

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



Winter 2025



Welcome!

Hello friends of the DelVal Psychology Department!

Fall 2024 was a busy and exciting time! Our students, staff, and faculty members kept themselves busy and we kept our eyes focused on the DelVal Core Values: Respect All People, Value the World of Ideas and Differences; Pursue Excellence; Live Each Day with Integrity; Teach, Learn, and Serve with Passion and Commitment; and Act as One Learning Community with One Purpose.

Alumni – reach out and let us know what you're up to. We'd love to feature you in future editions of this newsletter!

- Dr. Matt Mutchler, Department Chair
matthew.mutchler@delval.edu

Highlights

Celebrating Our Students

New Undergraduate Courses

New GCP Program Director

Experiential Learning – Grad & Undergrad

Adjunct Faculty Focus:
Dr. Wade Luquet

Alumni Updates

Faculty Activity

Gingerbread Champions!

Congratulations to our Winter 2024 Graduates!

- Kory Corkins
- Samantha Foy
- Jordan Gombs (right)
- Dominique Malgeri (lower left)
- Juliana Winget (lower right)



Fall 2024 Dean's List - Congratulations!

- Raghad Alfeen
- Brianna Bashore
- Markella Bishop
- Maria Bottone
- Ellie Bowman
- Kera Broaddus
- Mya Buss
- Jacquelyn Derricks
- John Farrell
- Jenna Feldman
- Ciana Feliciano
- Kylie Flanagan
- Taylor Haines
- Jennifer Harrelson-Balasa
- Alexandria Hendricks
- Kiley Higginson
- Shawna Hinkle
- Kayla Jones
- Shannon Mertz
- Sage Nelson
- Mikyla Oliver
- Ava Oller
- Alyx Piratzky
- Katelyn Schwartz
- Rachel Serratore
- Rachel Servin
- Rochelle Skvirchak
- Ryan Soto
- Alex Toth
- Kiona Williams
- Jessica Williamson
- Samantha Wills



New Courses!



Intersections of Nature & Mental Health

In collaboration with Dr. Jackie Ricotta and Ms. Joan Stelmach in the Plant Science department, Dr. Mutchler developed a course for the core capstone: PY/PS 3003 - Intersections of Nature & Mental Health. In this class, students learned about the ways that being in nature can benefit mental health. Students experienced a number of nature-based interventions and reflected on how they impacted their own mental health and how they might be used to help others.

The class could frequently be found around Lake Archer and in many of the other beautiful spaces on our campus. They also took trips to Shofuso Japanese Cultural Center in Philadelphia, Peace Valley Nature Center, and the Bucks County Audubon Society at Honey Hollow. One student commented, "This class was fun! I learned and retained so much on the first day... it was refreshing to be able to get outside to explore campus and other parks."

This course will run every Fall semester. It counts as both a Core Capstone and Advanced Elective.

Intro to Mindfulness Meditation

Dr. Ervin developed this new undergraduate course as an integration of her work as a Counseling Psychologist and a Professor. This class explores numerous applications of mindfulness and meditation to student's future careers and personal lives. Highly experiential, the course focuses on working with thoughts, emotions, and sensations while developing mind-body awareness of the present-moment. The class integrates psychological principles, neurobiology, and research. A feature of the course is student development of a personal and consistent meditation practice.

Reflecting on the course, Dr. Ervin tells us that "Students really enjoy hearing about how mindfulness skills are used to help people struggling with anxiety, depression, focus, attention and normal life stressors. At the beginning of the course, students complete a pre-test that measures trait mindfulness and then repeat the assessment at the end of the course. Most found that sustained practice (5 days a week) lead to increased trait mindfulness at the end of the term." "Students reported getting a lot out of the course, telling us that "Meditating helped me to relax and see myself in a different light," and "I liked that this course allowed for many different formats of responding and learning." This course is offered in the Fall and Spring semesters and counts as an Advanced Elective.



