

Liaison

A Periodic Newsletter for Psy.D. and M.A.
Psychology Programs at Wheaton College

Fall/Winter 2004

Ponderings

Grace, thank God, can break through to us regardless of our intent. God graciously awaits our assent and our participation in transformation, but God does not wait to give us good things. No matter what our primary dedication may be at any given time, God's love can burst through upon us, miraculously [p. 152].

God does not flash into our lives to work a piece of magic upon us and then disappear. To do so would eradicate human dignity; it would prevent our participation. Instead, God's grace is always present intimately within us, inviting and empowering us toward more full, more free exercise of will and responsibility. The more open and spacious our will and responsibility become, the more God and person commune in creative spendor [p. 155].

- Gerald May
Addiction and Grace, 1988

"Live neither in the past nor in the future, but let each day's work absorb your entire energies, and satisfy your widest ambition."

- Sir William Osler
Physician, to his students

Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step enough for me.

- John Henry Cardinal Newman
Lead, Kindly Light, 1833



Wheaton College
For Christ and His Kingdom

Introducing Liaison

Welcome to *Liaison*. This new publication is designed for alumni and friends of graduate psychology programs at Wheaton College including doctoral and masters level curriculums. The Psy.D. program in clinical psychology was established in 1993 and has been continuously accredited by the American Psychological Association since 1998. This five-year program admits some 20 students annually. The M.A. program in clinical psychology, a two-year program, was established in 1977 and admits approximately 30 students each year. Four years ago, an additional master's degree was added in Counseling Ministries, a one-year degree for individuals who primarily work through churches or mission agencies.

Psy.D. Accreditation Renewed

In May of 2004, the Psy.D. program was granted an additional five-year approval from the APA Committee on Accreditation (CoA). The Psy.D. program accepted its first class in the fall of 1993. Accreditation by the American Psychological Association (APA) was first granted in 1998, and the program has been continuously accredited since that time. This year's committee praised the program for its commitment to diversity as well as student/faculty mentoring.

Alumni Profile: Abi Shields

Graduating from Wheaton's M.A. program in 2003, Abi Shields never dreamed she'd be in Honduras working as a school counselor at Academia Los Pinares, a school in the capital city of Tegucigalpa. Founded 40 years ago by a group of Mennonites seeking to educate missionary children, the school now serves over 575 elementary children, with missionary kids only a small number of those served. Abi describes the journey as one centered on faith and trust in God. She particularly enjoys working as an advocate for children and parents, as well as collaborating with teachers. Although learning the language has been a struggle at times, she has found this to be a rewarding and character-building experience.



Abi Shields, M.A.

Psy.D. Self-Study Provides Program Snapshot

Accreditation is based, in part, on the findings of periodic written self-studies submitted to the CoA. Here is a quick snapshot summary of some of the things we learned from our self-study:

GRADUATES AFFIRM TRAINING

Although our alumni offered many constructive ideas for program improvement—and we listened carefully to these—the overwhelming impression from the self-study was graduate satisfaction with Wheaton's training. We received 46 responses to a questionnaire sent to the 55 graduates of the first three classes; a return rate of 88 percent. The final summary question asked alumni to rate their overall satisfaction with the doctoral program on a 20 point scale. The average rating was 16.1, which falls into the "excellent" category in the graphic rating scale used.

GRADUATE LICENSURE/EMPLOYMENT RATES ARE HIGH

While licensure takes time and is not essential for all psychologists (e.g., college professors may have less incentive to obtain licensure), the licensure rate for Wheaton graduates is nearly 100 percent after several years in the field. Graduates also do exceptionally well on the nationwide test used by most states for licensure, the Examination for the Practice of Professional Psychology (EPPP). Test scores on the EPPP average 145 with a passing range of 142-200. Wheaton graduates average 157, ranking them an impressive fifth among 42 competitor programs—fewer than 3 points behind the best professional psychology programs in the nation. Employment patterns are impressive as well. At the time of the self-study, about 96 percent of our alumni were employed full-time in the field (or part-time by choice). The top six areas of employment were: private or group practice (31 percent), community mental health (16 percent), hospital settings (16 percent), college or university teaching (13 percent), residential treatment (nine percent), correctional settings (nine percent), and other (eight percent). The number of graduates who have entered tenure-track positions in higher education was especially surprising.

