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Have a submission?

The Counseling Connections needs YOU! Please feel free to send submissions including upcoming events, program celebrations, recent publications or presentations, and any other items of interest to Kaifang Zheng at zhengkg@uc.edu. We want to hear your voice.
Fall 2013 Cohort Breaks New Record for Demographics!

By Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji

This fall, the Counseling Program cohort of School and Mental Health Counseling students has a significant number of students coming from outside of the tri-state area. For the School Counseling degree program, of the 18 students who matriculated, two were from China and one each from New York and Missouri. Additionally, while there were no males in the previous cohort of students, three male students entered this fall representing 16% of the entering class. For the Mental Health Counseling degree program, of the 31 students who matriculated, there were representatives from Nigeria, China, Delaware, Missouri, Kansas, and West Virginia in addition to those coming from Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. Also, we were very happy to see that 19% (n=6) of this class is male. Of the three doctoral students who matriculated this fall, one hails from China and a third of this cohort is male. This is a significant change in demographics over the previous years and it brings much diversity to the discussions in classes. We welcome all of the new entering students to our counseling community!

Fall 2013 Practicum and Internship Fair

By Marva L. Duvall

This fall, the Counseling Program held its second Practicum/Internship Fair on October 3, 2013. The Practicum/Internship Fair was designed to showcase agencies and schools in the Greater Cincinnati area and provide an opportunity for the different site representatives to meet our students. A total of 16 agencies and schools participated in the event.
Meet the New Faculty and Staff

Meet Dr. Jeff Wolfgang

By Nicole Kreutzer

Dr. Wolfgang is a newly added member to the University of Cincinnati’s counseling department. Despite being new, he did not waste any time becoming active in UC’s Counseling Program. Dr. Wolfgang is an instructor for four different graduate courses, serves as the interim school counseling program track coordinator, is part of multiple research projects, and is a member of Dr. West-Olatunji’s Center for Traumatic Stress Research (CTSR) team. In addition to leading a busy professional life, Dr. Wolfgang also stays busy by spending time with his family, being a fantastic cook, creating art, exploring nature, and learning about different cultures. Although maintaining this balance of professional and personal life has been challenging at times, Dr. Wolfgang feels that being able to help develop his students’ skills and aid in their growth and creativity has been truly rewarding for him as a counselor educator.

An alumnus of the University of Florida for his Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctorate degree, Dr. Wolfgang made his way to the University of Cincinnati to be part of Dr. West-Olatunji’s CTSR and to help further develop our counseling program. Dr. Wolfgang also was drawn to UC’s counseling program for our emphasis on ecological and culturally sensitive counseling as well as our researcher-practitioner approach. While he is here, some of the classes he hopes to teach are courses about counseling children and adolescents, group work, and ecological counseling. This interest in counseling children and adolescents has helped lead to his specialization, which is working with young children (birth to 5 years old) who have experienced some form of traumatic stress and/or difficulties in attachment. Dr. Wolfgang was also kind enough to answer some other questions for me:

Nicole: Favorite would you say is your defining counseling moment with a client(s)?

Dr. Wolfgang: It is difficult to think of just one moment that would be my favorite. I think it would be when a young child realized that he had many choices and that his differences to others made him special rather than an obstacle.

Nicole: Finish the sentence: “If I were not a counselor, I would be a...”

Dr. Wolfgang: Multitalented person who has had a multitude of life experiences.

Nicole: What theory do you most closely follow?

Dr. Wolfgang: The theory I most closely follow would be relational cultural theory (RCT). RCT believes that we grow through and toward connection. This theory suggests that we need connections to sustain health, and is grounded in the idea that healing takes place in the context of mutually empathic, growth fostering relationships (Comstock, 2008). RCT also assumes that the experiences of isolation, shame, humiliation, oppression, marginalization, and microaggression are relational violations and traumas that are a major source of suffering for people, at both the personal and cultural level.
Meet Dr. Hee Dae Kim

Dr. Hee Dae Kim is a visiting scholar from Chung-Ang University in Korea. He arrived at the University of Cincinnati on October 1st and will be joining the Counseling Program faculty for a year to conduct research with Dr. West-Olatunji. He holds his master’s and doctoral degrees in Education Administration, both from Chung-Ang University and has served as a professional counselor and general manager of the We Emotion Education (WEE) center, a youth counseling agency. Dr. Kim was also selected as the first president of the Korean Council for Professional Counselors. As president of this organization, he worked to enhance many aspects of Korea’s school counseling system.

