

School Psychology Newsletter

Fall 2017

Here we go!!

The 2017-2018 academic year is off to a fabulous start for the JMU School Psychology Program! After a spectacular dinner hosted by Dr. Ashton Trice, first and second year students joined the faculty at the American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton to view a production of *Taming of the Shrew*. The play was lively and engaging, with many of the first year students sitting on the stage and being a part of the performance. The night ended with gelato to signify the official start of the semester.

The following week, students and faculty were able to work on teamwork skills at UREC's TEAM (Team Empowerment with Adventure for Madison) Challenge Course! From jumping through hoops to untangling themselves, it was a great way to get to know each other and learn about working as a team.



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Welcome Tiffany Hornsby!

We are excited to welcome Tiffany Hornsby as a full time Assistant Professor in the School Psychology Program! Tiffany recently completed her doctoral degree at Oklahoma State University and her School Psychology residency at Harrisonburg City Schools. Welcome, Tiffany!



Where are our Interns?

Our third year students have been doing a wonderful job thus far in their internship placements and representing our program well. We are represented in numerous states throughout the country! Here is where our students are currently interning:

- Arsenio Moss – Fort Worth Independent School District, Fort Worth, TX
- Kaitlynn Carter - Greene County Public Schools, Standardsville, VA
- Katie Hughes - Kaskaskia Special Education District #801, Centralia, IL
- Rachel Larkin - Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, MD
- Ebony Mason - Prince Georges County Public Schools, Adelphi, MD
- Shana Little - Chesterfield County Public Schools, Midlothian, VA
- Jessica Meeks - Chesterfield County Public Schools, Midlothian, VA
- Alexis Morse - Rockbridge County Public Schools, Lexington, VA

VASP Fall Conference 2017



School psychology faculty members, Dr. Tammy Gilligan and Dr. Debi Kipps-Vaughn, and students, Michelle Hayes, Katelin

Pletcher, and Jessica Williams-Chase, attended the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP) fall conference in Norfolk, Virginia. Dr. Tammy Gilligan presented on “Integrating Mindfulness Practices into the K-12 Community” during Thursday’s roundtable discussions. Michelle, Katelin, and Jessica attended seminars on Interdisciplinary Practice and Specific Learning Disability identification. All attendees enjoyed spending time with colleagues from across the state. Mandi Simmers, a 2017 graduate of the school

psychology program, was honored at the VASP luncheon as the Graduate Student of

the Year. Congratulations, Mandi!

School Psychology Master's Celebration

On July 27th, 2017, the School Psychology program proudly announced the successful completion of Masters requirements to an outstanding group of emerging school psychologists. Students, families, and friends came together to celebrate the first major step in the process of becoming a professional school psychologist. The School Psychology program prides itself on training competent professionals in the areas of assessment, consultation, counseling, crisis management and prevention as well as many core fundamentals in the areas of education and psychology. Congratulations to all students on their accomplishments!



Trauma Informed Workshop

On September 15th the School Psychology program, in collaboration with the School Counseling program, sponsored the workshop, "Trauma-Informed Schools" presented by John Richardson-Lauve of Child Savers. The workshop focused on the skills necessary to work with children who have experienced trauma in their life. Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) scores were discussed as well as their correlation to overall adult wellness and mental health concerns. First and second year students, interns, faculty, and other professionals from around the Shenandoah Valley were in attendance. The program thanks John for highlighting so many of the important

aspects of working with and advocating for this population within a school system.

Inter-professional Collaboration

On November 3rd, 2017, School Psychology, Occupational Therapy, School Counseling, Exceptional Education, Social Work, Nursing and Speech/Language Pathology graduate students will gather for the Inter-professional Education Seminar to enhance their collaboration skills. The day-long seminar will begin by separating students into small groups to learn more about each discipline. Following lunch, students will form groups and process case studies that require students to contribute and collaborate with each other to achieve desired goals. The day will conclude with students coming back together in one large



group to discuss take-home points to use in the future when collaborating with others in the schools.

