Counseling Scene

Department of Professional Counseling
2018-2019 Academic Year
Second Annual Current Topics in Counseling Conference: A Huge Success!
Submitted by Erica Lapid, CAC Co-Founder

Connectedness is a key ingredient to happiness and longevity and continues to reign at the forefront of the mission for the Department of Professional Counseling’s - Counseling Alumni Connection (CAC). It is by design that this organization has found the word “connection” central to their designation, living up to its namesake since its 2012 inception. On Friday November 16th, 2018 the CAC hosted the second annual Current Topics in Counseling Conference on Monmouth University’s main campus. Over 100 counseling professionals joined for an energizing day of continuing education and networking.

Former ACA Governing Council Representative (2015-2018) and ACA Fellow Award winner (April 2016), Dr. S. Kent Butler headlined the day with an inter-active keynote discussion on the topic of Privileged Equity: Removing Culturally Biased Barriers; a presentation that holds special relevance in today’s volatile and demoralizing political climate. With poise and wit, Dr. Butler captured the undivided attention of the audience. He delivered an inspiring address that spoke to the responsibility of counselors to promote equity for marginalized populations by way of channeling their privilege and power into leadership roles. The tactful art of balancing social justice advocacy with therapeutic, counseling efforts was a theme attended to throughout. Counselors were encouraged to celebrate their authentic selves by sharing their gifts of power with their clients and the world. Dr. Butler concluded his presentation with a reprise of the song “This Is Me” featured in the 2017 film, The Greatest Showman. Connectedness was displayed as attendees swayed in unison, clapping their hands and belting out lyrics “Look out ’cause here I come. And I’m marching on to the beat I drum. I’m not scared to be seen, I make no apologies... THIS IS ME.”

(Continued on p. 2)
The energetic spirit of the conference circulated throughout each break-out session. Each revered and respected presenter brought with them passion and enthusiasm for their areas of specialty. Knowledge, skill and experience were shared and prompted thought-provoking discussions. Presentation topics included: *Incorporating Ethical Decision Making Models into Clinical Practice, LGBTQIA: Reading Between the Letters, Trauma Sensitive Yoga: Helping Clients Find Compassion and Emotion Regulation Through Embodied Awareness, Changing the Face of Addiction Treatment and Recovery Services, Art Therapy Experiential: Vulnerability and Shame Reduction, and Starting a Private Practice*—all of which made for an engaging and dynamic day. Upon reflecting on her experiences at the conference, alumna Tatiana Grant, 2015 stated “One thing that was special about the 2018 conference was the plethora of diverse speakers, which is a true reflection of our field,” she went on to state “I also enjoy the counseling conferences because they are a chance for me to reconnect with my fellow alumni and faculty and to continue to improve my counseling skills and knowledge base. For me, it is all about growing and staying connected.”

Mid-day in Anacon Hall, a catered buffet style lunch was co-sponsored by Monmouth University Graduate Studies. Cacophonies of excited chatter and laughter filled the space as presenters, alumni, current Professional Counseling students and local vendors littered the hall. Information about community resources were made available courtesy of vendors and poster sessions were displayed by current students and faculty. Jessica Bullock of Life Options Counseling hosted one of the most popular break-out sessions of the day on the topic of starting a private practice, a goal for many new and seasoned alumni. When invited to share her experience as conference presenter and attendee she stated, “As a presenter, this conference was well-organized and extremely welcoming. I was impressed by the warm nature of faculty and alumni. I felt more like a member of the Monmouth family than I did a guest. As an attendee, I left with relevant and applicable therapeutic techniques and interventions. I highly recommended this conference for any clinicians looking for continuing education, as it was very informative.”

A cascade of messages to include empathy, compassion, hope and healing were entrenched throughout the day. Though counseling professionals know that these tenants are the cornerstones of successful treatment, they are too often eclipsed by pervasive stress, caregiver burnout, and lack of self-care. The CAC remains dedicated to enhancing experiences that lead to the former so that alumni and practicing professionals within the field can continue to carry on these messages and positively impart change for those they serve. Strengthening attitudes toward remaining teachable is another impetus for this annual conference. With the unwavering support of student volunteers, the Professional Counseling department, and Monmouth University at large, the CAC is looking forward to future opportunities to keep post-graduate students connected to their academic community and invested in the field of professional counseling.
The Department’s Counseling Alumni Connection (CAC) hosted a “Guest Lecture Series” Presentation on Thursday, June 6, 2019 at 6:30pm on Monmouth University’s Main Campus.

Dr. Nancy Razza, Ph.D. presented on Trauma, Mental Health, and Intellectual Disability. Her presentation focused on the particular vulnerability children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) have to mental health disorders.

Attendees were astounded by the wealth of knowledge they gained from the lecture. Nancy’s expertise and experience brought a new perspective to consider while working as a professional.

More “Guest Lecture” and “From Our Own” series presentations will occur in the future. Past presentations include “Generation Z and Family Therapy” presented by Michele Levin, LPC, LCADC, ACS, SAC; “Self-Injury and Suicide: Is there a connection and what do we do about it?” presented by Dara Gasior, PsyD, and “Introduction to Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) in Counseling with a Focus on AAT for Veterans with PTSD” presented by Jennifer Tevlin, MS, NCC, NJDRCC, LPC, PATH & EAGALA-Certified.

