



University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

# School Psychology Newsletter

Fall 2021 • Volume 43, No. 1

## From the Director's Desk

by Dr. Rob Dixon

Greetings!

I remember writing this note last year when we were in the middle of a pandemic and were hopeful that the new academic year would start off well and normalcy would come back to the world. It has been a longer haul than most of us expected. Back in September 2020, we made it four days as an institution before we had to hit the reset button. Some university programs were able to make it back to in-person after three weeks, while the school psychology program remained in distance mode for the rest of 2020. In fact, the schools in our area started the year closed so we allowed students to relocate practicum closer to home – in some cases that resulted in more opportunities with in-person or hybrid instruction happening around the state. From our perspective, we were able to see the different practices and roles from a wider swath of the state. I think students still received the robust opportunities that have been a hallmark of our program. I happened to teach the first school psychology class in-person and that did not happen until February! We met once a week and then did some asynchronous learning for the rest of the week. To say it was challenging would be an understatement. However, the challenge also brought out more opportunities and I was able to develop several cool activities that I probably would not have done otherwise. I also stayed on-track with the syllabus – former students would remember this as a challenge! A special shout out to my school psychology colleagues –

Joci, Dan, and Yanchen who moved all their classes to an online format. It has been a challenge, and we have had to be flexible, but at the end of the day, students were learning and ready to move into their next phase of their educational growth. To the students who rode this rollercoaster ride for the year, thank you for sticking it out. On the horizon we expect to be back face-to-face in the academic term beginning in September.

The pandemic also brought a few challenges to the “extras” of the program. For example, gone were the potlucks, volleyball, train wreck, and holiday gatherings with sing-offs and gift exchanges. WSPA was held online in both the Fall and the Spring. For better or worse, we continue to be considered the champions of the WSPA Spirit Award because there was no competition this past year. Look to next year when we hopefully get an opportunity to defend the title! We managed to have our Milwaukee trip to learn about diversity, but we had to do it via zoom. Despite this limitation, the experience of trying some of the 2<sup>nd</sup> language acquisition exercises were memorable. Unfortunately, the NASP trip to Salt Lake City also fell victim to the pandemic, but students were still able to present their posters to a virtual audience. They again presented them to a virtual spring WSPA, and virtually at the celebration of learning on campus. The posters are hanging within the halls of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Graph Main Hall and on our website if you want to check them out!

(Dixon, "From the Director's Desk" continued from p. 1)  
Students continued to excel and were recognized for their efforts. Nic DeKeyser was selected as the WSPA Elizabeth Wood Outstanding Student as well as with the UWL Graduate School recognition. Sam Beckett was recognized as a Student of Excellence within our College. Finally, Sierra Caine was recognized with the School Psychology Leadership Award. Knowing these students, they would all cite their cohort as contributing factors in their own recognition of excellence. Despite the pandemic, social distancing, and other precautions, it was wonderful to see the students still coming together and supporting and encouraging one another.

Finally, while we said hello to our new colleague, Dr. Yanchen Chang only last year, he is moving on to pursue his research and intervention activities at the University of Iowa. We wish him all the best and are grateful for the brief time he was with us. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to search for a replacement and found Dr. Ruth Schumacher-Martinez to join the faculty. She will be



*Dr. Ruth Schumacher-Martinez, newest member of the UWL School Psychology Program*

teaching the behavior and consultation classes, as well as practicum classes, and will likely infuse them with strong social justice thread. We are so pleased to welcome her to the

program. One final change in the faculty ranks – Joci will be taking over as the Department Chair for Psychology. While we are celebrating her new opportunities, we also need to acknowledge that she will play more of a supportive role in the program with her classes being picked up by other instructors – some from the community. If you have an interest in teaching a class and/or picking up several classes for the next couple of years, we encourage you to apply to the School Psychology pool. Please state in the cover letter the class(es) you are interested in teaching.

We look forward to continuing to connect with you and appreciate your support moving forward. Look for the program on Facebook, like us, and stay informed about the program accomplishments between the newsletters! Thanks.



*Rob Dixon, School Psychology Program Director*

## WSPA/ISPA 2021 Reflections

by Hannah Salzseider, Class of 2021

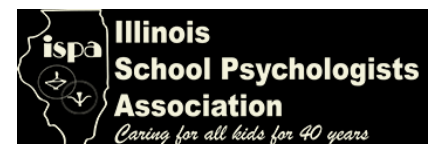
As we are all aware, this year was certainly a year like no other. Given the restrictions on in person gatherings, the traditional Fall and Spring WSPA conferences our students and faculty attend in person had to be reworked in order to remain COVID conscious. WSPA, our state organization, had to get a bit creative with what our conferences were going to look like during this strange year. Fortunately, being flexible is a skill most school psychologists are equipped with, so it didn't take long for a new conference plan to emerge.

After reviewing the options, this year's conferences occurred over a virtual platform, something that was new to all of us. However, what was unique about the virtual platform is that it allowed WSPA to work with ISPA (Illinois School Psychology Association) to put on a joint conference for both states. This unique opportunity provided our students and faculty with professional development sessions to choose from, more individuals to network with, and even more people for our students to share their research with. Each student had their poster virtually uploaded and a short video describing their research. People at the conference were then able to interact with students, ask

them questions, and give our students a chance to show off their hard work. As an added bonus, there was also access to an employment fair through the conference that took place one morning. This was a great opportunity for our students to connect, learn more about school psychology roles throughout the state and even interview with potential school districts.

