



# Psychology Department Newsletter Spring 2020

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## Congratulations, Grads!

*Undergraduates*  
 Jocelyn Balan  
 Cearra Barker  
 Olivia Bauer  
 Ashleen Caba  
 Dena Cleary  
 Matthew Cummings  
 Amira Drummond  
 Darlene Gary  
 Justine Hartman

Morgan Hawk  
 Tyhesha Kirkland  
 James McGlynn  
 Ashley Monroe  
 Samantha Polichetti  
 Dominick Stiefel  
 Elizabeth Trivino  
 Alijah Walter  
 Shane Wittkop

*Graduate Students*  
 Emily Andersen  
 Brendan Barca  
 Jameia Boone  
 Lindsay Boyle  
 Molly Callaghan  
 Emily Canale

Megan Clawson  
 Jennifer Cunnane  
 Alyssa Horn  
 Kristen Morrison  
 Kiara Peralta  
 Dakota Sheehan  
 Emily Sjogren

## Founders' Day Award Recipients



On April 30, DelVal observed a virtual Founders' Day ceremony, which recognizes the academic success of our students. Three students from the Psychology Department were recipients of awards. Undergraduate student Shane Wittkop received the Psychology Departmental Achievement Award and was a finalist for DelVal's Founders' Award. Undergraduate student Elizabeth Trivino received the Presidential Scholar Award. Emily Sjogren received DelVal Graduate Scholar Award.

## Introducing Dr. Ankita Sahu



The Psychology Department is thrilled to introduce our new faculty member, Dr. Ankita Sahu, from the doctoral Counseling Psychology program at Texas A&M University. She holds a M.Ed. in Prevention Science from the University of Oregon and a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Minnesota. Sahu's research interests include multicultural training and supervision with special emphasis on the translation of multicultural theories and principles into practice and exploration of trainees of color experiences with multicultural training/supervision. Her teaching philosophy emphasizes the importance of critical dialogues and self-reflection throughout the process of learning. In her free time, Sahu enjoys reading books, spending time with close friends and family, trying her hand at cooking different cuisines, and watching international films and TV shows.

## Transitioning to Remote Teaching and Learning



In March, DelVal announced the decision to move all class instruction online as a protective measure against COVID-19. For many faculty, this sudden shift meant a complete change how they teach. One important person helping with this transition was Ms. Tanya Letourneau, one of the adjunct faculty members in the Psychology Department. Letourneau also is the eLearning Specialist working part-time with Ms. Cindy Renner in the Distance Education office. For faculty who were trying to transfer their courses online quickly while simultaneously dealing with the uncertainty of the virus' impact on our world, Letourneau offered sound pedagogical and best-practices advice.

From Letourneau's perspective, "the main benefit of online instruction is that it allows for *Self-Paced Learning*. Having done a fair amount of research on learning theory and instructional design, I feel the online platform is ideal for providing students the opportunity to learn according to their style, time and strengths." For example, students have the ability to re-review parts that are difficult for them as well as the ability to go more quickly through parts that are easy. This benefit of self-paced learning in the online platform offers many students an avenue to high quality learning.

When considering post-COVID-19 education, Letourneau cautions that we should not expect all teaching to be fully online or that every course ought to be offered online. She does hope that many faculty will continue to use some of the technology tools that they have found useful. Her greatest hope "is that we will continue to support and teach our students with all of the dedication and enthusiasm that I've seen happening this semester during the transition to remote instruction."

## Job & Internship Fair Goes Virtual



The Job and Internship Fair, organized by DelVal's Center for Student Professional Development, was run virtually! The in-person fair was canceled in response to COVID-19, but a virtual recruiting event allowed interested students and recruiters and opportunity to interact without being physically present at a live event.

There were many organizations participating in the virtual fair that relate to the counseling psychology major, including Access Services, Foundations Behavioral Health, and Kaleidoscope Family Solutions. Organizations who were unable to participate in the fair have given DelVal permission to share their contact information. Students interested in outreach should contact the Center for Student Professional Development.