If you are interested in future events, or to be added to our professional development e-mail list, please contact Lisa Himelman at limelma@monmouth.edu.
In June 2019, Dr. George Kapalka will retire from his role as a Professor within the Department of Professional Counseling. For the past 18 years, Dr. Kapalka has served as an integral part of the department and has impacted thousands of counseling students with his knowledge and expertise in several areas of counseling. His dedication to the development of his students will be missed!

Dr. Kapalka began his educational endeavor into the counseling world approximately 30 years ago, when he received his Master’s in Counseling from Kean University. Always having a passion for teaching, he planned to both teach as a counselor educator and practice clinically. However, he quickly realized that earning his Doctorate in Clinical Psychology was the most fitting option given his professional goals. “Things were different in the 1980s—there was not a professional counselor licensure available in New Jersey, so I obtained my Ph.D. out of necessity”, Dr. Kapalka states. After obtaining his doctorate in 1989, Dr. Kapalka taught at several colleges and universities, including Rider University and Jersey City State College, while also counseling in a private practice setting. In 1998, he was given the opportunity to teach on a full-time basis, however, admits that he always enjoyed having a sense of diversity in his career from both counseling and teaching.

Clinically, Dr. Kapalka states that approximately 75% of his clinical work has involved children and adolescents. His first experience with children and adolescents dates back to his teenage years, when he worked with children of immigrant families who had adjustment difficulties in a volunteer capacity. It was this endeavor that had also inspired him to become a teacher, as he noticed that he naturally gravitated towards this population and always strived to help others grow and learn by providing guidance in making more conscious life choices. As his professional career expanded, Dr. Kapalka went on to specialize in working with clients who experienced Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), parenting issues, and family conflicts. He also dedicated much of his clinical work to collaborating with schools to improve behavior management techniques. Since the start of his clinical career, Dr. Kapalka has performed extensive research in these areas, and has even published several books, some of which can be found in over eight different languages.

Recognizing his professionalism and commitment to academia, Monmouth University welcomed Dr. Kapalka in 2001. Previously Director and a counselor educator at New York Institute of Technology, he joined Monmouth’s Department of Psychological Counseling in a very important capacity. While teaching a variety of counseling courses, Dr. Kapalka said that he was instrumental in developing the Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree program. Specifically, he participated in the writing of the proposal for the degree and advocated to get it approved. Since its approval, he has taught over half of the degree program courses, his favorites including Field Placement courses, Psychopathology, Psychopharmacology, and Research Methods.

(Continued on p. 5)
As Dr. Kapalka’s career at Monmouth grew, Dr. Kapalka decided to pursue further education related to a long-standing interest—pharmacology. For over two decades, he gathered that he was treating many clients with psychotherapeutic techniques who were also prescribed psychotropic medications. Realizing he did not know much about such medications, he took continuing education courses to learn more, and over time became fascinated with the biological underpinnings of pharmacology. In 1990, a group of psychologists became organized into the first prescriptive movement for psychologists in the United States. Yearning to expand his knowledge of pharmacology, Dr. Kapalka became involved with this movement, and was trained to become one of only two prescriptive psychologists in New Jersey. “I feel very fortunate to be able to utilize both forms of treatment. I recognize that psychotherapy is important, but also that for some people, it is not enough and that a medical piece is missing and necessary. To be able to combine both psychotherapy and prescribing within one working relationship, I see that as beneficial”, says Dr. Kapalka.

As Dr. Kapalka’s time at Monmouth University comes to a close, he reflects back on his clinical and academic commitment to realize that he has many proud achievements. “Seeing my students graduate and become professionals makes me feel like I accomplished something great, while clinically, seeing my clients come in and become stable is also very rewarding. In addition, it is very rewarding to see my work out there, my books being bought—it is rewarding to know that my work is reaching someone”, Dr. Kapalka says. Looking forward to the future, Dr. Kapalka says that he will be relocating to New Mexico within the year, where he plans to continue his clinical practice, academic writing endeavors, and even focus a bit on his latest hobby—photography.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the Department of Professional Counseling, Dr. Kapalka! We wish you all the best in your future endeavors!
Over the 2018-2019 academic year, Monmouth University’s chapter of Chi Sigma Iota has been engaged in several exciting service projects. Mu Upsilon Omega began the year by volunteering at Monmouth University’s Trunk-or-Treat event during which young children from the West Long Branch community trick-or-treated on main campus. The executive board members as well as co-advisors, Dr. Delaney and Dr. Bobbitt, dressed up in costume and passed out candy to the families in the neighborhood. In conjunction with Dr. Jodry’s Transformational Counseling course, Mu Upsilon Omega sponsored items and toys to be donated to the children of the One Life to Love organization. One Life to Love is an orphanage for children with special needs, many of whom have been abandoned by their respective families. The children of this New Delhi, India based orphanage received notebooks, backpacks, and pens as well as tactile and sensory toys and items to encourage their educational pursuits and address their mental health needs.