Last but not least, we would be amiss if we did not mention one of our programs favorite WSPA traditions. Traditionally, our Spring conference involves university students competing for the coveted WSPA Spirit Award in which 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year student teams create their own witty parody to a song of their choice. Unfortunately, due to the virtual nature of the Spring conference, we were disappointed there was no award to compete for this year. Dr. Dixon, who's pride, and joy is the Spirit Award, is hoping the lack of competition this year will help fuel the fire for a fierce competition next year. Maybe, just maybe, the current 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, who will be interns by next Spring, will make a guest appearance, and vie for the first-place trophy they believe they truly deserved last year as 1<sup>st</sup> years. Our fingers are crossed for more of a return to normalcy for next year's

WSPA conferences, but in the end, we are thankful for the professional development opportunities we had and are looking forward to applying what we all learned virtually at WSPA this year.





## Honoring Three Outstanding Graduate Students: 2021 Student Awards and Recognition

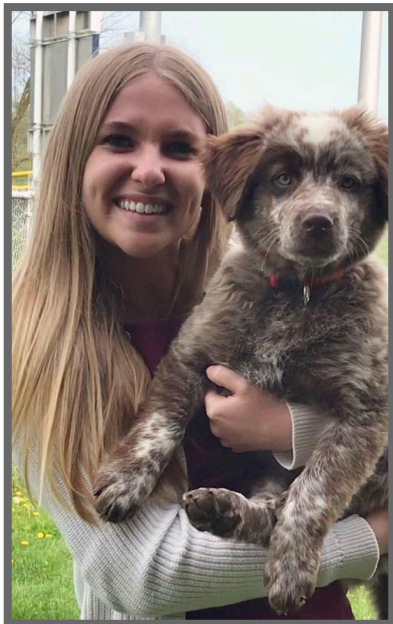
### Sam Beckett: Graduate Student of Excellence

by Rob Dixon

Every spring the College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities (CASSH) sponsors an Evening of Excellence. This year, because of COVID, we celebrated virtually. Here is a link to the program:

<https://www.uwlax.edu/cassh/recognition-of-excellence/>

As a program, we were happy to put Sam's name forward as a graduate student who represents excellence in our program. It was an easy decision as Sam is the type of student who shows up first, asks great questions in class, and performs well on the required assignments. Beyond those academic qualities, Sam also routinely



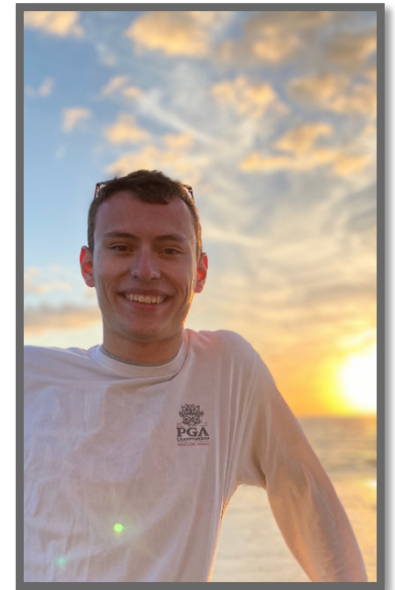
**Sam Beckett, Class of 2022,**  
*posing with her dog, Woody. Sam is the 2021  
Recipient of the UWL CASSH Graduate  
Student Excellence Award*

displays those personality traits that allow her to connect with students, teachers, and parents in an effortless way. We are looking forward to seeing Sam display these academic and personality qualities as she embarks upon her internship this fall.

### Nic DeKeyser: Elizabeth Lindley Woods Award

by Hannah Salzsieder, Class of 2021

Every year the Wisconsin School Psychologist Association presents the Elizabeth Lindley Woods Award to one graduate student. This year the award, along with a \$500 scholarship, was presented to one of our own, Nic DeKeyser! This award not only honors the selected student, but its namesake, Elizabeth Lindley Woods, who marks the beginning of the school psychology profession in Wisconsin. To be eligible for this award, a



**Nic DeKeyser, Class of 2021**  
*2021 Recipient of WSPA's  
Elizabeth Lindley Woods  
Award. Nic was also awarded  
the UWL College of College of  
Arts, Social Sciences, and  
Humanities (CASSH)  
Academic Achievement Award  
for Graduate Students*



Elizabeth Lindley Woods

student must be nominated by a faculty member and complete their own candidate statement which addresses their professional goals, commitment to school psychology, and their involvement in WSPA. Once all nominations are reviewed, the student who most clearly embodies the characteristics of Elizabeth Lindley

(Salzsieder, "Nic DeKeyser..." continued from p. 4)

Woods is selected. Such characteristics include an unwavering dedication to helping and identifying children with exceptional needs and an appreciation for the value and importance of collaborating with others. These characteristics are undoubtedly ones that Nic shares, which has been made evident through all of his hard work and dedication in everything he does within our program and the schools. We are so incredibly proud to have one of our own students be selected for this honor. There is no doubt that he will continue to make us proud as he begins his next journey as a school psychologist in Green Bay Area Public Schools.