Welcoming Our New Program Director:

Chris Walter, M.A., LPC



- We are excited to announce that Chris Walter, M.A., LPC, has **officially** stepped into the role of Program Director for the GCP program! Since joining us in Fall 2013 as the Clinical Coordinator, Chris has been an integral part of our community, bringing dedication and expertise to both administrative and teaching roles. While continuing to manage the responsibilities of Clinical Coordinator, Chris will now also guide the future of the GCP program as its director.
- A licensed master's level counselor trained at Arcadia University, Chris is not only a valued educator in the GCP program but also maintains a thriving private practice. His areas of expertise include spiritual emergence, psychedelic integration, sexuality, and trauma. With credentials as a Certified Holotropic Breathwork practitioner and a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional, Chris is also working toward certification as an Integrative Sex and Couples counselor. Beyond his work with us, Chris has been a member of the MPCAC board since 2014 and recently led a two-year international experiential training for Holotropic Breathwork practitioners.
- In his new role as Program Director, Chris is committed to upholding the integrity and quality of the GCP program while advancing the mission of our university in today's evolving social and cultural landscape. He extends deep gratitude to the faculty, students, alumni, and community partners whose dedication has been vital to the program's growth and success.
- When he's not shaping the future of the GCP program, Chris has a rich array of personal interests. He finds joy in the art of Bonsai and Tarot, enjoys staying active through movement and cycling along the Delaware Canal, and loves to explore the woods on long, phone-free walks. An advocate for supporting small and local businesses, Chris is also known for his alpaca hoodies, festive socks, and an unexpected fascination with YouTube channels like Wheels Through Time and Laura Farms.

Please join us in congratulating Chris on his new role! We look forward to the continued growth and innovation he will bring to the GCP program.

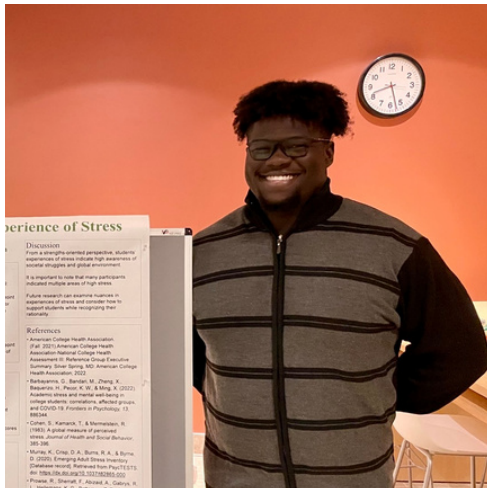
Experiential Learning



NAMI Warmline

Several Counseling Psychology students are earning E360 credit by doing Career Explorations with the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) Warmline. Per NAMI, the Warmline is a “telephone-based, non-crisis support system for anyone struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues... WarmLine Responders help to empower callers and equip them with the tools to do their own work.”

In Fall 2024, Rochelle Skvirchak ('25, right) and Raghad Alfeen ('26, left) began work as Responders on the WarmLine. Skvirchak learned that “many callers simply seek understanding and emotional connection rather than immediate advice or problem-solving. This has given me the opportunity to strengthen my active listening skills while providing a safe, nonjudgemental space for individuals navigating mental health challenges. It’s deeply rewarding to witness how a simple 15 - 20-minute call can be an incredibly validating and therapeutic experience for our callers.” Alfeen agrees, stating, “I have witnessed moments of relief, clarity, and empowerment in callers as they process their feelings and find reassurance in being heard. Knowing that I can play a small role in helping someone feel less alone, even briefly, has deepened my passion for mental health advocacy and reinforced my commitment to supporting those in need.”



Student Research Spotlight: Brandon Perot Explores Undergraduate Stress

On December 2, 2024, Brandon Perot ('25) presented his research, "Undergraduate Students' Experience of Stress," at DelVal's symposium. Over 80 attendees joined in-person and via Zoom to hear student presentations and engage in poster discussions. Under the mentorship of Dr. Allison Buskirk-Cohen, Perot surveyed over 200 DelVal students to identify major stressors—finding that the future, finances, studying, and competing demands cause the most stress.

He emphasized that students' stress responses are rational in today's challenging world and argued that addressing these issues requires more than quick fixes. Perot's research will be presented at the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood (SSEA) conference in June 2025 in Charleston, SC. This year's theme, Thriving in Complexity, focuses on the resilience of emerging adults aged 18-29. Perot expressed gratitude to the participating students and his research assistant, Juliana Winget ('25). DelVal's Student Research Program, supported by the Schoenfeld Foundation, is open to all majors. Interested students should consult a faculty member to learn more.