Mu Upsilon Omega also co-sponsored a presentation with The Counseling Alumni Connection (CAC). The CAC holds its annual “From Our Own” presentations which are given by Monmouth counseling alumni (many of whom are CSI members), during which these alumni present on their areas of expertise and offer continuing education credits. Adjunct faculty member and CSI alumna Jenni Tevlin presented on animal assisted therapy with veterans who have been diagnosed with PTSD. Additionally, for students who are preparing to take their licensing examinations, CSI sponsored study sessions and refreshments led by Dr. Delaney and Professor Tirrell.

Mu Upsilon Omega provided scholarships to active members to attend the Current Topics in Counseling Conference at Monmouth University this past November. Our chapter helped fund conference fees for ten current graduate students, which allowed many emerging professionals to attend their first counseling conference. Another role of Mu Upsilon Omega is peer mentoring. Through the program called Counselor Connect new counseling students are connected with students who have been in the program for at least one year so they may share their experiences and advice. The goal of this program is to help acclimate new students to the journey they just began. While each student is assigned to an academic advisor, peer support is a helpful option for newer students to build relationships with seasoned students and gain insight to life as a counseling student.

Mu Upsilon Omega held its annual induction ceremony on March 31st, 2019 and inducted 45 students from the Mental Health Counseling program and the Educational Counseling programs. State Senator Vin Gopal was the keynote speaker, he shared his experiences with inductees and offered words of inspiration to this group of aspiring counselors. Additionally, Professor Lori Todd, adjunct professor in the Educational Counseling department, challenged inductees to continue to learn and grow in service of the communities they will serve. CSI alumna Jessica Colucci spoke about her experience this past January when she traveled to India to work with the children of One Life to Love and how transformational her journey was.

The final event the 2018-2019 Mu Upsilon Omega executive board sponsored was with activist Trystan Reese on April 30th, 2019. Trystan is a transgender man who has been a professional advocate for LGBTQ+ families for over eight years. Trystan first shared his story on a podcast entitled “The Longest Shortest Time” and since then he has been interviewed by larger news outlets like CNN and the Washington Post. Mu Upsilon Omega offered free CE hours to all attendees for this incredible event. The 2018-2019 academic year was a fruitful one for Mu Upsilon Omega, and we are excited to announce the next executive board for the 2019-2020 academic year: co-presidents Samantha Renfree and Alicia Giglio, Vice President Michelle Sholk, Secretary Victoria Porter, and Advocacy Chair Jeffrey Singh.
Counseling Scene

Counseling Student Association
Submitted by 2018-2019 CSA President, Merritt Reid

Upon coming to Monmouth University, I was unsure of how I would fit into the mental health counseling program, and school in general. I fortunately was able to utilize my diverse background and integrate it into my work here at Monmouth getting involved with various projects and endeavors. One of the responsibilities over this past year, that I chose to be a part of was president of the Counseling Students Association (CSA). My goal as president was to create a more unified Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduate school student body. The CSA executive board, which included Helene Maliko-Abraham as vice-president, Alanna Cosgrove as Treasurer and Sunanda Sharma as Secretary, organized trips and events to attempt to enrich the experience of the Clinical Mental Health graduate students. Helene Maliko-Abraham spearheaded and represented CSA at Monmouth University’s annual Trunk-or-Treat. Other events included a trip to see Dear Evan Hansen, the Broadway play about suicide and mental health, a day at the Jungian institute and a night at Pinot’s Palette. Beyond my involvement in CSA as president, I became highly involved with research during my time here acting as co-researcher on studies revolving around the topics of transformation, acting, empathy, and meaning of life. I was an integral part of organizing the India trip that took a group of students to India to assist a children’s home, One Life to Love, in Delhi. This trip was utilized to conduct some of the research I became involved in focusing on topics of travel and transformation, as well as create a documentary, Bodhi, which is currently in post-production. I was honored to act as CSA president and am beyond grateful to all the faculty in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program and all the students I met along my journey here at Monmouth. You changed my life for the better.

Transforming Our Space
Submitted by Dr. Megan Delaney

One of her favorite assignments Dr. Delaney gives to her Family Therapy class is listening to the story of the “Accidental Gay Parents” as told on the podcast The Longest Shortest Time. Everyone in the class becomes captivated by Biff Chaplow and Trystan Reese’s honest, raw accounting of becoming “accidental gay parents” when a sister suddenly couldn’t care for her kids, and these two 20-something guys were thrust into the world of parenting.

Trystan and Biff expanded their family by having their own biological child— one that Trystan carried and birthed himself. As a transgender man, he has all the parts necessary to do so in a safe manner. He stopped taking his hormones, and they successfully conceived and had a beautiful, happy baby. We resonate with this story because it is one of love and hope and family. We were thrilled to be welcome Trystan Reese to campus April 30th! During his visit, he met with Dr. Delaney’s Family Therapy class as well as student groups on campus. He also gave a larger talk to the community in Wilson Hall. Listen to the podcasts: https://longestshortesttime.com/tag/accidental-gay-parents/
Monmouth University’s CAC offers both LACs and LPCs the opportunity to participate in peer supervision. The Peer Consultation Group (PCG) provides an informal, confidential forum for counselors to discuss clinical issues that arise in practice. Colleagues have the opportunity to share challenges, offer solutions, further develop skills, and explore areas of strengths and weaknesses in a supportive environment.