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### Sierra Caine: UW-La Crosse School Psychology Student Leadership Award

*by Nic DeKeyser, Class of 2021*

Every year, the UW-La Crosse School Psychology Leadership Award is awarded by students and faculty to one student who demonstrates positive leadership, scholarship, and a commitment to the ideals of the UW-La Crosse School Psychology Program through their practice in serving children, families, and school systems. This spring, we are excited to announce that this special recognition is awarded to Sierra Caine. Sierra excels in all



***Sierra Caine, Class of 2021,  
this year's recipient of the  
UWL School Psychology  
Student Leadership Award***

areas, has demonstrated strong academics in the program, and is a willing and capable leader. The first-years have really appreciated her dedication to supporting them in any way that she can. Sierra is always kind, willing to lend a helping hand to anyone and everyone, and she shows a strong commitment to social justice and serving children and families. As such, she continually exemplifies the essence of this award and is a more-than-deserving recipient.

Next year, Sierra will be completing her internship with Milwaukee Public Schools. We appreciate Sierra's contributions to the UWL School Psychology Program, recognize her outstanding accomplishments, and look forward to seeing the positive impact that she will continue to have on the students, families, and schools that she serves through her professional practice.

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*We are so proud of you,  
Sam, Sierra, and Nic!*

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## Financially Supporting Students

by Dr. Rob Dixon



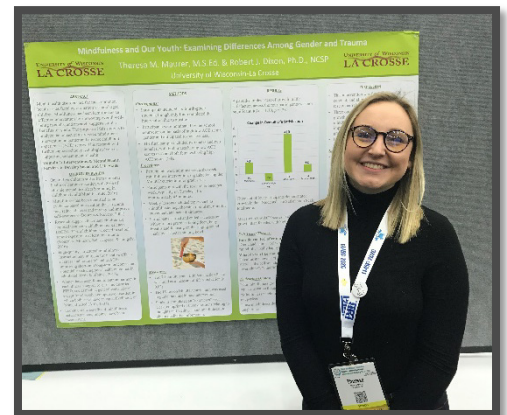
Back L-R: Jordan Jozefacki ('20), Ashley Haut ('20)  
Front L-R: Courtney O'Brien ('20), Kayla Scheevel ('20)  
Students from the Class of 2020 pose outside Graff Main Hall  
with their commencement medals

The school psychology is proud to have two substantial scholarships to help students in the program: The Dr. Robert Arthur Endowed Scholarship in School Psychology and the Jay and Janet Fulkerson School Psychology Fund Agreement. Applications to these scholarships are open until June 15 and can be accessed on the UWL scholarship website.

The School Psychology program and Adapted PE program wrote an interdisciplinary grant to US Department of Education and it was one of four programs funded in the amount of \$1.25 million over the next 5 years. With a substantial commitment and expectation to help graduate students develop their skills, each student will be funded \$1,166 for each of the two years of on-campus learning, plus \$400 to attend and present their research at NASP, as well as \$120 to take the required PRAXIS exam. We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with Adapted PE and look forward to the interdisciplinary learning and opportunities taking place over the next five years.



(Above and Right) Photos of the offices of some of our SPY students who completed their internship during 2020-21.



(Above) Theresa Maurer ('20) poses next to her capstone research poster. Theresa completed her internship in Thornton, CO during the 2020-21 academic year.

## NASP 2021 Reflections

by Hannah Salzsieder, Class of 2021

As with most things during the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person NASP Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah experienced a change in plans. To help maintain everyone's health and safety, the 2021 NASP Convention followed suit with many other in person events and moved to a virtual platform. As an event that is highly anticipated from the beginning of our entrance into the program, our group of second year students were disappointed that we would not be able to experience NASP together and explore Salt Lake City. While we were initially a bit disappointed in the change of scenery, the virtual NASP experience ended up surpassing our expectations.

From the comfort of our own homes, we were able to interact with over 9,000 school psychologists from across the world! Almost double of what an in-person convention would! At the beginning of each virtual session, the chat box was filled with comments of where conference attendees were joining from, and during the sessions, links to resources used throughout the world were shared. The chat box was often filled



From L to R: Ashley Haut ('20), Kayla Scheevel ('20), and Jenna Sether ('20)  
Though it was unexpected and disappointing to be stuck at home so much over the past year, humans—and perhaps graduate students especially—are resourceful and resilient. We found ways to cultivate connections with each other despite COVID and its quarantines.

enthusiasm that arose each time a “ding” appeared to monitor attendance in the sessions. It will surely be reminisced about at future NASP conventions, and we wouldn't be surprised if there were even t-shirts created!