GRADUATES REVEAL A HEART FOR SERVICE

An important part of the doctoral program's mission statement emphasizes service to underserved populations. Our graduates exemplify this standard in their practice. Practitioners report clientele in the following categories: low income/poor (39 percent), substance abuse (26 percent), unemployed (20 percent), severely mentally ill (18 percent), homeless (five percent). Graduates also report two hours per week of pro bono service, and seven hours per week of reduced fee service.

Alumni Profile: Sandy Johnston Kruse

Since graduating from the Psy.D. program in 1999, Sandy Johnston Kruse has had a passion for training future psychologists for work with underserved groups. After graduation, Sandy and other professionals from Wheaton, the Center for Rural Psychology, Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago, Lydia Home Association, and Outreach Community Ministries began exploring the possibility of creating a consortium focused on training pre-doctoral interns. The consortium became a reality in 2000 and was APA-accredited in 2002. This fall, Lawndale Christian Health Center joined the consortium and has added a strong health psychology component to the training program. Sandy still finds her work as consortium director exciting and fulfilling even after five years. "The collaborative effort between the sites and mentoring interns are the most fulfilling parts of my work," Sandy says.



Sandy Johnston Kruse, Psy.D.

Graduate Students in Honduras

Honduras, one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, recently came into the world spotlight as the number of youth in gangs reached near-epidemic proportions. This summer, a group of seven graduate students, faculty, and staff visited Honduras with three goals: 1) to perform a needs assessment concerning the current gang crisis in the country, 2) to participate in a national conference aimed at gang intervention, and 3) to train pastors and lay counselors in understanding basic psychopathology and utilizing counseling skills with members of their congregations. The Wheaton representatives collaborated with more than 300 pastors/church leaders who traveled nationwide to participate in the counseling workshop. In addition, the group interviewed key national leaders as part of the needs assessment. Although the research findings will be analyzed over the next year, initial reviews of interviews suggest that intervention involving the family and local churches may be the key to empowering youth to stay out of gangs and engage in more prosocial behavior.

*Right: (From left to right)
Janelle Nelson, M.A.
Carlos Pozzi, Psy.D.
Jen Gorham, M.A.
Jon Gorham, M.A.
Juliet Caceres, M.A.
Tracy Lee, Psy.D.
Ryan Baker*



*Above: Conference Participants
Right: Jen Gorham, conference speaker, Psy.D. student.*



Faculty Profile: Michael Mangis and the Center for Rural Psychology

There are basically two kinds of rural communities in the US—those that are being swallowed up by suburbs and those that are dwindling as their residents seek a living in more populated areas. About 90 percent of land in the United States is considered rural and nearly 25 percent of the population lives there. Over half of these rural counties are considered impoverished. In the past 20 years rural rates of suicide, violence, delinquency, and drug and alcohol abuse have surpassed those in urban areas. Fifty-five percent of the counties in the United States—all of them rural—have no mental health professionals to address these enormous needs. The Center for Rural Psychology, directed by Wheaton College psychology faculty member Michael Mangis, Ph.D., has *Big Hopes for Small Towns*. Through their training center in Elburn, IL, Mangis and his colleagues train graduate practicum students, pre-doctoral interns, and postdoctoral residents in the unique challenges of serving the mental health needs of rural America. "Even students who enter graduate school with a passion for rural needs gradually gravitate toward comfortable suburban practices. That is what they see modeled," Mangis notes. "Now we can keep at least a few of these students focused on the dream of serving rural communities and give them the skills and knowledge to help make the dream a reality." To learn more about the Center for Rural Psychology log on to their web page at www.ruralpsych.org.



Dr. Michael Mangis, Director for the Center for Rural Psychology, talking with Dr. Don Preussler, former Wheaton faculty member.

Announcements

- Robert Gregory, Ph.D. was recently appointed Chair of the psychology department. Special thanks to Cynthia Neal Kimball who served the department in this role for the last 7 years.
- Helen DeVries, Ph.D. was recently appointed Director of the Psy.D. program, taking over for Robert Gregory.
- In August, Mark McMinn, Ph.D. was elected President of APA's Division 36 (Psychology of Religion) beginning August, 2005.

Alumni and faculty of the Wheaton College Department of Graduate Psychology are invited to send in announcements to share with others who receive this newsletter. We also welcome your suggestions. For more information, contact the Graduate Psychology Program Administrator, Tracy Lee, at tracy.w.lee@wheaton.edu.

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