The PCG is an additional avenue outside of an employment setting for like-minded others to share information and experiences that facilitate both professional and personal development for those working in a helping role. Peer consultation helps counselors to improve client services, as well as practice in accordance to ethical guidelines and considerations. The PCG meets monthly and topics of discussion include a wide variety of subject matter. Colleagues provide guidance and support for one another and clarify questions and concerns particularly as it relates to licensure, renewal, continuing education, and supervision.

Challenges are addressed such as working with resistant clients, what course of action to take when ethical guidelines are impeded upon within the work environment, and legal issues within counseling. The PCG helps to reinforce fundamental concepts such as building therapeutic rapport, practicing congruence as a counselor, establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries with clients, as well as managing emotions that arise within the counseling environment. It reminds helping professionals how important consistent self-care is and offers suggestions as to how to implement this practice.

The PCG serves as a network to provide referrals, exchange knowledge, share tools, and utilize resources. The CAC cordially invites you to attend one of the upcoming meetings. For more information, please contact Alicia Zielinski Straub at 732-500-6394 for additional information.
Transformational Travel

In January 2019, Students were offered the opportunity to accompany Dr. Joanne Jodry and Dr. Stephanie Hall on a transformational trip to India where they able to develop and grow in multiple aspects of their lives. Here is what they have to say about their experience:

“India was more than a class. So much more. For me it was the turning of a page, it was a new family, it was laughs and tears and conversations that will resonate through the rest of my life. Going on that trip changed everything I thought I knew about counseling, education, service, and love.” -Parker R. Hilton

“My time in India taught me that prioritizing service of others over your own personal growth leads to incredible transformation. The family we created with One Life to Love gave me a sense of purpose and belonging I’ve never experienced before, and it’s been such a beautiful journey integrating what I learned in India back into my life here.” -Olivia C. Pruznick

“The children of One Life to Love have been my greatest teachers. They taught me how to come back to center and helped me remember what is at the center is love.” -Jennifer Noble

“Life changing. Perspective shifting. Consciousness elevating. Eye widening. Heart opening. Weight releasing. To be submersed in experiences that were so starkly different from my past experiences literally changed the cells in my body, making room for a kind of grounding and healing I didn’t know was possible.” -Lauren Cozzolino

“Traveling to India and working with One Life to Love was without a doubt the most meaningful and deeply special experience I have ever been afforded. The trip gave me an opportunity to grow in my counseling practice in a way that typical graduate classes never could. This trip has helped to further my ability to comprehend and practice true empathy, love, understanding, compassion, and curiosity for all of mankind. I will forever be in debt to everybody who contributed to this experience.” -Emily Rice
Donna Cetroni, MA, BSN, RN, CPHQ, AHN-BC, NBC-HWC

Donna graduated from the program in 2014. Prior to her time at Monmouth, she started her journey as a Holistic Nurse, and graduated with her Master’s in Holistic Health Studies from Georgian Court University in 2003. She went on to become a board certified Advanced Holistic Nurse, and graduated from the Institute of Integrative Nutrition (affiliated with Columbia University at the time). Most recently, Donna was certified as a Health and Wellness Coach in July of 2018 by the National Board for Health and Wellness Coaches and the International Consortium for Health and Wellness Coaching (ICHWC).

Currently, Donna serves as a Performance Improvement and Quality Outcomes Coordinator at an acute care hospital in Monmouth County. She also holds a full-time position and teaches at Georgian Court University. Building on her love of working directly with clients, Donna recently opened a private practice, named “The Healing Way”. Her practice focuses on helping clients achieve optimum health and wellness through holistic and integrative healing approaches. Donna’s passion is to empower people to live a life overflowing with self-worth, health, and joy.

Tara Arhakos, MS, LPC, NCC

Tara is the owner and operator of Mindful Moments, LLC and Let Go, Let Be, LLC. Her counseling practice Mindful Moments, LLC has been located in Milltown, NJ for over eight years. She recently opened a second location in Monmouth Beach, NJ. Mindful Moments, LLC is dedicated to helping women and young adults achieve personal and professional goals while creating balance and living meaningful and happy lives.

At the start of 2019, Tara published her first book “Food, Mood, and You: Emotional Eating Education Curriculum”. The book presents four modules with twelve lessons for healthcare professionals to guide either individuals or groups in expanding their insight and knowledge about emotional eating behaviors. The curriculum guides participants to identify and define emotional eating patterns, identify triggers, and gain insight into their relationship with food while developing new skills to help regulate distressing emotions. Participants complete the program with a knowledge of their behaviors and insight into cognitive and behavioral skills to help reduce or eliminate such behaviors. The book is currently available on Amazon.

From her love of educating and motivating clients, Tara began her second business pursuit with Let Go, Let Be, LLC. Let Go, Let Be, LLC is dedicated to helping women achieve peace, unity, and happiness through educational seminars and wellness retreats. She is very excited to be launching this newest adventure with a holistic focus on promoting wellness through the knowledge of the mind-body connection.