The theme of this year's National Association of School Psychologists' Conference was "The Power of Possibility" (Image obtained from nasponline.org)

With the increased attendance this year, there was even more networking, knowledge and resources being shared among all. There were so many great sessions to choose from that it became hard for our students to pick which ones to go to! Another great thing the NASP Convention always provides our students with is a way to share their research. Thankfully this didn't change with the virtual setting and our students enjoyed monitoring and interacting with who attended their session. Lauren, one of our 2<sup>nd</sup> year students who presented, even had her own “celebrity moment” when Celeste Malone, the NASP president elect, visited her poster session! Reflecting on the overall experience, we are very glad to have had the opportunity to further our learning and connect with others. We hope that by the time NASP rolls around next year we can be together in person. Perhaps some of us who missed out on the in-person session this year will be able to attend next year in Boston, Massachusetts.



## NASP 2021 Reflections

by Hannah Salzsieder, Class of 2021

### Beckett, Samantha K., *Integrating Students with Disabilities: It Begins with Teacher Attitudes*

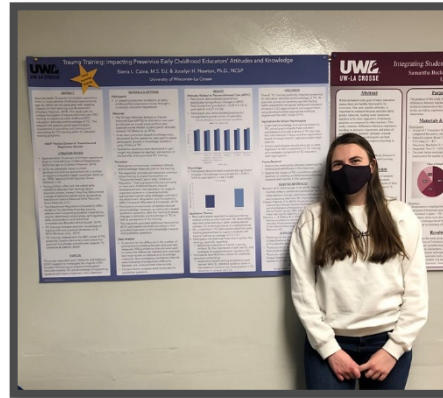
While inclusion is the goal of many education teams, there are hurdles that need to be overcome. One area, teacher attitudes, is important to examine because attitudes likely predict behavior leading some teachers in classrooms being more supportive of inclusion practices than others. This study examines differences between experience teaching in inclusive classrooms and place of employment on teachers' attitudes towards inclusivity. School psychologists can help teachers develop ways to improve teaching in inclusive classrooms.

### Caine, Sierra L., *Trauma Training: Impacting Preservice Early Childhood Educators' Attitudes and Knowledge*

Approximately 70% of children experience three or more adverse childhood experiences by age six, which can be associated with negative impacts on their learning and development (Clarkson Freeman, 2014). This study aims to analyze the impact of trauma-informed care (TIC) training on preservice early childhood (EC) educators' attitudes and knowledge of TIC. This research will support school psychologists' involvement in providing such training and advocating for TIC training within EC educator training programs.

### Christenson, Sarah L., *Stress in Graduate School: Identifying Strategies to Overcome Challenges*

Graduate studies can be stressful for students, and there are various factors that contribute to every student's perceived stress level. Stress, and the coping behavior employed, has the potential to derail one's graduate education or shorten one's career and impact in the field. The purpose of this study is to analyze the characteristics and coping strategies of graduate students to determine if there are supports to assist with a successful transition to becoming a practitioner.



Sierra Caine ('21) stands by her research on trauma training and its impact on early childhood educators. Like her Class of 2021 SPY colleagues, Sierra's poster will be displayed for the next few months on the third floor of UWL's Graff Main Hall.

### DeKeyser, Nicholas, *Predicting Teacher Self-Efficacy in Bullying Intervention*

Bullying in school can result in significant internalizing problems and lower academic achievement (Burger et al., 2015). Teacher intervention in response to bullying is essential and can be impacted by teacher self-efficacy. This study will analyze factors that predict self-efficacy, including administrator support, bullying intervention training experience, teacher peer response and teacher years of experience. This research will further reinforce the role of school psychologists in supporting teachers with their bullying interventions.

### Geis, Abigail, *Student Mental Health: The Influence of Perceived Social Support*

Early adolescence (ages 10–14) can be described as a transitional time full of significant changes in physiology, emotional regulation, and social orientation as they seek separation and individuation from their families. It is also a time when a number of mental health concerns emerge. This study describes the predictive relationship of nonfamily perceived social support (i.e., teachers, peers, significant adults) to internalizing and externalizing symptoms reported by middle schoolers.



(“NASP 2021 Sessions” continued from p. 8)

Hendrickson, Lauren M., *Sense of Belonging: Impacts on Well-Being for Students of Color*

To improve family–school partnerships, we must address and identify obstacles to parent participation within the schools, provide options for involvement that match each family’s motivations, interests, and abilities, and inform families of ways to support their child (Jonak, 2014). The purpose of this study is to better understand these relationships and cultural differences that impact families’ perceptions of family–school partnerships. School psychologists can then support their school’s formation and sustainability of effective partnerships with families.

Horton, Kallie E., *Safe Spaces: How Comfortable Are Educators Supporting LGBTQ Students*

School can be a hostile environment for LGBTQ+ youth, as they can often experience harassment and victimization. Institutional supports, such as openly supportive educators, can mediate the adverse effects of discrimination for LGBTQ+ students (Kosciw et al., 2008). The present study seeks to predict how comfortable educators are supporting LGBTQ+ students and the factors that influence this to inform best practice in consulting with educators to create safe spaces in school for LGBTQ+ youth.

Miller, Chaselyn C., *Diversity and Disability: Examining the Behavioral Referral Pipeline*

Teachers play a crucial role in the special education process, making their self-efficacy in working with diverse students an important factor to consider as it may affect referral practices. Through survey and case scenario data, this study aims to understand how a teacher’s self-efficacy best predicts referral chances for diverse students with behavioral concerns. Based on the results, school psychologists can inform best referral practices to address disproportionality and relations with students from diverse backgrounds.