Graduate Internships



Skylar Knapp

Skylar is completing her Internship at Milestone Behavioral Health, located in Yardley, PA. In addition to being a clinical intern in Milestone's Outpatient Department, she also is employed as a part time Behavior Health Technician (BHT) in the Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) department. As an intern, Skylar carries an active load of clients. She works with children, pre-teens, and teens on issues including depression, anxiety, and ADHD. In addition to carrying a caseload of counseling clients, Skylar conducts intake interviews, writes treatment plans, and assists with medication management.

Skylar tells us that "The GCP program has assisted me in transitioning into clinical work by offering well-rounded and diverse courses. The program is very hands-on, allowing me to step out of my comfort zone by practicing counseling skills prior to treating clients of my own. One of the things I appreciate the most about the program is how open our professors have been about their own experiences in the field. I have taken so much away from everyday conversations with professors as well as other students!"

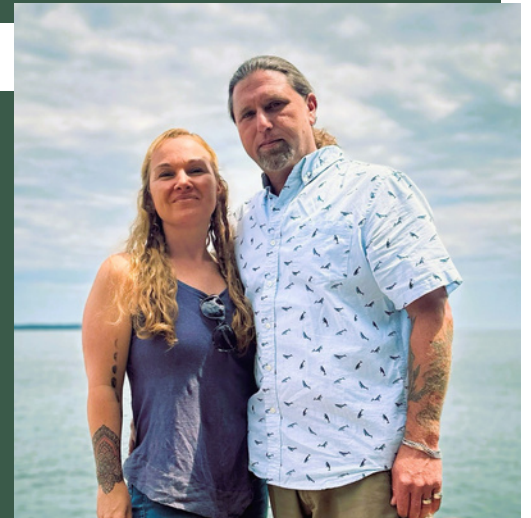
Skylar is a member of Cohort 10 and will graduate in May 2025.

Aaron Mutterperl

Aaron is completing his Internship at Montco Recovery Center. The Center serves adults with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders. At his internship, Aaron runs Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP), Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP), Outpatient groups, and 1 on 1 counseling. He focuses on recognition of how addiction has affected clients' lives, arresting the dysfunctional behaviors, instituting new and productive behaviors, and exploring how coexisting afflictions can be managed for overall well-being.

According to Aaron, his most significant learning has been how to infuse and balance his own experience in recovery while working in this setting. He tells us, "I have learned how to utilize the tools from our program and how to align the most appropriate resources for where each individual is currently at. The [GCP] program has prepared me by introducing tools and resources, as well as encouraging me as I find my footing and voice in this endeavor. "

Aaron is a member of GCP Cohort 10 and will graduate in May 2025.





Adjunct Focus: Dr. Wade Luquet

Dr. Luquet has been teaching in the GCP program for 7 years and is a supportive and calming presence in the classroom. You can find him teaching Psychology of Gender, Child & Adolescent Counseling, and Group Counseling.

When he is not teaching at DelVal, Dr. Luquet serves as a professor of social work at Gwynedd Mercy University, where he has been on the faculty for 24 years. A native of New Orleans, he earned his Master of Social Work from Tulane University and a Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Studies from the Union Institute. He has also received advanced training in Family Therapy from the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic/University of Pennsylvania and in Couple Therapy from the Institute for Imago Relationship Therapy.

Dr. Luquet is the author and editor of three books, ten book chapters, and over 40 peer-reviewed journal articles. He is currently under contract with Oxford University Press for an upcoming book on the diverse history of social work. In 2020, he was honored with the Educator of the Year Award by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. He also serves as president of the Pennsylvania Association for Social Work Education (PASWE).

When asked about teaching in the GCP Program, he told us, "What I love most about teaching at DelVal is working alongside a dedicated group of faculty colleagues and an engaged, curious group of students. It's an incredible privilege to be part of someone's journey—especially when that journey is driven by a deep desire to help others. Everyone in the program shares a common goal: to make a difference. As faculty, we have the opportunity to help shape well-intentioned individuals into skilled, ethical, and compassionate professionals. It's a transformative process, and I'm grateful to be a part of it at DelVal."