Kevin R. Majewski, Ph.D., MA

Kevin graduated Monmouth with a MA in Psychological Counseling in 2009. From there, he went on to work at CPC Behavioral Health for several years, before eventually going on to receive his Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership, Management, and Policy from Seton Hall University in 2018. Currently, Kevin works as an Adjunct Professor for Seton Hall University, as well as working as an Analyst of Institutional Research at Union County College. Kevin recently presented his research, entitled “Does College Experience Matter? A National Study Understanding Graduate’s Job Satisfaction”, in Toronto at the 2019 American Educational Research Association’s annual meeting.
Counseling Scene

Lisa Kreutzberg, MS, LPC, NCC

Lisa graduated with her MS in Mental Health Counseling in 2011. Upon graduating, she was immediately hired by her internship site, Rutgers University-University Behavioral Healthcare (UBHC), working in a prison setting with adolescent boys. After obtaining her LPC, she took a neuropsychology position at Shore Counseling and Coaching, which has a particular specialization in counseling related to major life transitions, such as divorce, empty-nesting, returning to the workforce, and caregiving.

Bethany Sheridan, PhD, CPC-I, NCC, Licensed School Counselor

Bethany Sheridan is a Licensed School Counselor in NJ and NV, and a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor-Intern in NV. While a student Monmouth University, Bethany made the decision to pursue further education in counseling and was accepted to the Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral program at the University of Nevada, Reno.

During her first internship, she fell in love with school counseling and transitioned from the clinical setting to an elementary school. Bethany also met Dr. Megan Delaney at this time. Dr. Delaney was presenting on ecotherapy at the American Counseling Association Conference and Bethany resonated with everything she said, so she knew Dr. Delaney had to be on her committee and she had to study ecotherapy.

Bethany’s dissertation study investigated the effects of a nature-based guidance lesson program on anxiety and connection to nature among third grade students. She found that students who had outdoor lessons showed significant decreases in anxiety at the end of the study. Building off this work, Bethany is now employed as a full time school counselor at a Montessori school, where she is head of a therapeutic gardening program. Through this program Bethany is able to continue implementing ecotherapy, teach students eco-literacy, and develop community partnerships with sustainable living organizations and professional counselors. Her education both at Monmouth University and at the University of Nevada helped Bethany find her passion and have prepared her well to pursue it.

Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund Created to Directly Benefit Our Students

Written by Nick Spanola

The Department is honored to officially announce the creation of the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund. Many professionals and alumni from the department have been diligently working to bring this scholarship process to fruition for the purpose of directly benefiting Monmouth counseling students.

Students may often struggle to balance their education with work in order to support tuition, or may not be able to work while in school. The Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund was created to help offset some of this burden and allow counseling students more opportunities to immerse themselves in their education. All money donated to the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund will be awarded directly to current students in the department in order to make a meaningful difference in their professional journeys. The criteria for receiving the scholarship will be merit and needs based, with the intent of helping students who are having a difficult time navigating the demands of class, internships, work, and other commitments of being a graduate student. (Continued on page 12).
In order to accomplish the goal of the scholarship, the alumni of the department are needed. “Alumni participation in funding this scholarship will greatly expand its reach to future students,” stated Dr. Gary Handler, the Ambassador of the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund. As an alumnus himself, Dr. Handler said that “if alumni just think about their own struggles while in college and graduate school, they will be able to empathize with current and future students and hopefully become a part of helping them on their paths to becoming professionals”. Any amount contributed to the scholarship fund can make a difference.

The Professional Counseling Departments has close to a thousand alumni and if a large percentage contribute, it will result in a massive impact. The scholarship fund is currently active and will be discussed at major departmental events moving forward.

The motivation for this scholarship fund came from the experiences of professors, others working at Monmouth, and alumni. For example, Dr. Handler’s experiences teaching practicum and internship enabled him to attain a deeper level of interaction with the students in these classes, allowing for strong relationships with his students and learning about their lives outside of the class. He remembers hearing frequent conversations related to the dedication and all the associated struggles that each student experienced during their educational journey. These experiences reminded Dr. Handler of his own family’s experiences, handling the demands of his college education. He started to expand his awareness of the need to provide meaningful support to students, which led to his. This led up to his involvement with the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund.

Aside from his involvement in the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund, Dr. Handler and his wife, Joan, who is also a Monmouth alumnus, created an individual endowed fund to benefit a Monmouth University counseling student each year. Dr. Handler wants to stay involved by helping to expand the drive to support the department that he was an integral part of for so many years (both as a student and a professional).

Dr. Handler will continue working with the alumni organization to publicize the opportunity to expand on the Professional Counseling Scholarship. Using our active alumni network, progress has already been made to involve all who are graduating and others that are in the field working. Hopefully, this trend will continue and many alumni will support this effort.

As a current student in the Professional Counseling Department, I was taken aback when learning about the message and meaning behind this scholarship’s creation. The supportive and compassionate nature of this scholarship fund truly embodies the commitment of not only our professors, but also our department as a whole, to the professional growth of all the students.

Our profession is based on compassion and empathy, and the goal of this scholarship fund is for professors, alumni, and students to share some of this empathy amongst one another and build on the success of our department. Alumni have played a major role in the growth and development of our program from the time of its inception, and now the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund provides them with an additional opportunity to become a part of its future.

