



Psychology Department Newsletter Spring 2023

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Congratulations, Grads!

Undergraduate Degree Recipients (B.A.)

Ashley Barrett***
 Madison Paige Bernacki
 Mary Rose Coll**
 Danielle Conner*
 Maxwell Cowan
 Marina Leigh Cox**
 Ashley Paige DiNunzio**
 Allison Nicole Harvey*
 Caitlyn Patricia Haynes
 Leigh McKenzie Illing
 Cheyenne Catherine Krut**
 Alli Millar***
 Nathaniel Pinto**
 Francis Ivan Robles Montas
 Taylor N. Rouh
 Jocelyn Brenda Beltran Tapia **
 Paige Wehr

Graduate Degree Recipients (M.A.)

Cassandra Mae Andrusko
 Rabeel Atif
 Jocelyn Susely Balan Lopez
 Olivia Susanne Bauer
 Amanda Betson
 Emily Easter
 Joshua Elliott
 Hannah Croft Fox
 Sarah Kling
 James F. McGlynn
 Ashley Meade
 Taylor Price
 Danielle Sargent
 Cecelia Serwell



** cum laude ** magna cum laude *** summa cum laude*

Day of Scholarship Founders' Ceremony



On April 27, 2023, family and friends joined the DelVal community in celebration at the Day of Scholarship Founders' Ceremony. This ceremony takes place annually to recognize the contributions of those who make DelVal so special. Many members of the Psychology Department were recognized during the ceremony. Ashley Barrett (Class of 2023) received the Psychology Departmental Achievement Award, and Jocelyn Balan Lopez (GCP Class of 2023) received the Graduate Student Scholar Award. Madison Bernacki (Class of 2023) and Taylor Rouh (Class of 2023) were Founders' Award Nominees.

Cheyenne Krut (Class of 2023) received a University Scholars Award. Dr. Audrey Ervin, Academic Program Director of Graduate Counseling Psychology, received the Champion of Diversity and Inclusion Award. Congratulations to all!

Graduate Student Conference Presentations

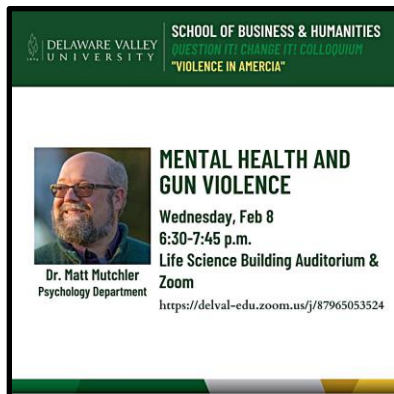


Jocelyn Balan Lopez (GCP Class of 2023) and Emily Easter (GCP Class of 2023) worked with Dr. Audrey Ervin, Graduate Counseling Psychology Academic Director, to facilitate two structured discussions at the annual conference of the Association for Women in Psychology (AWP). The conference took place in March in Atlanta, Georgia, and focused on engaging transformative justice. In their structured discussion "Exposing the Exploitation of Unpaid Internships," Easter, Balan Lopez, and Ervin emphasized the importance of acknowledging the oppressive structure of unpaid masters-level internships, a professional norm in the female dominated field. Unpaid

internships are often seen as a professional issue in which many believe the experience validates the unpaid labor. However, this discussion reframed it as the human rights issue. Balan Lopez recognizes that change may take time but is "committed to continue to advocate for future clinicians in training so that they do not go into the field feeling as strained as we do, as we try to manage full time graduate coursework, 20+ hour/week unpaid internships, and side jobs to help pay for living expenses."

The other presentation was entitled, "Teaching and Learning about Social Justice Issues in the Politically Polarized Times: Strategies for Feminists in the Classroom." This presentation was attended by faculty and students across the country who shared current struggles and solutions for constructively discussing polarized social issues. Educators and students discussed systemic barriers and provided suggestions for innovative assignments. Reflecting on the conference, Easter added, "It is a professional space in which I feel entirely welcomed and a sense of belonging. At AWP conferences, my identity as a feminist is celebrated and welcomed."