Dr. Kim is here to introduce South Korea’s national school counseling system to the United States and to conduct a comparative study of school counseling systems in South Korea and the U.S. He hopes to raise the general appreciation of school counseling in both countries. With Dr. Kim visiting the U.S., specifically at UC, a network between school counselors in South Korea and the U.S. will be built. By comparing both of the school counseling systems, we can determine what works best, what should be eliminated, and what we should add within policies, laws, organizations, programs, problems, and course.
National and Global Impact: ACA President Travels Towards Progression in Counseling

By Brittany Wanner

As most of you know, our very own Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji is the 2013-2014 ACA (American Counseling Association) President! She has had the privilege to travel not only throughout our country, but to Turkey, Australia and India as well. During her travels she has met with many people in the counseling profession from all over and has discussed important topics to help better our counseling association, along with counseling around the world.

In the beginning of September, Dr. West-Olatunji travelled to Istanbul, Turkey for the International Association for Counseling Conference. The focus of this conference was Counseling and Technology Use. It was hosted by Boğaziçi University along with the Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association. Counselors from all over the world came to meet with international colleagues.

After arriving back in the states, Dr. West-Olatunji returned to her alma mater, Louisiana, for the Louisiana Counseling Association Annual Conference. She greeted all of the LCA members during the opening session of the conference. She also celebrated four generations of UNO (University of New Orleans) counseling supervision as well as gave a post-LCA lecture “From Backatown to Cape Town” as a fundraiser for Haiti.

Dr. West-Olatunji attended the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference, where they discussed topics such as criminal justice reform and the need for a responsive to promote the interest in youth. She also attended a session that reflected 50 years after the March on Washington. The Georgia congressmen and the Black Women’s Agenda made an appearance at the conference as well.

Soon after being in Washington D.C., Dr. West-Olatunji travelled all the way to Gold Coast, Australia where she joined the Australian Counseling Association for their annual conference. Outside of the lectures, workshops, and keynotes she attended, there was a post-conference Roman themed party for everyone to enjoy.

Heading into October, Dr. West-Olatunji spent a few days in Denver at the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision conference (ACES). She presented two poster sessions on her proposals School Counselor Training And Equity: Student Culture and Recommendations for Advanced and Remedial Interventions and Trends in Empirical and Conceptual Research Published on African American Client Issues in...
the Past 20 Years. She also did a presentation on *A Vision for the Future of Counseling: The Building Blocks to Portability Project* along with two colleagues. The most exciting part of this trip was Dr. West-Olatunji being awarded the 2013 Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) Locke-Paisley Outstanding Mentor Award, for which former students nominated her.

Briefly between Denver and her adventures in India, Dr. West-Olatunji attended the NCA conference in Kearney, Nebraska, which had the theme “Synergy.”

During the last few weeks of October, Dr. West-Olatunji represented the United States at the International Conference On Enhancing Counseling Professions in Jaunpur, India. She presented at the University of Delhi, met with students in the Psychology Department, as well as unveiled and put a lei on a statue for which her name is carved on.

Most recently Dr. West-Olatunji was invited by special invitation to Atlanta, Georgia for the Rosalynn Carter Symposium on Mental Health. The focus of this year’s conference was the Affordable Care Act. She had the honor of experiencing this wonderful event and met and conferred with the former first lady!

With many more months to come as the 2013-2014 ACA President, Dr. West-Olatunji will continue her travels and bring back plenty of knowledge and skills to help with the progression of the ACA and better the counseling profession.

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**Take a Part in Enhancing Interactions between International and Domestic Students in our Counseling Community**

*By Kaifang Zheng*

This fall, five international students coming from Nigeria and China entered our Counseling community. They represent 9% of the entering student body. International counseling students can play a critical role in multicultural training and enrich the lives of domestic students. However, they face unique challenges of navigating a new culture and language in addition to the intense introspective counseling work in a new counseling program. At the same time, the internalization of the counseling profession provides individual counselors, both domestic and international, with a global perspective, transcultural awareness, and international competencies to address both local and global challenges.

Enhancing the mutually supportive interactions between international and domestic students in the counseling program can enrich both international and domestic students’ academic and global diversity.
experiences in navigating their journey. Domestic students can learn from their international peers about diverse cultural values, norms, indigenous counseling issues and approaches while they support international students’ adjustment and transition. Both domestic students and international students can benefit from the mutually supportive interactions while increasing their transcultural awareness and competencies in the globally diverse counseling program.

Both you and I can take a part in this mutually supportive interaction. Here are some ways to enhance the personal and professional experiences of all students in our counseling program:

**International Students**

- Balance academic work and social engagement.
- Appreciate and value the process.
- Realize what you can offer to others.
- Expect difficulties.
- Address challenges when you are struggling to engage your peers.

**Domestic Students**

- Invite international students to get involved in both academic and social activities.
- Understand that cultural adjustment takes time.
- Appreciate what you can learn from international students.
- Reach out to international students to help them through difficulties.
- Offer support and take the initiative to engage with international students.

In summary, as William Shedd stated, “a ship in a harbor is safe, but this is not what ships are built for.” For international students who take the big step of moving to a new country and entering a new program, they have decided to face and embrace the challenges, storms, and exciting discovery and growth. However, sometimes we can smooth the seas by navigating around the storms with support from domestic classmates. This mutual learning process in a cross-cultural environment can be an enriching experience for both international and domestic students alike.