We are proud to announce the commencement of the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund, and we encourage alumni to consider contributing through the link provided below. All contributions go directly to our students and any amount is greatly appreciated:

www.monmouth.edu/give/pcsf

Above: the webpage to donate to the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund.
Meet Dr. Jason Branch

Written by Nick Spanola

At the beginning of this academic year we had the privilege of welcoming Dr. Jason Branch to our Professional Counseling faculty. Dr. Branch spent the first 18 years of his life in Dayton, Ohio, and then he moved to Alabama for his collegiate education. At the University of West Alabama, Dr. Branch graduated with a Bachelor’s in both psychology and sociology. Upon completion of these degrees, he went directly on to the University of Alabama at Birmingham to obtain his Master’s in clinical mental health counseling. Dr. Branch went on to get 10 years worth of counseling experience working as a private practice clinician in Alabama before continuing his education.

After these valuable years working in the field, Dr. Branch decided to pursue higher education, and he decided to attend Auburn University for his Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision. Completion of his Ph.D. led to him holding adjunct teaching positions at several universities in Alabama, and eventually moving to Youngtown, Ohio for a part-time faculty position. His path ultimately brought him to Monmouth University, where he has accepted his first tenure-track teaching position. Besides his teaching, Dr. Branch’s research interests include self-care among the helping profession, addiction and substance abuse, multiculturalism and diversity, and examining the experiences of African American males in counseling. A current research project of his, which is a continuation of his dissertation, examines the life experiences of African American males as counselors and counselor educators, with a focus on how they overcome mental health stigma to enter the profession.

Outside of his career, Dr. Branch has a variety of interests such as traveling and going to different restaurants to try different types of food. He also loves to go riding on his motorcycle, and he enjoys thrill-seeking activities, such as skydiving.

When asked about his time so far at Monmouth, Dr. Branch described it “feeling like home with such warm and welcoming faculty and students”, and he is thrilled to be a part of the department. Dr. Branch’s educational and research backgrounds make him a great fit for the department, and we are excited to have him as a member of our faculty.

“I chose Monmouth, because I felt I would be celebrated more than tolerated. The desire for diversity here goes beyond ‘numbers’.”

– Dr. Branch
Introducing Dr. David Ford

Written by Nick Spanola

The Department of Professional Counseling had the honor of welcoming Dr. David Ford as a new professor this year. Dr. Ford grew up in Fairmont, North Carolina, and moved to Winston-Salem, NC after graduating high school. In Winston-Salem, Dr. Ford received his Bachelor’s in psychology from Wake Forest University. After completing his Bachelor’s, he spent the next 11 years in various positions. He started as a retail associate for Eddie Bauer, and then worked in various mental health facilities including Charter Behavioral Health. After this, Dr. Ford worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant at a hospital for 3 years, and then held a position at a day center for adults with developmental disabilities. Switching over to the field of education, he worked as a substitute teacher prior to becoming a full-time teaching assistant, and then finally worked as an Assistant Hall Director for Winston Salem State University.

Following his time in these professions, Dr. Ford went back to Wake Forest University and completed his Master’s in counseling. This led directly into him moving to Virginia and going on to receive his Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from Old Dominion University. Dr. Ford went on to work as a professor at James Madison University. Dr. Ford worked at James Madison for the past 4 years before moving to New Jersey and accepting his position here at Monmouth University. In regards to his choice to join Monmouth, he explained that our program has been on his mind since he was a Ph.D. student and Monmouth provided him with the change in work environment he was searching for in his life.

Along with his teaching, Dr. Ford’s research interests include examining the experiences of Black male students at predominantly White universities, working with LGBTQ+ populations, examining the impact of HIV/AIDS on communities, and career counseling related studies. A current project of his is focused on exploring the career concerns of Queer men who are HIV positive. When not working, some of Dr. Ford’s personal interests include shopping, traveling, cooking, and playing piano. He also has a great love of the arts, including (but not limited to) ballet, opera, and theatre.

Dr. Ford brings a wide range of research interests and an enthusiasm for progressing the counseling profession, and he will be a wonderful addition to our department in the years to come.

“I have greatly enjoyed being here so far, and I am looking forward to being here a long while.” – Dr. Ford
Faculty Accomplishments

In May, Dr. Megan Delaney and Professional Counseling graduate student Sunanda Sharma travelled to the Children and Nature Network conference in Oakland, California. Their presentation, “Developing the Ecological Self: An Evaluation of a Collaborative Social Practice Art Initiative,” included results from a research study of Discovering the Ecological Self (https://discoverecoself.org/), a Social Practice project developed by Monmouth University artist Kimberly Callas. The study included local children and Monmouth University art students who participated in a semester-long interactive art and nature experience. At the end of the program, the children designed and created their own personal ecological masks. The presentation provided an overview of mixed-methods research findings that explored children’s and students’ connection to nature as well as their own meaning-making of the experience.