Featured School Psychologist:

Dr. Phil Wickline is a full-time school psychologist for Rockingham County Public Schools. This is Phil's third year working for RCPS. In addition to his work in schools, Phil does a small amount of private practice work. His journey to become a school psychologist has been long and somewhat atypical. After receiving his undergraduate degree, Phil began working at the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents in a direct care position. He then completed a Master's level program in psychology and upon graduation, began working for the Virginia Department of Corrections. Phil remained at the DOC for 3 years, working in a maximum security prison. He then completed his doctoral degree in the combined school/clinical psychology program at the University of Virginia. Phil returned to the DOC while volunteering at Rockingham Memorial Hospital's outpatient behavioral health program, as part of his supervision for his license as a clinical psychologist. He then worked for RHM for a few years before transitioning into a school psychologist role. His first work as a school psychologist was in Augusta County Public Schools.

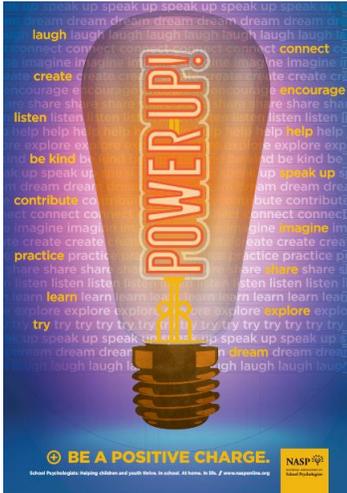
Phil explains that the best part of his day, as a school psychologist, is working and interacting with students. It helps remind him that "life can be filled with hope, play and energy; which are all things that I find inversely correlated with age." When asked about happenings in his district, Phil discussed the current move to fine-tune RCPS's student study process. They are working to establish clear, well-developed interventions for tier I and tier II students. This is also in an effort to "untangle" them. He is hoping this will open the door for better consultation with teachers and reduce the need for special education referrals.

Recently, Phil has become interested in performance validity in the context of abilities testing. He explains that this type of testing helps identify if/when students are not demonstrating their best ability during a cognitive test. The information gained from these tests indicate when it may not be a good idea to rely on the student's cognitive measures for decision making. This type of performance validity testing may benefit multidisciplinary teams with decision making processes.

When asked about what type of improvements are needed within the field of school psychology, Phil expressed concern about psychological reports, especially as products for teachers and parents. He mentions "as psychologists, we need to do a better job of writing reports that are both concise and helpful to the people who read them." He believes that this task may be difficult, considering current practices. However, he is hoping that this will be a fruitful endeavor in the future.



Power Up! Be a Positive Charge!



Power Up! Be a Positive Charge! is the theme for School Psychology Awareness Week 2017. NASP and the school psychology community celebrate this week every year through various activities, initiatives, and programs. The JMU School Psychology program has a tradition of recognizing the efforts of school psychologists in the community during this week with gifts of appreciation. The program also strives to raise awareness about school psychology in the JMU community through presentations in undergraduate psychology classes, giving undergraduate psychology professors an informational flyer, and reading to students at local elementary schools.

Program Recognitions

We would like to congratulate recent graduate, Mandi Simmers, for being awarded the VASP Outstanding Graduate Student of the Year. Mandi, who graduated last year with her Ed.S., is currently employed by Harrisonburg City Public Schools. While a student, Mandi was eager to participate in volunteer, research and professional development opportunities as often as possible. Congrats to Mandi on all her hard work!

Find us on Facebook!

Check out the JMU Graduate Psychology Facebook page to see other School Psychology program activities, and other goings on in the Graduate Psychology community.

Support Future School Psychologists

To support the School Psychology Program and the training of our students, consider making a contribution to the JMU Foundation specifying Account Number 14789. We value your continued

support in maintaining our educational excellence by providing funds that go towards testing and materials for student research. Contributions can also be made specifically to the O. Ashton Trice

Scholarship or the Patti Warner Award. Please refer to the following webpage: <http://psyc.jmu.edu/school/scholarships.html> Please keep in mind, many Graduate Assistantships no longer cover the full 12



credits per semester or any
of summer tuition.

Please mail checks to:
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Check out the JMU School Psychology Website at:
<http://psyc.jmu.edu/school/>

Did we miss someone? Please send us **emails** of colleagues who did not receive our newsletter.