**Meet Dr. Corinne Wehby Bridges**

By Nicole Kreutzer

Dr. Bridges is a recent graduate from the Doctoral Program in Counseling from the University of Cincinnati. She is a student who truly mastered the concept of time management: not only was she Vice President of Chi Sigma Iota, the counseling department’s honor society, but she was a graduate assistant, a board member for the Greater Cincinnati Counseling Association, and worked in private practice during her studies. Did I mention she also is married with four children? Her devotion and hard work paid off as she is now working in the Psychology Department for Mansfield University and is also an instructor in the Substance Abuse Counseling Program at
UC. In addition to her already impressive resume, Dr. Bridges was also nominated by one of her students for the George Barbour Award for Good Faculty Student Relations.

In choosing a dissertation topic, Dr. Bridges was able to use her own experience working in private practice to lead to an area she was interested in. In private practice she specialized in the treatment of mental health issues related to chronic pain and work related injuries, and in her experience she has found that these clients are especially in need of clinicians who can provide both treatment and advocacy. Her dissertation topic, “The Impact of Gender, Employment, and Class on Perceptions of Chronic Pain: An Ecological Perspective” was a qualitative study that focused on working class males and their experience of chronic pain. Dr. Bridges stated that along with chronic pain, men, women, and children alike experience the risk of symptoms of depression and anxiety, and that even after seeking medical attention for their chronic pain symptoms there is no specific treatment that will guarantee relief. From an ecological perspective, Dr. Bridge’s research will give us new understandings of the characteristics and life challenges that these individuals face, how clients can regain some of that lost control, accept their new normality, and embark on a new life course.

While still a Licensed Professional Counselor and a National Certified Counselor, she is now taking some time to focus on research, writing, and instruction. Someday she hopes to continue her work with chronic pain and start working as a counselor for rural, underserved communities. Dr. Bridges was also kind enough to answer some other questions I had for her:

Nicole: What made you choose the University of Cincinnati for your Doctorate?

Dr. Bridges: The Doctorate in Counselor Education and Supervision prepares counselors to be skilled teachers, supervisors, and researchers from an ecological perspective. After speaking with Dr. Ellen Cook, I felt that my desire to work with diverse populations and underserved groups would be supporter throughout the program.

Nicole: Any advice for students considering a doctorate?

Dr. Bridges: Document everything, be persistent, and don’t be afraid to advocate for yourself.

Nicole: What do you like to do in your free time?

Dr. Bridges: My husband and I have four kids. My stepson Gabe is 15, Kelly is 6, Edward is 2, and Virginia is 1, so I don’t get a lot of free time. However, I love to cook with the kids, take weekend hikes, and read. Mostly, I look forward to weekly date nights with my husband.
Congratulations Dr. West-Olatunji!

Congratulations to Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji for receiving the 2013 Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) Locke-Paisley Outstanding Mentor Award! She was honored with this award at the SACES meeting at the 2013 Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Conference in Denver, Colorado this October. The purpose of the award is to acknowledge and appreciate individual educators whose mentorship impacts students and colleagues in extensive ways in their education and career development. She was nominated by a group of current and past students from the University of Florida and the Xavier University in Louisiana, where she worked as a faculty member. We are privileged and honored to have Dr. West-Olatunji as a counselor educator and the program coordinator here at the University of Cincinnati.

Thank you for your dedication and tireless mentoring efforts in Counselor Education, Dr. West-Olatunji!
Updates & Events

Open House

On December 11th, the Counseling program will host an Open House for current and prospective applicants. Attendees will learn about the counseling profession and the UC Counseling Program faculty’s research interests. Attendees will also hear more specifics about the school counseling, mental health, and doctoral programs. This event will provide an opportunity for attendees to meet with current students and representatives from the Graduate School, Admissions, Financial Aid, and the School of Human Services. All current and prospective applicants are welcome to attend!

Center for Traumatic Stress Research

University of Cincinnati and University of Florida students gather every week to meet as members of the Center for Traumatic Stress Research (CTSR) team. Students share their research ideas and work together for bettering their own research under the guidance of Dr. West-Olatunji. If you are interested in joining the research team, please email Kaifang Zheng (zhengkg@uc.edu).

Announcements

Congratulations to doctoral student, Niby Kannai, on publishing a book “Living Word For A Dying World” by NEM, Thrissur in India.

ACA Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii (March 27-30, 2014)

The Counseling Program will have a booth at the ACA conference Exhibit Hall to recruit master’s and doctoral students to our degree and certificate programs. We will need lots of volunteers to be at the booth during the conference hours. Please sign up to help. Additionally, we will have a reception for current students, faculty, alumni, and friends. Stay tuned for the location and time.