduates), only now we discuss a variety of scholarly projects rather than collaborating about class assignments. I still also regularly communicate with my dissertation chair. With my PhD earned, I find professional pursuits less intimidating, yet I remain nostalgic about the doctoral process: the late nights meeting up with my writing group over coffee, baby and wedding showers, fellowship at conferences, and commiserating over the doctoral workload. I hope that the current CSPS students are able to enjoy the process, whatever it entails!

Reflections from a Recent Graduate

Camile Irving, 2015 Cohort

Attending the ACA Conference 2014 in Honolulu, Hawaii

As a student member of the American Counseling Association (ACA), I have enjoyed several opportunities to attend and participate at national conferences as a volunteer. I attended the 2014 ACA Conference in Oahu as a volunteer for the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) and Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) Day of Service. As a volunteer, I was asked to act as a coordinator for the in-service at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I was charged with developing the lesson plan and coordinating volunteers once we arrived at the conference. I had the pleasure of co-teaching a two-hour workshop on the implications of marriage equality, which was recently passed in the State of Hawaii. Teaching a two-hour workshop at a national conference in my interest area was only made better by the reimbursement check I received from AMCD for my hotel expenses. Volunteering has afforded me a chance to build my confidence and I have developed several collegial relationships. Moreover, giving my time freely has meant developing significant mentor relationships.

Kim Hughes, 2014 Cohort

The role of student volunteer is a wonderful way to grow your professional network, enhance your skill base, build your vita, and, in some cases, enjoy discounted conference registration.

“With my PhD earned, I find professional pursuits less intimidating.”

- Dr. Lauren Moss

ACA Conference 2014: Honolulu, Hawaii

Attending the ACA Conference 2014 in Hawaii

I received opportunities to hone my counseling skills, meet pioneers in the counseling profession, and network with leaders and educators from elite institutions. The sessions I attended at the conference focused on supervision practices, Solution-Focused Therapy, techniques for working with ethnically diverse students, and strategies for becoming a change agent in the counseling profession. I felt privileged to meet Dr. Norma Day Vines and Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy whose research I had utilized during my comprehensive exams. I also attended informational sessions conducted by Dr. Samual Gladding and Dr. Gerald Corey, which was a surreal experience since they authored textbooks I owned. Each of these leaders in the counseling profession encouraged professional development and continued mastery of counseling skills. Dr. Pam Paisley facilitated my introduction to the elite attendees at the conference. She proactively introduced me to various leaders of professional organizations, and tenured professors from universities throughout the United States. Overall, the ACA Conference afforded me the opportunity to foster development of future goals. Meeting all the leaders and innovators at the ACA conference encouraged me to continue with my research and studies since I aspire to high-level of achievement in the counseling profession.
Maximizing your course work as you prepare for preliminary exams

Proper prior preparation prevents poor performance!

These six words are key as students make the steady journey toward preliminary examinations. Here are my top 5 suggestions:

1) Organization and preparation are essential. Each class you take along the way contains necessary elements. For instance, whether I chose to use hard copy prints and binders, or electronic filing techniques, I read and filed all of the articles from each course, even the optional reading material. I found it extremely beneficial to have articles readily accessible to use when reviewing, writing, referencing, or preparing a study guide or writing project. The information and articles from one course are typically referenced at some point in another course. Organizing information is a great way to recall and synthesize information learned across courses.

2) Become aware of your learning style and environment. Do you read and write best at night or during the day? Do you read and write most effectively in longer or shorter sessions? Become familiar with your preferred writing style, writing timeframe, and writing space to play as familiar with whom, how, and where (e.g., library, home office, coffee shop) you read and write best, you will maximize your learning and productivity. It may take a couple of weeks to identify the most effective process, but once you have identified your process, make it habitual.

3) Find a study buddy. Identify a classmate who has a similar schedule, and get together for study sessions after class or on the weekend. Often, other students may have additional perspectives or resources related to a topic. A study partner is especially beneficial because other students may have different educational backgrounds and work experiences which may help them to select knowledge. For example, my study partner has a background in college counseling and one of them to select knowledge.

4) Push to be an exemplar scholar, most importantly, but remember to be gentle to yourself. Take time to reflect on the accomplishments you have made and will continue to make as a scholar-advocate-practitioner!

Getting to know your faculty:

"Excluding your current faculty position, if you could have any career in the world, what would it be and why?"

Dr. Diane Cooper: I wish I could manage a golf course that has a café/coffee shop and independent bookstore on the property. That way I could blend my loves of playing golf, gardening, cooking, and reading mystery novels in to one career!! And if it was oceanfront or in the mountains next to a lake, all the better.

Dr. Laura Dean: If I could have any career in the world other than my faculty position, it would be something that involved travel - a travel writer, perhaps, or someone who facilitates cultural exchange programs. I love experiencing new places, and it would be great to do something that introduced others to new settings, people, and cultures.

Dr. Natoya Haskins: An Actress- I always enjoyed performing. From forensics (public speaking) in high school to dramatic interpretation in college, I found it to be fun and relaxing. It also allowed me to tap into my creative side and see the world through the eyes of the individual I was portraying.

Dr. Jolie Daigle: I would work in the public health sector and direct health care centers located on school campuses that serve children and families.

Dr. Karen Griffith: In my fantasy world, I would be an architect. I love building things and I love beautiful buildings. I would want to have unlimited resources to create a variety of places and, of course, all would be accessible, useful, efficient, and beautiful.

Dr. Pamela Paisley: I would run a retreat center for professionals to come and unwind and replenish. It would be in the NC mountains and everyone would be well taken care of and we would have great food!

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