Salzsieder, Hannah, *Challenging Social Stigma: How Accepting are Youth of Depressed Parents?*

Approximately one in six youth may suffer from mental illnesses like depression (Whitney & Peterson, 2019) and many of those youths may also experience stigmatization resulting in a lack of peer acceptance. This study investigated how students with depression are accepted among peers. Results will further support the school psychologist’s role in advocating for and implementing mental health interventions and the potential fallout from strained social relationships in the school.

Sievers, Emma C., *Resilience Informed Care: Examining Positive Childhood Experiences*

Resiliency is the ability to recover from difficulties quickly. When a child experiences safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, we call them positive childhood experiences (PCEs). Research has shown that these experiences are important to healthy development and overall adjustment. The purpose of this study is to examine adolescents and whether a relationship exists between their identified number of PCEs and self-reported resilience.

Wierzba, Hailey M., *Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusion: Impact of Location and Experience*

Inclusive classrooms have greatly impacted the educational experiences and positive lifelong outcomes that students with disabilities receive. Teachers’ attitudes greatly impact their behaviors which is why it is important to analyze what shapes their current attitudes such as community location and previous experience teaching in an inclusive classroom. Implications of this study can help teachers and school officials create a more positive attitude towards inclusive classrooms and students with disabilities in general.

## Intern Placements for the 2021-22 Academic Year

Sam Beckett  
District of South Milwaukee  
Lakeview Elementary and Rawson Elementary  
*Milwaukee, WI*

Sierra Caine  
Milwaukee Public Schools  
Hawthorne School and Golda Meir School  
*Milwaukee, WI*

Sarah Christenson  
Hartford Joint 1 School District  
Central Middle School and Crossroads  
*Hartford, WI*

Nic DeKeyser  
Green Bay Area Public Schools  
Washington Middle School and Northeast Wisconsin School of Innovation  
*Green Bay, WI*

Abigail Geis  
Adams Friendship School District  
Adams Friendship Elementary and Adams Friendship High School  
*Adams, WI*

Lauren Hendrickson  
Blair-Taylor School District  
Blair-Taylor Elementary, Middle, and High School  
*Blair, WI*

Kallie Horton  
School District of Cambridge  
Cambridge High School, Nikolay Middle School, Koshkonog Trails  
*Cambridge, WI*

Chase Miller  
School District of New London  
Parkview Elementary and Readfield Elementary  
*New London, WI*

Hannah Salzsieder  
Edgerton School District  
Community Elementary  
*Edgerton, WI*

Emma Sievers  
Hartford Joint 1 School District  
Lincoln Elementary  
*Hartford, WI*

Hailey Wierzba  
Milwaukee Excellence Charter School  
*Milwaukee, WI*

## How I Spent Five and Half Years of My Life: My Journey to Writing My First Book

by Dan Hyson

Writing a book is a lot harder than I even thought.

Prior to joining the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse (UWL) school psychology program faculty in 2014, I worked for seven years as the Data Management Coordinator (DMC) for Hiawatha Valley Education District (HVED), a cooperative of over a dozen school districts, charter schools and alternative schools in southeastern Minnesota. In my role as DMC, I supported the systems-level data-driven decision making of HVED and HVED member district staff, managing a data warehouse with their screening and summative assessment data and training and coaching them in accessing, interpreting, and using the data to inform their instructional decision making.

Drawing on these experiences, I regularly presented on systems-level data-driven decision making and the role technology tools can play in supporting it. These presentations occurred at the state and national level, both alone and with regular collaborators, including Dr. Ben Silbergliitt, who at the time was in a similar role with TIES, an educational technology cooperative in St. Paul, MN. Ben and I even talked about writing a book with another colleague about what we had learned in these roles, but our initial efforts to find a publisher fell through. It was then that, through one of the aforementioned presentations, I met Dr. Joe Kovalski and Dr. Jason Pedersen, two fellow “data geeks” like me and Ben, who were themselves considering writing a book on a similar topic and already had a tentative contract with Guilford Press. Thus was born what eventually became *The Data-Driven School: Collaborating to Improve Student Outcomes*.

The emphasis in that last sentence should be on “eventually.” It took five and a half years, from December 2014 through June 2020, for us to finish the book. I have to admit, I didn’t know what I was getting myself into when I agreed to be first author, especially since I was doing it just as I was starting my new job at UWL, my first full-time, tenure-track faculty position. I sometimes felt like I was “herding cats” as I tried to keep us all on track with deadlines (something I was only intermittently successful at) and ensure that the book would ultimately have one consistent voice throughout. Like most new faculty, I struggled at times juggling the multiple roles within an academic position. Adding to that trying to continue to make progress writing my first book was at times overwhelming.

Finally, at long last, in June 2020, the book was published.



SPY faculty, Dr. Dan Hyson, poses with the book he co-authored, *The Data-Driven School: Collaborating to Improve Student Outcomes*.