B&H Colloquium: Violence in America



Dr. Matt Mutchler and Dr. Audrey Ervin were two of the faculty members organizing sessions in DelVal Business and Humanities' *Question It! Change It!* Colloquium series, "Violence in America." The colloquium explored the history and context of violence in America, offering seven different sessions in the Spring 2023 semester. In February, Mutchler led a session entitled, "Mental Health and Gun Violence", which examined the relationship between gun violence and mental illness in perpetrators of violence. Mutchler explained, "Despite the impression that many people have, the research

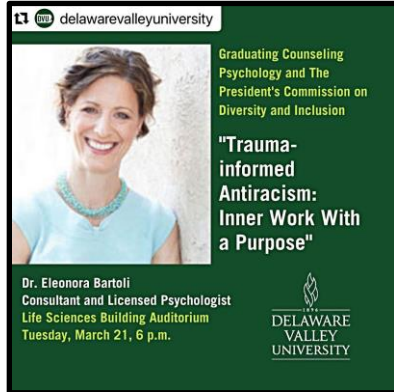
shows that mental illness is NOT predictive of perpetration of violence in general, and mass shootings specifically. Overall, only 4% of violence crimes can be attributed to mental health alone." He warns that painting perpetrators of mass violence with a broad "mentally ill" brush worsens stigma and may prevent people from seeking treatment. Mutchler emphasized that, "We need to be looking for a wide range of solutions to the violence problem in the USA, and those efforts need to be data driven. The data do not support mental illness as a 'cause' of gun violence." With additional mass shootings continuing to occur in the United States, this topic is particularly relevant and impactful.



In March, Dr. Audrey Ervin facilitated an interactive panel discussion "LGBTQ+ Marginalization & Violence: Strategies for Change" in collaboration with Doylestown Pride Festival, Senator Steve Santarsiero, A Women's Place, The Rainbow Room, and DelVal's GLOW student group. The community forum discussed how marginalization, stigma, discrimination, and violence impact the well-being of sexual minority, transgender, gender expansive and queer folx. Experts and community members highlighted the relevancy of the topic in Bucks County and the need for continued advocacy. Over 150

people attended this panel discussion. Ervin emphasized, "Right now, LGBTQ+ rights are under attack nationally, regionally, and locally. It is imperative that we facilitate difficult conversations to develop meaningful solutions. Violence and marginalization of LGBTQ+ folx is a human rights issue." The presentation created an affirming space for concerns to be raised and solutions generated. Furthermore, it brought together individuals from many areas-academic, political, non-profit, government-to collaborate, make connections, develop strategies for change.

Graduate Speaker Series: Dr. Eleonora Bartoli



The Graduate Counseling Psychology Speaker's Series took place in March, offering, "Trauma Informed Antiracism: Inner Work with a Purpose with Dr. Eleonora Bartoli." Bartoli's presentation included skill development and action items to promote antiracism. She taught how to use emotion regulation skills when facing challenging situations. Bartoli offered a menu of antiracist actions and spheres of influence, ranging from participating in protests to contacting a legislator. According to Dr. Audrey Ervin, Academic Program Director of Graduate Counseling Psychology and coordinator of this event, "This interactive presentation provided people with the concrete skills necessary to talk about and interrupt individual and systemic racism. Drawing upon evidence-based psychological research, Dr. Bartoli created a powerful and affirming learning space where students and community members learned about concrete strategies to engage in trauma-informed anti-racism work." Over 60 people attended the event, with students eagerly asking if Bartoli would return for another event in the future!

International Conference Presentations



In March, Dr. Allison Buskirk-Cohen, chair of the Psychology Department, presented at the Association for Psychological Science's International Convention of Psychological Science (ICPS) in Brussels, Belgium. In one session, Buskirk-Cohen shared a project in which students read a fictional book and completed a written analysis that promoted a deeper understanding of course terms, concepts, and theories. "I liked that this project helped to show different parts of the lifespan from a different perspective," said Jackie Derricks (Class of 2025). "It allowed me to put the theories and other topics in class and apply them to the experience of a character that had a very different lived experience than me." Her other poster was inspired by Jocelyn Beltran's (Class of 2023) student research project that considered how experiences of discrimination impact students' sense of belonging at a university. Beltran's personal experience as a first-generation Hispanic woman motivated her to conduct this study. Beltran was excited to explore what the "university is doing to make those students feel a part of a community." This session offered an opportunity to talk with other scholars about the research and receive feedback on the study for improvement. "The opportunity to share this work and learn from others was so exciting," said Buskirk-Cohen. "I especially appreciated having an opportunity to connect with international scholars. It's fascinating to identify commonalities, but also to appreciate the differences in our work. I'm excited to apply what I've learned to both my teaching and scholarship.