Stacy Moore, Director of Career Services, encourages students to “reframe their thinking from the ‘right’ job or internship to the best job or internship *right now*. This serves to relieve some pressure in thinking they have to know all the answers and that there is only one correct option.” There are many resources available through the Center for Student Professional Development to guide students through this process, including self-reflection worksheets, resume generators, networking tools, and the online job and internship board. Both undergraduate and graduate students should take advantage of the opportunities offered!

## Graduate Students Share Experiences with Life Span Class



Graduate students Meg Clawson and Emily Sjogren joined Dr. Allison Buskirk-Cohen's undergraduate class on life span development to discuss their experiences working with you. Currently, Clawson is completing her internship at Airmid Wellness and Counseling Center in Warminster, PA. Her main responsibility is her clinical work where she sees clients one-on-one. She is excited that some clients have already met their goals, saying it's “a very rewarding feeling to see people learn how to help themselves.”

Sjogren is completing her internship at Villanova University in the student life office. She works under the assistant dean for drug and alcohol intervention, assisting students who violate school policy. For the majority of her cases, Sjogren sees students once as a wellness check and to engage in psychoeducation surrounding drugs and alcohol. She provides support to students who are struggling, offering an option for students to return for follow-up or regular sessions.

Clawson and Sjogren enjoyed sharing their experiences with the students in the life span class. They mentioned how much they enjoy giving back to others and talking about the field. When asked what advice she would give to students, Sjogren responded, “Don't be afraid to explore your options and take risks. The worst thing that can happen is you decide you don't like something, and that is just as important as finding out what you do like.” Clawson added, “Go in the direction of the thing that really motivates you. That way, when things get hard, you will remember your ‘Why’.”

## Graduate Students Attend Trauma Training



In February, some of the newest members of the Graduate Counseling Psychology program attended a conference related to trauma-informed care, provided by the Greater Philadelphia Area Counseling Association and the Pennsylvania Counseling Association. In addition to attending various workshops, participants also had the opportunity to attend a suicide prevention training and receive a program certificate.

Nikki Eagan, Cohort 7, was particularly inspired by a session on the use of service dogs in trauma treatment. The presenter described the importance of knowing the difference between a therapy animal, a service animal, and an emotional support animal, since each category has its own laws, regulations, and standards. Eagan believes this information “is vital for our generation of future counselors. Many don’t know the difficulties individuals face when trying to maintain and protect themselves and their service animal.”

Graduate students enjoyed networking with others in the mental health field, and learning about a specific area. Julia Hess, another Cohort 7 graduate student, stated the “trauma symposium was incredible informative on specific target areas in the field of trauma counseling. The QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) training gave me valuable tools to prevent suicide. There were so many fascinating individual sections that I wish I could have attended more!”

## Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy



In February, Dakota Sheehan, Cohort 5, talked with graduate students in her Internship Seminar II class about equine-assisted psychotherapy. As an undergraduate student, Sheehan worked on research with animal-assisted therapy. Now, as a graduate student, she is excited to have the opportunity to mesh her passion for animals with her passion for counseling psychology.

Currently, Sheehan is completing her internship at Shamrock Reins, a non-profit organization that provides services to veterans, first responders, and their families. They offer programs on therapeutic horsemanship, therapeutic riding, and equine-facilitated psychotherapy (EFP). Sheehan’s sole focus at Shamrock Reins is the EFP, and has helped build upon the activities manual used at the organization.

Prior to Sheehan’s class presentation, she met with DelVal’s barn manager to obtain permission and have release forms completed by classmates. Sheehan explained, “There are two main ways to gather information during EFP session. One is how the client constructs the area to represent something in their life. The other is how the horse reacts to their energy and the ways in which the client interprets the reaction. Both of these were addressed in the demo, and my cohort members seemed relatively interested in the topic. Of course the horse we used, Buttons, was very helpful!”

Class professor, Dr. Matt Mutchler commented, “Genuinely engaging in the therapeutic activity outside of our regular space not only teaches us a new (to us) method of counseling, but we got to engage it in and experience first-hand the benefits that working with horses as part of mental health care can be meaningful and change-making.”