## UWL's Commitment to Social Justice and Equity

by Joci Newton, Sierra Caine, & Shayde McKay

The UWL School Psychology program faculty are committed to training culturally competent and culturally humble practitioners who serve students and schools through an equity lens. This commitment is represented through recent edits to our mission statement (bolded emphasis added for the purposes of this article):

*“Graduates of the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse (UWL) School Psychology Program are prepared to function as School Psychologists in broad-based roles similar to what is articulated in the NASP Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services. **By employing an equity lens, grounded by examining their own biases and social justice, graduates are advocates for children, providers of behavioral and mental health care, specialists in the assessment of children, psychoeducational consultants who use effective problem solving strategies, and experts in the design and delivery of effective psychological and educational interventions at the individual, family, and systems levels. Finally, graduates of the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse (UWL) School Psychology program recognize the importance of lifelong learning and continually engage in professional development and leadership opportunities.**”*

To clearly communicate our commitment on our program website, program faculty and graduate assistants collaborated to highlight the variety of equity-related learning opportunities the program provides. This article will expand upon some of the recently added or upgraded

learning opportunities that represent our social justice goals, as summarized by two current UWL School Psychology students.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**Immersion Field Trips:** Each year, the UW-La Crosse School Psychology program provides students with opportunities to learn more about the work of practicing school psychologists in larger urban districts like the Milwaukee Public Schools and the Minneapolis Public Schools. These immersion field trips focus on providing students with additional training in multicultural competence, equity, and serving diverse learners, and are typically provided by leaders and practicing school psychologists within the district. As a component of recent immersion field trips, students have had the opportunity to read and discuss contemporary works on topics of racism and privilege, such as “White Fragility” by Robin DiAngelo, as well as reflect on their own biases and privileges by using provided self-assessment tools and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s Model to Inform Culturally Responsive Practices. Additionally, although it could not be offered this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program continues to partner with Milwaukee Public Schools to provide interested second-year students with the opportunity to complete an “advanced practicum” by shadowing an MPS school psychologist for one week during the winter term. Students typically find this to be an extremely impactful experience that provides them with an opportunity to observe the varied and direct services-

(Newton, Caine, & McKay, "UWL's Commitment..." continued from p. 12)

to attend any in-person "immersion fieldtrips" in Minneapolis or Milwaukee, UWL was able to again partner with the Milwaukee Public Schools to provide second-year students with additional training related to antiracism in school psychology. Specifically, this training focused on the efforts MPS has undertaken to utilize the Wisconsin DPI's Model to Inform Culturally Responsive Practices (led by program alums Melannie Litscher, Stacy Black, and colleagues!) and provided imperative learning surrounding our work with multilingual learners and diverse families. Students found this training to be extremely impactful and appreciated the learning, discussion, and goal-setting that resulted from this incredible opportunity to connect with practicing school psychologists who are committed to antiracism, equity, and social justice.

**2020-21 WSPA Attendance:** The fall and winter brought with them a conjoint virtual professional development opportunity between the Wisconsin School Psychologists Association (WSPA) and Illinois School Psychologists Association (ISPA). Among the presentations from professionals and school psychologists were opportunities for discussions on social justice and equity. Dr. Celeste Malone presented on "Creating Culturally Affirming Environments for Minoritized Youth." The presentation identified strategies for school psychologists to work towards creating school climates that are safe for all students, but especially for those who are members of racial and ethnic minoritized groups. Dr. Laurie Klose presented equity-centered issues and walked through the legal and ethical problem-solving process in her presentation "Let's Get Ethical, Ethical: Using Ethical Problem Solving to Address Challenges in School Psychology."

Additionally, Ms. Sybil Baker and Ms. Caryn Curry presented on providing equitable social emotional learning services in an online format in their presentation "Striving to be Your Best Self: The Application of Adult SEL Skills to Successful and Equitable SEL Virtual Practices." These presentations provided an in-depth look at what graduate students and school psychologists can do to promote and utilize equitable practices for racial and ethnic minoritized groups as well as students with disabilities.

**2021 NASP Attendance:** This year, second-year students and faculty within the UWL School Psychology program again had the opportunity to attend the annual NASP convention, which was hosted virtually! This year, one of NASP's Presidential Strands of focus was "Inclusivity," which emphasized the importance of approaching "our work as school psychologists to and through the cultural lenses students possess," such that all students see themselves reflected in the school curriculum. As a major point of focus, this year's NASP Distinguished Lecture centered around the topic of Equity and Social Justice in School Psychology (by Dr. Melissa Pearrow). The convention included several extremely impactful sessions on the topic, allowing students to learn more about supporting forcibly displaced youth (Dr. Shereen Naser and Dr. Tracey Scherr), culturally responsive assessment and interventions (Dr. Janine Jones), a strengths-based approach to disrupting racial inequities (Dr. Byron McClure), and strategies to advance equality through social justice practices (Dr. Celeste Malone). Additionally, this year's NASP convention also featured an evening conversation with Dr. Dayna Bowen Matthew and Dr. John B. King Jr., which focused on hearing their perspectives on critical issues such as equity, education, social justice, and our roles as school

(Newton, Caine, & McKay, "UWL's Commitment..." continued from p. 13)

and faculty to dive deeper into what it means to be a culturally responsive school psychologist, as an abundance of live and on-demand training sessions were available to further our knowledge of diversity, social justice, educational equity, and supporting our diverse learners and families.

