Hello everyone!

As I sit down to write my message to the department, I am happy that the “fall” semester is finally here. After 80 degree temperatures last week, the crisp air and the changing leaves are a welcome sight, at least to me.

I took a second to practice some mindfulness as I considered what to include in this edition of the newsletter. One of the things I noticed during this exercise was the sounds of children playing on the playground at the school near my house. They’re at recess. I hear what I can only describe as joy; the school is a kindergarten academy and the voices are from five and six year olds who are playing tag, flying on swings, sliding down sliding boards, and climbing up ladders.

I know we all have so much going on in our lives, and for graduate students, the stress can seem endless. It wasn’t THAT long ago that I was on the other side of the classroom, trying to figure out how I was going to balance all of my responsibilities with the stress of completing my degree. That stress can seem overwhelming sometimes; I remember it well.

But I wonder what separates us from the children playing across the street from me? Sure, we have more responsibilities: bills to pay, work to do, assignments to turn in (or grade), families of our own, and so on down the line. I promise you, the faculty are stressed too, maybe just about different things. But perhaps we can all learn something from the children around us. Maybe we can stop for a second and give ourselves permission to be free of those responsibilities, at least for a little while.

I guess what I’m suggesting is that we could all use a little recess. I hope you find time to do what brings you joy. Maybe that’s even taking a few minutes to grab some fresh air and slide down a sliding board.

All the best to everyone as we move through the semester.
Dr. Owens
Department Updates:

As we are off to a great start in our 2018-2019 academic year, it is important to keep up with any changes and updates that have occurred in the department. Below is a quick summary:

Practicum and Internship Field Placement Process:

As most of you already know, our department has transitioned to a new procedure for securing field placements. Specifically, School Counseling students now need to go through Director of Field Placement, Triniti Anderson, to secure initial interviews. To date, 57 out of 65 students seeking a placement have secured a site for the spring semester and most students who do not have a confirmed placement have interviews scheduled. This is a large improvement from this time last year and when asked about her thoughts on the new process, Director Anderson said, “overall the new school counseling field placement process has been a success!”

The process for Clinical Mental Health Counseling students securing a field placement is the same as last year except that students will now meet with Director Anderson prior to reaching out to sites.

Thank you to all students who have remained patient throughout this new process. We are looking forward to another successful semester in the spring!

CACREP Update:

It’s official! The Department of Counselor Education at West Chester University has received reaccreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) for all three of our programs (Clinical Mental Health Counseling, School Counseling, and Higher Education) for the next eight years! Congratulations to all students and faculty!

New Office Locations:

Returning students may have noticed that Dr. Dickinson’s office is now located at the front of Suite 102 in room 156. Therefore, the departmental graduate assistants are now working in room 136, across from the Individual Counseling rooms at the back of the suite. Graduate assistants can also be found in Suite 101 in room 114.

What does this mean for you?

If you need to sign out cameras, tripods, adaptors, and laptops for class or for your practicum and internship sites, or you need to book a counseling room, you can locate a GA in one of those offices between the hours of:

- Mondays: 11:00am-6:00pm
- Tuesdays: 11:00am-7:00pm
- Wednesdays: 11:00am-5:00pm
- Thursdays: 12:00pm-7:00pm
From the Desks of Alumni

Allison Gatta, M.S., NCC

“Hello from the real world! After graduating in May of 2018 I gave myself a mental health break and spent time at the beach, with friends and family, and enjoying life outside of the GBC. In August I began my journey to Farmville, VA to work at Longwood University as a Resident in Counseling, which is a full-time position as a mental health counselor working towards LPC hours. During my first few weeks in this position I was happy to find that I was able to keep up with clinical cases, consultations, and crisis intervention – which I have the counselor education department to thank for. Through my experiences in the department I feel prepared for the challenges that come along with being a mental health counselor and have been able to apply my skills, past experiences, and knowledge of research to unique situations that you won’t find in a textbook. I am always consulting with my notes from classes, other graduates of the program, and suggested readings from the department when I am working with a challenging case. My caseload is diverse in diagnosis, including depression, anxiety, childhood trauma, recent trauma, personality disorders, trichotillomania, skin picking disorder, learning disabilities/ADHD, and crisis situations including suicidality, psychosis, and manic episodes. As a mental health counselor in a college setting, you never know what is going to walk through your door, but I feel confident in my abilities and knowledge that I learned throughout my time in the counselor education department. I definitely miss spending time in the GBC and being surrounded by such wonderful classmates and faculty, but I do enjoy being able to go to bed at a decent time. **My advice for current students** – absorb as much as you can in graduate school, make sure you save all of your notes and books, and always ask questions and feedback from your supervisors to learn more. Wishing you all the best of luck as you continue your education journey and I am always available to reach out to with questions regarding job searching, professional organization involvement, and case consultation!”