Dr. Sarah Springer conducted research with two Monmouth University students, which will be published in the Fall of 2019. She also published an article in the Journal for Specialists in Group Work in 2018. This publication was the recipient of the 2018 ASGW Research Article of the Year award. Lastly, edited a textbook surrounding group counseling:


Dr. Sarah Springer had the honor of achieving several professional service accomplishments of the past year. She became an Appointee of the ACES Awards Committee. She also became an Executive Board Member of NARACES, as well as becoming the NJ-ACES Treasurer. Lastly, this Spring Dr. Springer was invited as the Keynote Speaker for the Chi Sigma Iota Induction Ceremony at New Jersey City University.
Dr. Jessica Burkholder, Dr. David Burkholder, and Dr. Stephanie Hall presented at the 2018 Annual Convention of the European Branch of the ACA, which took place in Athens, Greece. They also wrote a chapter for a counseling textbook regarding group counseling:


Dr. Jessica Burkholder, Dr. David Ford, and Dr. Stephanie Hall collaborated on research focusing on ethics in counseling, and they presented at the annual Law and Ethics in Counseling Conference:


Dr. Alan Cavaiola presented a research paper in Lisbon. The study was based on his research with Dr. David Stout, which was published in the journal Psychologist Manager. He also collaborated with Alumni and Adjunct Professor Jenni Tevlin on research pertaining to the use of equine therapy with veterans:


(continued on page 17).

Professor Matthew Tirrell had some major professional accomplishments over the past academic year. First, he took over as the Field Placement Director for the Professional Counseling Department. Also, he is in the final process of obtaining his ACS credentialing. Professor Tirrell was also recently accepted in the Counselor Education Ph.D. program at Montclair State University.

Professional Counseling’s Lisa Himelman and her husband, Eric, welcomed their son Max David Himelman on November 23, 2018. Max was born weighing 6 pounds, 3 ounces and has brought so much love and joy into their family. In April 2019 Lisa was promoted to Director of Professional Development and Special Projects after 5 years with the department. Lisa is looking forward to continuing her work in Professional Counseling, including increasing their professional development offerings. Congratulations!
Welcome Back Matthew Tirrell

Written by Alexandra Evangelista ‘19

In May 2018, Monmouth University proudly welcomed Matthew Tirrell to serve as Director of Field Placement within the Department of Professional Counseling. Within this role, Matthew assists Professional Counseling students as they embark on their often first-ever journey into the counseling profession as clinical interns. Wholeheartedly considering this position a “true privilege”, Matthew continuously strives to protect Professional Counseling students as they gain counseling experience at their carefully vetted field placement sites, while simultaneously seeks to expand their professional development opportunities and horizons along the way.

Though new to the position, Matthew’s connection to the Department of Professional Counseling is deeply rooted. Matthew graduated from the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program in 2013. Following graduation, Matthew worked as a therapist, gaining substantial clinical experience and eventually his license as a Professional Counselor. However, he admits that diversity and creativity were two very important and much appreciated values of his, and that the idea of incorporating something more than clinical work into his career would be most fulfilling for him and his professional and personal development. To uphold these values, Matthew sought to stay involved in the Department of Professional Counseling as an alumnus, and eventually created the Counseling Alumni Connection (CAC), the department’s alumni organization. The CAC spearheads several professional development events and programs in such a way that promotes inclusivity, builds relationships amongst alumni and professionals, and gives back to Professional Counseling students in meaningful ways. Since its inception, the CAC’s influence has been far-reaching, and has allowed for positive, long-lasting ripple effects within the counseling profession to be made, an impact Matthew deeply cares about.

After several years of facilitating the development of the CAC and working clinically, his continued dedication to his educational roots led him to land a position as an adjunct faculty member within the Department of Professional Counseling. Matthew’s exposure to academia allowed him to see that clinical work and counselor education are not distinct and separate, but rather that they are mutually informative. As Director of Field Placement, presently teaching within the department has allowed Matthew to be more in tune with students’ academic and clinical needs and, in turn, produce the necessary, often creative solutions to fill such gaps. Further, this dual role has allowed Matthew to maintain and enhance his own identity as a counselor, all while contributing to the creation of his students’ identities as budding counselors.

Devoted to lifelong learning and continuous self-improvement, Matthew does so for the betterment of not only himself, but also his students, the Department of Professional Counseling, and the counseling profession as a whole. His commitment to and respect for the counseling profession is clear, as this September, Matthew will begin his journey towards earning his Ph.D. in Counseling from Montclair State University.

(Continued on page 19)
As Dr. Delaney’s Graduate Assistant this year, I had the pleasure in helping her plan the Ecotherapy class Fall semester 2018. This was by far one of my top Highlights while being a student in this program. Ecotherapy is defined as contact with the outdoors and nature as a method or element of therapy (Clinebell, 1996) and addresses the critical fact that as humans we are interwoven with the natural world (Buzzell & Chalquist, 2009). The class was designed to learn the theory of Ecopsychology as well as ways that students can apply these concepts in Ecotherapy, or the work we do with clients that involve the natural world. Our relationship with nature is an important component of our mental and physical health. This class explored student’s own relationship with nature as well as guided them in ways that they will be able to integrate nature in their future work as a counselor.