### **CURRICULAR MODIFICATIONS**

**SPY 771: Multicultural Psychology (Dr. Suthakaran Veerasamy):** SPY 771 is a new course developed as the first in a 3-course counseling sequence. It is taught by Psychology faculty member Dr. Suthakaran Veerasamy, a Counseling Psychologist who specializes in racial identity, religious identity, and multicultural education. SPY 771 aims to develop students' multicultural competence (i.e., knowledge, awareness, and skills) to prepare them to live and work with individuals from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. It also aims to increase students' understanding of, and commitment to, social justice in their personal and professional lives. Faculty view this course as an essential foundation for students before they learn skills for individual and group counseling in the subsequent two counseling courses (SPY 772 and SPY 773).

**SPY 700: School Psychology Role and Function &**

**SPY 759: Assessment of Personality and EBD (Dr. Dan Hyson):** Dr. Dan Hyson has added numerous equity-focused components to his SPY 700 and PSY 759 classes. In both courses he creates and shares graphic syllabi which highlight the course's equity lens. For each class session, he intentionally moves discussions of equity to the front end to prompt usage of an equity lens throughout the class session and course as a whole. Additionally, he changed both course textbooks to include ones that more prominently discuss equity and

social justice; he also requires supplemental readings by school psychologists or school psychology trainers of color. Regarding specific course changes in SPY 700, he prompts students to read equity-related boxed inserts in required textbook readings prior to reading the remainder of the chapter. This ensures that students apply the equity lens throughout the reading. Additionally, he specifically sought school psychologists of color to participate as email buddies to exchange messages with students to elevate voices of school psychologists with marginalized identities. In PSY 759, Dr. Hyson has highlighted advocacy and social justice more intentionally by including a targeted focus on disproportionality in EBD assessment. He also invited a colleague with expertise in teaching equity to observe a class session focused on equity and is using that feedback to revise plans for the remainder of the course.

**SPY 751: Schoolwide Practices in MTSS (Dr. Rob**

**Dixon):** Dr. Rob Dixon added *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools* by Amanda Lewis and John Diamond to his required reading list in his SPY 751 class: School-wide Practices in MTSS. This research-based work highlights an idealistic high school which presents itself as the poster child for inclusion. However, the authors critically review why students of color lag behind their White peers despite having well-trained teachers, affluence, diversity, and proper funding. The in-depth study highlights the systems-wide practices that perpetuate racism and disproportionality in schools today.

**SPY 756: Early Childhood Assessment & SPY 758: Psychoeducational Assessment II (Dr. Joci**

**Newton):** This year, Dr. Newton has made some impactful changes to her Early Childhood Assessment



(Newton, Caine, & McKay, "UWL's Commitment..." continued from p. 14)

and Psychoeducational Assessment II courses to help students better approach assessment with an equity lens. In Psychoeducational Assessment II, the course material now places a heavier emphasis on conducting culturally sensitive assessments by using tools like Dr. Samuel Ortiz's Culture-Language Interpretive Matrix (C-LIM) and the Multidimensional Assessment Model for Bilingual Individuals (MAMBI). Importantly, Dr. Newton provided students with additional opportunities to practice using these tools to inform their data-based decision-making. Specifically, this was accomplished by incorporating more opportunities for applied analyses through the use of case studies and data collected for diverse learners. Using the provided data and the tools covered in class, students were asked to determine if the obtained data was valuable for decision-making and develop recommendations in alignment with their analysis. In Early Childhood Assessment, the course material was again adjusted to provide students with additional perspective regarding the important impacts of race on development in early childhood. In order to provide students with an additional opportunity to conduct their own research on the available literature and present this information to peers, the "Race Matters" presentation series was introduced, in which students worked in small groups to investigate and present on how "race matters" in terms of children's development in the communication, cognitive, social-emotional, and physical/adaptive domains. Across the two courses, Dr. Newton has been extremely intentional in providing students with additional opportunities in learning best practice in working with diverse student populations, as well as the strengths that result from having a diverse student body that represents families from a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds.

## NEXT DIRECTIONS

The faculty in the UWL School Psychology program look forward to continuing growth in this area as we learn more from leaders in our field, from each other, and from our students. We hope that these changes will enable us to not only produce high-quality School Psychologists who view equity and social justice as an essential part of their professional role but will also serve as a way to recruit and support a more diverse and social justice oriented student population in the years to come.