Brittany Buchanan, M.Ed., NCC

“Six months ago, I was preparing to graduate from West Chester’s School Counseling program. I remember feeling like everything was winding down, and I could not wait to take a much-needed break. Little did I know, the hard work was just beginning. In August, I began a position as a 5th & 6th grade School Counselor at a charter middle school in the Port Richmond area of Northeast Philadelphia (alongside another West Chester School Counseling alum!). I work in a neighborhood where poverty, crime, and substance use disorders are commonplace, and as a result, many of my students have experienced trauma or other adverse childhood experiences. The amount of work and energy this job has required from me is intense, and after-school naps have become a staple in my life. There have also been days where I’ve thought, ‘I can’t do this.’

But I want you to know, for when you face that feeling one day, you can do this! This program has prepared you for the job you’re going to take on. You have the skills and the resources to serve your students and the power to change systems for the better. Your professors have prepared you for how to tackle problems and find solutions. I’m not saying it’s not going to take a lot of hard work, but you have the ability and the training to get it done.

**If I could share any advice with you that I wish I’d had one year ago,** it would be the following: soak up all the crisis and trauma training you can while you’re in school; when you start your first school counseling job, do your best to befriend all staff members; take on as many uncomfortable parent conversations as you can at your internships because soon they will be solely your problem; if you’re nervous about your classroom management skills – practice! – the kids can sense your weakness; wherever you get a job, familiarize yourself with the neighborhood and local resources; and consider buying stock in Dunkin Donuts!

Finally, I’ll say that as hard as I’m working, it never feels anything but worth it. My students make me laugh every day, and when they come to school in the morning and give me a side hug and a, ‘Hi, Miss!’ I know I would do all the work in the world to make sure they’re safe, well adjusted, and presented with ample opportunities for their futures.”

Fall 2018 Newsletter
Annual Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) Pennsylvania Statewide Conference

West Chester University had the exciting opportunity to host the 8th Annual Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) Pennsylvania Statewide Conference this year on Saturday, April 21st. In previous years the conference was hosted by Pennsylvania State University and Marywood University and next year the conference will be held at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At the CSI Statewide Conference counselor educators, counselors, and graduate students are able to network with each other, learn about current research being done in the field, and present important research to their peers. A great part about hosting or attending the CSI Statewide Conference is that individuals from all over the state can come together to expand their knowledge to others outside of their region. Dr. Alessandria, the Delta Tau Kappa Chapter Faculty Advisor (CFA) last year, worked with students in the Counselor Education department of WCU to plan this conference from the beginning. Dr. Alessandria shared that, "being CFA is not about doing all the work, it's about empowering students to have opportunities to lead”. There are always great opportunities to present our research to the field, and when that opportunity arises so close to home, it can be even more meaningful and impactful to attend. The Delta Tau Kappa Chapter of CSI strongly encourages you to attend any and all conferences that you can so that you can build your resume, network, and knowledge prior to entering into your first job after graduation. See the next page of this newsletter for photos from the 8th Annual Chi Sigma Iota Pennsylvania Statewide Conference hosted here at WCU’s campus.

Publications:


Presentations:

Drs. Owens and Neale-McFall presented at the North Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (NARACES) conference on the CACREP accreditation processes.

Drs. Alessandria and Owens presented at the NARACES conference on issues related to technology and counseling.

Drs. Owens, Neale-McFall, and Boccone presented at the PA Counseling Association (PCA) conference on issues of ethics and grade inflation.
Annual Chi Sigma Iota Pennsylvania Statewide Conference

(Enclosed photos courtesy of Dr. Kathryn (Tina) Alessandria)
Chi Sigma Iota

The Delta Tau Kappa Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota here at West Chester University would like to extend a warm welcome to all returning and new students in the department!