To make this class an immersive and experiential experience, classes were held at the many outdoor resources of Monmouth County including Seven Presidents beach, Deep Cut Gardens, Hartshorne Woods, F.Bliss Price Arboredum, Thompson park, Holmdel park, and Tatum park. Our goal was to have all classes in natural places and to make it as experiential as possible. Some highlights from this class were: a guided meditation in the woods called forest bathing; hearing Kristen Huber, an Ecotherapist/Monmouth Alumni talk to us about her private practice, Jersey Shore Ecotherapy; Adventure Based Therapy rock climbing at Thompson park; volunteering with the horses and learning more about Equine-Assisted therapy at Serenity Stables; restorative yoga held by fellow student Meghan Casey; numerous team-building and mindfulness exercises at the parks; and practicing horticultural therapy with the senior community members at Atria in Tinton Falls.

Parker Hilton, who was enrolled in the fall 2018 Ecotherapy notes, “In a very real way, I came to Monmouth because of the existence of this class. I’ve always been an advocate for being outside in my own personal world but...”

(Continued on page 20)
Dr. Delaney’s class provided real world techniques and approaches to helping clients see something in the natural world that so much of us lose sight of over time—a therapeutic safe-haven. This class gave me the tools and opportunity to share something I love so much with people who may have disconnected with nature’s generous capacity for therapeutic fortitude."

Dr. Delaney is offering this elective again in Fall, 2019. This class will get to participate in all of the afore mentioned activities as well as experience the “3 day effect” or the change in body/mind when immersed in nature for 3 days. This class will spend a weekend at Camp Sacajawea participating in archery, rock-climbing, low-ropes course and a solo experience. Dr. Delaney is building her army of Ecotherapists right here at the Jersey Shore.

Congratulations to our Graduates!

**August 2018 Graduates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juliana DePazza</th>
<th>Elizabeth Matthews</th>
<th>Kasey Ramoth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raquel Figueroa</td>
<td>Christina Mercado</td>
<td>Kristen Robertori</td>
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<tr>
<td>AnnaMarie Giurano</td>
<td>Natalie Minichino</td>
<td>Samantha West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher King</td>
<td>Julia Mueller</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madison Lawn</td>
<td>Nigjusua Nelson</td>
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**January 2019 Graduates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courtney Aranowitz</th>
<th>Danielle Corcoran</th>
<th>Carlee Frew</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tiffanie Borges</td>
<td>Dario Costa</td>
<td>Caitlin Golden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Borghese</td>
<td>Lauren Daly</td>
<td>Jessica Hardy</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Campbell</td>
<td>Loralei Euchler</td>
<td>Maeve Hogan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anjelica Ciminello</td>
<td>Delaney Fell</td>
<td>Jennifer Noble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Colucci</td>
<td>Candice Ferretti</td>
<td>Madison Paul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**May 2019 Graduates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heidi Agramonte</th>
<th>Alexandra Evangelista</th>
<th>Samantha Osso</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Amar</td>
<td>Jessica Ganczar</td>
<td>Jennifer Pancheco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tia Baranosky</td>
<td>Heather Harbachuk</td>
<td>Gabrielle Petosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malik Biel</td>
<td>Samantha Hartophilis</td>
<td>Dana Porowski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Bristol</td>
<td>Alison Kulick</td>
<td>Emily Ramos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alanna Cosgrove</td>
<td>Cassandra Martin</td>
<td>Tiffaney Ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas Cresson</td>
<td>Emmi McCauley</td>
<td>Rebecca Shack</td>
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Chair’s Corner  
Dr. Stephanie Hall 

As the 2018-2019 academic year draws to a close we have much to celebrate. The three newest members of our department, Dr. Jason Branch, Dr. David Ford and our Director of Field Placement Matt Tirrell are finishing a successful first year at MU. We are delighted to have them with us. This summer we will also say goodbye to our colleague Dr. George Kapalka. We wish him all the best in his retirement and thank him for his years of contribution to Monmouth University.

A definite highlight of this year was the January trip to India. I had the pleasure of accompanying Dr. Jodry and a group of students to Northern India, which was a life changing experience for all of us. We visited many amazing places such as the Taj Mahal, Ganges River, Golden Temple, and Himalayan Mountains of Dharamshala, but our most meaningful time was spent at One Life to Love, a non-profit organization and children’s home that provides resources such as education, nutrition, and healthcare for children with disabilities in New Delhi, India. Our department continues to develop unique experiences for students to learn outside the traditional classroom, such as trips to the African American museum in Washington D.C. with Dr. Ford’s Multicultural Counseling class and Dr. Delaney’s Ecotherapy course. Faculty and students have also been busy outside the classroom presenting at ACA, AARC, NARACES and NJCA conferences together.

Our alumni continue to do outstanding work with their many projects, the highlight of which was the second annual Current Topics in Counseling conference- a big thank you to Lisa Himelman for her leadership on this event. Dr. Kent Butler delivered our keynote this year and the new addition of a networking lunch with poster sessions was a huge success! I would also like to congratulate Lisa Himelman on her promotion to Director of Professional Development and Special Projects. We are very fortunate to have Lisa on our team and look forward to the continued expansion of our professional development offerings.

Thank you to everyone who made this a successful year!

Lisa Himelman  
Director of Professional Development and Special Projects  
lhimelma@monmouth.edu or 732-923-4572

Make a Difference in Our Students’ Lives! 
Consider making a gift to support Professional Counseling students’ education and professional development by donating to the Professional Counseling Scholarship Fund! Visit www.monmouth.edu/give/pcsf to donate or contact us to learn more.

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