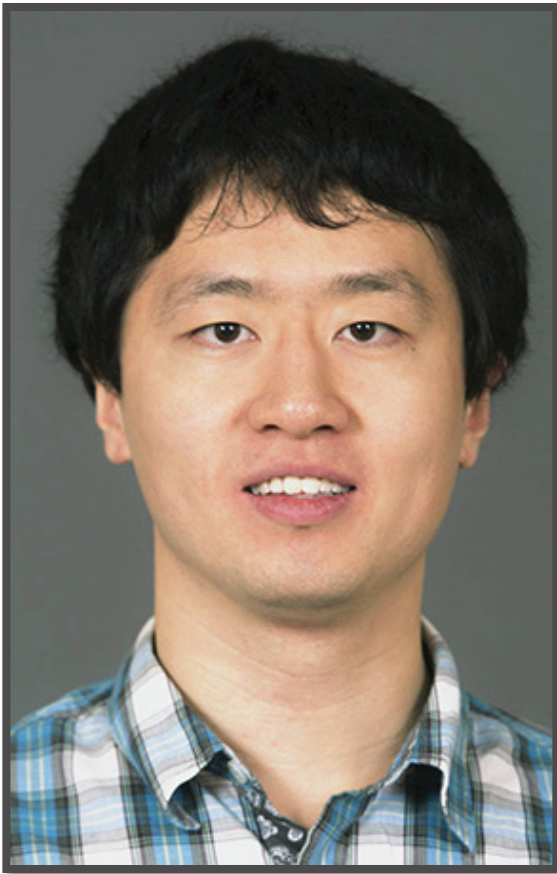


*Dr. Joci Newton, School Psychology faculty*

## Farewell to Dr. Zhang

*by Kelly Hinden & Shayde McKay*

The UWL School Psychology community is sad to see Dr. Yanchen Zhang leave the program but offers our utmost congratulations to him as he pursues his new faculty position. Dr. Zhang will begin the fall semester in the School Psychology graduate program at the University of Iowa. We wish him the best on this next step in his career and journey in academia, and look forward to following his research contributions to the field!



*Dr. Yanchen Zhang*

Dr. Zhang exudes the ideal qualities of a professor, most notably in his dedication to scholarship and utmost caring for his students. He works endlessly at his research endeavors through his connections across universities and educational institutions. Even with his extensive experience, he treats his students as equals and encourages collaboration rather than strict professor-student supervision. Dr. Zhang has shared countless resources, insight, and best practices supporting school-based mental health, which will be remembered as one of his lasting impacts in the UWL School Psychology graduate training model.

Not only is he invested in the academic success of his students, Dr. Zhang is also dedicated to their well-being. At the start of every class, he asks his students to share what has been going on in their lives and shows warmth and empathy for both the ups and downs of their professional and personal situations. Even through the unprecedented times of teaching virtually through a pandemic, he has fostered genuine relationships with his students and strives to ensure that every student feels supported and has what they need to succeed. Dr. Zhang has taught SPY 775: Behavior Assessment and Management, SPY 776: Psychological Consultation and Collaboration, and has supervised students in their first- and second-year practicum experiences. Drawing on his extensive school psychology expertise, he has helped his students succeed by encouraging collaboration and seeking professional development opportunities. Dr. Zhang will be a tremendous asset to the University of Iowa and will be missed here at UWL by students and faculty.

## ANNOUNCING: UWL School Psychology Diversity Award

The UWL School Psychology Program is pleased to announce the creation of a new scholarship award to promote diversity within the applicants to the program. Preference will be given to an individual(s) with:

- First generation student, or
- Socioeconomically disadvantaged student, or
- Individuals who have overcome substantial education or economic obstacles.

One of the greatest things about this award is that it gives everyone an opportunity to contribute to this award allowing a more substantial award as well as the personal opportunity to make a difference to our field. Planned or deferred gifts to the fund are welcome and encouraged. We look forward to seeing what impact our strong alumni base can make to this important award!



*A Message from the Second-Year Cohort (Class of 2022)*

### Calling All Alumni! We Need Your Help to Help More Kids!

Hello, UWL School Psychology Alumni!

It's us, the current second-year students, striving to make a difference in our community! During practicum, we have seen many needs not being met for our local students, especially in the surrounding rural areas. Many young men and women come to school without any access to the everyday hygiene products many of us take for granted—necessary items like soap, deodorant, and menstrual supplies.

Our plan? Develop take-home care kits for our area's rural schools. The kits will be filled with all the basic wellbeing necessities, mental health awareness facts and contacts, and a list of all the local resources available to them. Be the school psychology superheroes we are all called to be and support us in supporting the children and families in La Crosse's tri-state region!



**Please check out our [GoFundMe](https://gofund.me/47739a18) at the link below... and share it with anyone you know who cares about kids!** <https://gofund.me/47739a18>



Information to share? Call (608)785-8441 (day or night) or e-mail schoolpsych@uwlax.edu. You can also follow/like us on Facebook – UW-La Crosse School Psychology!

## Annual Alumni Fund Drive

Every spring the UWL Foundation Office calls alumni asking for your continued support of the UWL School Psychology Program. The response last year was very encouraging, and your gifts were sincerely appreciated.

Please complete the form below and mail to make your tax-deductible contribution. The School Psychology staff and students thank you for your ongoing support of our School Psychology program. This campaign is meant to complement the University's Annual Fund. Please continue to support the UWL Foundation.

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\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I want to support the **UWL Foundation School Psychology Fund!**

Please PRINT:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

My School Psychology Campaign pledge is \$\_\_\_\_\_. I have enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to the **UWL Foundation School Psychology Fund**

Please charge my pledge to: (Circle one)    Visa    Mastercard    Am. Express    Discover

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Cardholder's name \_\_\_\_\_

**Cardholder's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:            Foundation Office, School Psychology Fund  
                         UW-La Crosse, Cleary Alumni & Friends Center  
                         615 East Ave N  
                         La Crosse, WI 54601