My name is Shalyn Leigh and I am the Delta Tau Kappa Chapter President. Myself, along with two other executive board members, six committee chairs and two chapter faculty advisors have been working very hard to make this semester all about promoting membership throughout our chapter.

Throughout the semester, the Delta Tau Kappa Chapter hosts various events. This semester we have hosted a Welcome Back Potluck, a Suicide Awareness informational event, a Halloween Party and a bake sale supporting the Color Run 5K to Fight Opioid Addiction in Chester County. We have also had members attend the Out of the Darkness Walk in Philadelphia and a Philadelphia Phillies Game. We have more events coming up before the end of the semester including a bake sale and Dine-to-Donate at Panera (12/5) to support our chapter, and the Color Run 5K at Everhart Park mentioned above (11/10). Please look out for emails from our chapter secretary, Casey Cerullo, for more information about these events and more!

Membership:
All Counselor Education students are welcome to attend our events! We cannot wait to see you there! If you are not yet a member or you are a member who is looking to get more involved, please reach out at any time to discuss available opportunities. There are multiple leadership positions within our chapter and we encourage new and prospective members to become involved!

If you are not yet a member and are considering joining, the process is very easy! Once you have completed 9 credits in the program and achieved a 3.5 GPA or higher, you are eligible! You will receive an email from our Chapter Faculty Advisor, Dr. Asempapa, which will have instructions including going to www.csi-net.org to register, paying the $50 Annual National Dues and the $15 one-time local chapter dues. We can’t wait for you to get involved!

Upcoming Events

**Chester County Color 5K**
**Saturday, November 10th**  
9:00 a.m.  
Everhart Park, West Chester, PA  
Dedicated to fighting opioid and heroin addiction in Chester County.  
Registration: 8:00 a.m.  
Race: 9:00 a.m.  
Register here: [https://runsignup.com/Race/PA/WestChester/Color5k](https://runsignup.com/Race/PA/WestChester/Color5k)  
Registration is $35. Registration includes a long-sleeve t-shirt. Use promo code “WCU” to receive $10 off the registration price.

**Panera Bread Dine & Donate Fundraiser**
**Wednesday, December 5th**  
4:00-8:00 p.m.  
1115 West Chester Pike West Chester, PA 19382  
Present the flyer that will be sent out via D2L at checkout in person, on your phone, or simply mention CSI, and the chapter will get 20% of the proceeds!
“Stormy” the Therapy Dog

On Friday October 26th students arrived to the graduate center to take the CPCE comprehensive exam. As many students were anxious, sleep deprived and stressed, Dr. Alessandria, her therapy dog Stormy, and Nicole Rudderow teamed up with CSI to create an event to help ease some of the students’ stress before and after taking their exam. Mindfulness coloring pages, stress and meditation toys, snacks, empowering messages and cards were provided to the students along with the presence of Stormy. Stormy is Dr. Alessandria’s certified therapy dog who visited the students offering some extra love in the aims to ease the students’ stress and anxiety. The event was a hit! The students loved having Stormy there; 11 of the 15 students taking the exam went out of their way to visit with Stormy! Some students shared that the event overall really eased some anxiety and they loved having Stormy there. This event is something that the department hopes to continue to run with the participation of future students. A special thank you for all who made this event possible and a huge shout out to Emily Phillips and CSI for your assistance in providing the food, drinks, and personalized cards.

Program Reminders:

- If you have any news or announcements that you would like to be featured in the next newsletter, please e-mail GA Casey Cerullo at CC790987@wcupa.edu
- Field experience contracts are due Wednesday, November 28th!
- Please check your D2L daily for department announcements and updates
- Make sure your Degree Candidacy is filed before the start of internship. Follow the instructions on the Degree Candidacy Checklist found on The Wall. Without the Degree Candidacy form, your internship class will be dropped.
- Finals begin Tuesday December 11th and end Saturday December 15th
- Clearances have to be valid throughout the semester— don’t forget to renew them! (don’t forget about Liability insurance due each semester too!)
- Apply for graduation the semester before you plan to graduate on myWCU!