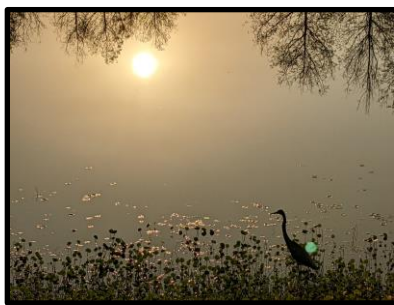
Dr. Brianna Morgis: Advisor Extraordinaire



In a ceremony organized by Del Val athletes during D3 week, Dr. Brianna Morgis was recognized by Shane Newell (senior) for her impact in the classroom. Dr. Morgis stated, “Knowing that my efforts to connect with my students haven’t gone unnoticed was truly touching”. Since 2021, Morgis has served as the advisor to our Psychology Club. She works closely with the executive board to plan activities and enjoys participating in fundraising initiatives with the students. This semester, the Psychology Club brought students together for wellness activities including creating clay sculptures, drawing with chalk on campus sidewalks, tie-dying shirts, and a partnership with

Roxy Therapy Dogs, a Bucks County nonprofit organization. “I’m so proud of all of the events that Psych Club has facilitated already, and I’m really excited about some of the events that we have coming up”, Dr. Morgis states. “We sold psychology-inspired t-shirts during A-Day for the second year in a row to promote mental health awareness. We had a lot of success last year and are hoping for the same this year!” Morgis also serves as the newest co-advisor to Delta Epsilon Beta, which is part of DelVal’s Greek community. In April, Morgis offered professional development training to the chapter members. Her presentation focused on conflict resolution and incorporated training on active listening. “Conflict resolution is such an important skill to have because it can be applied to all sorts of relationships”, Morgis explains. “Whether it be with friends, family members, romantic partners, colleagues, or supervisors, conflict is inevitable and being equipped with the right skill set can make resolution much more attainable”.

Breathwork: Exploring Growth



In accordance with DelVal’s mission to blend science with practice, Mr. Chris Walter, the graduate clinical coordinator, recently participated in ongoing training for Holotropic Breathwork. This modality of breathwork encourages experiential self-exploration and personal development through the integration of naturally induced expanded states of consciousness. According to Walter, “Through the experiential, non-directive and non-rational in nature,

breathers’ experiences reveal insights about life experiences and/or traumatic responses to life situations that, when integrated, allow for symptom reduction or resolution, greater life satisfaction, and greater sense of meaning and purpose.” Walter frequently uses examples from his own experiences of participation in and facilitation of Breathwork to highlight important elements of group dynamics and trauma resolution. In early April 2023, Walter completed co-facilitation of the last module of a two-year intensive professional training in Delray Beach, Florida, for future Breathwork facilitators. Many participants will pursue certification with plans to bring this methodology to their own practices.

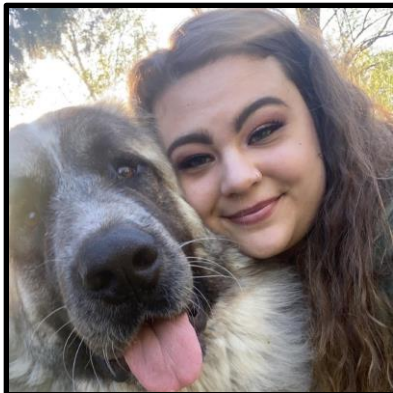
Student Profiles: Taylor Rouh and Cecilia Serwell

Two students have been selected to profile in this edition of the newsletter. They exemplify the hard work and dedication we see in all our students.