Alumni Corner

Roni Evans (M.A., 2022)

“Given that we often live in a culture that avoids discussions about death, my role as a doula is to help individuals approach their mortality in a compassionate and informed manner.”

Meet Roni: Compassionate End-of-Life Doula

Roni, a dual-certified end-of-life doula for humans and companion animals, offers holistic support during life's final chapter. With expertise in yoga, grief counseling, and Level 2 Reiki, they provide personalized care.

What Does an End-of-Life Doula Do?

Roni supports clients wherever they are—at home, hospice, or hospitals—offering reiki healing, emotional support, and guidance. They assist with vigils, end-of-life planning, and legacy projects like letters and recordings.

Community Support Through Grief Circles

Roni created a Grief Circle and Queer Grief Circle in Doylestown, offering a safe, monthly space for sharing, connection, and healing through movement and sound.

A Compassionate Approach

With psychology degrees from King's College and Delaware Valley University, Roni combines therapeutic techniques with a caring, holistic approach to help clients navigate death with dignity and peace.



Almendra Reyes-Paredes (B.A., 2015)

“Del Val opened my eyes to how much diversity there is in the world.”

Almendra is a School Psychologist at a nonprofit private K-12 school in San Antonio that specializes in supporting students with learning differences such as dyslexia, ADHD, autism, and more. In this role, Almendra conducts psychoeducational assessments for students on campus and through the school's Center for Neurodiversity.

Additionally, she teaches an introduction to psychology dual

credit course, giving high school students the opportunity to earn college credit through San Antonio College.

After earning a Master's in School Psychology in Texas, Almendra gained experience working in the public school system before transitioning to the current role. Inspired by time spent working with underprivileged children in Spain, she developed a passion for supporting diverse learners. With a belief in individualized education, Almendra considers a broad range of factors beyond diagnoses to ensure students receive tailored interventions that build on their unique strengths and needs.

Faculty Activity

Classroom teaching is only one portion of a professor's job. Check out what else the Psych Faculty have been up to!

Dr. Allison Buskirk-Cohen

- Chair of the DelVal Honors Council
- Faculty representative to the DelVal Board of Trustees
- Co-Chair of the Student Research Committee
- Schoenfeld Foundation Grant for research on supporting undergraduates
- NSF Foundations for Success Grant studying STEM students' career readiness



Dr. Audrey Ervin

- Co-Chair of the Doylestown Pride Festival
- Co-Chair of the DelVal Presidential Commission on Diversity & Inclusion
- Practicing Counseling Psychologist
- Active member of the Association for Women in Psychology (AWP)
- Peer Reviewer for AWP and the American Psychological Association

Dr. Brianna Morgis

- Faculty Advisor for the Psychology Club
- Faculty Advisor for Delta Epsilon Beta
- Practicing Couple & Family Therapist
- Board Member of Pennsylvania Association for Marriage & Family Therapists (PAMFT)
- Conference planner for PAMFT



Dr. Matthew Mutchler

- Chair of the Psychology Department
- Chair of the Pennsylvania Association for Marriage & Family Therapists (PAMFT)
- Secretary of the DelVal Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)
- Guest Speaker on Ethics - Aldie Counseling Center
- Practicing Couple & Family Therapist, Ecotherapist, & Clinical Supervisor



Fun & Shenanigans: Gingerbread Champions!

The Eagles aren't the only team celebrating this winter. At this year's DelVal Holiday Party, there was a gingerbread house contest. The faculty and staff of the Psychology Department spent a weekend building a scene that included a replica of Lasker Hall (where our offices are) and a horse barn. Eagle-eyed observers can see our faces on gingerbread Peeps and some hidden faces of friends of the department. While the fun we had doing this was prize enough, we also won **Best in Show**.

Remember – it's important to do silly things for no other reason than to enjoy them. We hope you're finding your own silliness through the year.

See the pictures below! From l to r: Dr. Mutchler, Chris Walter (front), Dr. Morgis, & Dr. Ervin. Dr. Cohen was not able to attend the competition, but was a key creative mind in assembling our masterpiece. A true collaborative victory!