Taylor Rouh, Class of 2023, is bringing her love for psychology to early childhood education. She has accepted a full-time offer to serve as a lead kindergarten teacher at The Goddard School. Rouh is excited to incorporate all she has learned at DelVal into her lesson plans and student interactions. “I chose to study counseling psychology because I always knew I wanted to help people. I wanted to see people grow and be a part of journey,” Rouh said. She has been highly involved on DelVal’s campus, and especially values her work with other students. “I served as a peer mentor my junior year and as a resident assistant my senior year. I loved having the opportunity to help and guide students

through academics, student involvement, and the college experience, in general. This work gave me purpose and helped me to apply the work of my major through direct experiences,” Rouh noted. When asked for advice for other students, Rouh responded, “Be an active member of the classroom as well as the campus. When in class, try to always contribute to the discussion and never be afraid to ask questions. No question is too small, and every class discussion is big. Be an active member of campus and join clubs and activities because it is a good way to meet friends, network, and have a fun college experience!”



Cecilia Serwell, GCP Class of 2023) plans to continue working as a full-time outpatient therapist at Family Service Association of Bucks County in Langhorne, PA. She completed her internship there, and received very positive feedback regarding her knowledge base, professionalism, and strong counseling skills. Reflecting on her DelVal education, Serwell says, “It has really helped me to expand my view of the world and of people. I have learned so much in terms of multiculturalism and diversity... I also think this program has helped me become a stronger advocate for myself and for others, and for the needs we are seeing within the mental health field.” The master’s

program at DelVal incorporates a cohort model that emphasizes peer-learning. Serwell says, “My favorite part of this program truly has been the relationships I have formed... I feel like I was able to bond with my classmates and form relationships with professors, which is so difficult to do in a bigger program. The bond between the cohort members is one I hope is long lasting... I would have struggled a lot more over these last few years if I didn't have the support system I did. I think this is why the cohort model is especially beneficial, because we were all just cheerleaders and a shoulder to lean on for each other.”

Psychology Department Chair Transition



In 2016, Dr. Allison Buskirk-Cohen began serving as the inaugural Chair of the Psychology Department. Buskirk-Cohen's main responsibilities included providing leadership to the undergraduate program and managing daily operations, while also supporting Dr. Audrey Ervin, Academic Program Director of Graduate Counseling Psychology. The undergraduate program has been recognized for excellence on the "25 Best Bachelor's in Counseling Psychology" and "30 Great Small Colleges for a Counseling Degree" lists. Students have earned numerous awards and accolades, representing the department well at the annual Founders' Ceremony (as noted above!) Buskirk-Cohen started the newsletter in 2010 and developed the Instagram account in 2016. She also facilitated an introduction between DelVal and Amazon Prime's *The College Tour* to showcase the institution.

For Buskirk-Cohen, the best part of serving as department chair has been working with the students, faculty, and staff. "I've loved working together and being part of this incredible journey," she said. Buskirk-Cohen is excited for this next step in her professional career. She will continue teaching in both the undergraduate and graduate psychology programs. Buskirk-Cohen has accepted the role of Director of the Delaware Valley University Honors Program. She also is a co-investigator on a National Science Foundation grant developing a program to support transfer students in STEM. Buskirk-Cohen's efforts to consider how interpersonal relationships influence academic success and well-being remain at the center of her professional work.

She's thrilled to introduce Dr. Matt Mutchler as the new department chair. Mutchler has been at DelVal since 2013 and has taught extensively in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. He has leadership experience in multiple campus committees and serves with the Pennsylvania Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (PAMFT). Mutchler hopes to continue building the Psychology Department and its reputation on- and off-campus. "Our students and alumni are our greatest ambassadors," Mutchler says. "Their successes shine a light on the experiences we offer students and show the value of a DelVal degree in Psychology." Other goals include increased connections between the graduate and undergraduate programs, development of a range of tracks of study within the psychology major, and development of psychology-specific study abroad opportunities.

For a quick trip down memory lane, check out the photos on the last page. The Psychology Department proudly celebrates our past and is excited for what the future holds!

Photo Memories

