

# SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY NEWSLETTER

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## Welcome Back!

With the start of the 2020-2021 school year the school psychology program has welcomed 11 new students: Taylor Bronaugh, Hannah Delmonte, Robyn Devendorf, Liliana Ferrufino, Mason Folk, Tyler Frink, Zaakirah Fulani, Arayana Harris, Stephanie Harris, Jordan Otto and Alison Palmer.

# It's a Celebration



The School Psychology program proudly announces the successful completion of Master's requirements to a wonderful group of emerging school psychologists. On August 20th, faculty, students, and student's families, came together for an intimate, and socially distanced gathering at the JMU arboretum pavilion to celebrate the first major step in the process of becoming a professional school psychologist. The students have successfully completed their Masters Level training. The School Psychology program prides itself on training competent professionals in the areas of cultural awareness, assessment, consultation, counseling, crisis management and prevention as well as many core fundamentals in the areas of education and psychology. Congratulations to all students on their accomplishments!

## The Transition to hybrid learning

We all arrived on campus in August ready to learn in the safest way possible. We started off with hybrid learning that limited our amount of unnecessary contact, knowing that being moved to fully online classes was a possibility. After a week of hybrid learning JMU moved to a month of online learning and our faculty handled this transition well, keeping school psych students engaged in online learning during the month of September. At the beginning of October JMU gave in person learning another go with the plan to return to online classes after thanksgiving break and so far, it has worked out well. These new learning transitions took some getting used to, but everyone worked hard through less than ideal conditions to make it work.

# Great Start to the New Year!

The school psychology program typically gets together to do a team building challenge with UREC services. To keep the tradition alive the program participated in a virtual team challenge course still led by UREC staff. The team challenge took place on zoom and began with Ice breakers to gauge everyone's confidence and comfort levels.



The first activity was solving wordless (word puzzles) to get comfortable in the zoom session before moving onto anonymously describing comfort levels regarding Covid-19 and being on campus. The next activities paired students and faculty into groups to solve bigger word puzzles that required teamwork.



The virtual challenge then ended with metaphors and discussion. Droplets of water on a penny cling together before spilling over the sides, and for the School Psych program to be successful the students and faculty should cling together to work through these hard times to make the program stronger.

# Staying informed

## Inter-professional Education Seminar

This year students representing JMU's undergraduate programs in nursing program and social work, and graduate programs in occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, school counseling, special education and school psychology participated. These disciplines informed each other of their skills and expertise. Following presentations, students worked through case scenarios and practiced collaboratively to build a better, safer, student centered, community and population-oriented health care system. At the end of the seminar, each group shared their process of collaboration and challenges they overcame during the day long seminar.



## True Colors Shining Bright: Providing Counseling and Support for LGBTQ++ Youth

On the first Friday in September the program came together to take part in a workshop led by a former graduate of the program and NASP Chair of the LGBTQI2-S Committee, Amy Cannava. Amy led our faculty and students from the School Psychology Program through an engaging workshop on how to best support LGBTQIA youth in our roles as school psychologists. She taught the program how to leave breadcrumbs for students to follow that will lead them to an inclusive and safe space in School Psychologists offices, how to support children who are figuring out their identity and how to respond when a student decides to come out to their School Psychologist. The workshop was titled True Colors Shining Bright and was a terrific way to spread knowledge about best practices and becoming inclusive service providers!

# Staying informed

## **Nondiscriminatory Assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students**

This workshop was presented by Dr. Sam Ortiz. Dr. Ortiz a bilingual, Spanish, and bicultural, Puerto Rican who has published widely on a variety of topics including nondiscriminatory assessment, evaluation of English learners, cross-battery assessment, and learning disabilities. This 2-day training focused on the increasing diversity of U.S. public schools, educational services for dual-language learners, understanding first and second language acquisition, generational effects in language development, history of immigrant achievement, parallel processes in development, and language development. Participants were informed on legal compliance in assessment of diverse children and a framework for comprehensive nondiscriminatory assessment was reviewed. The second half of the workshop covered bilingual assessment versus assessment of bilinguals. The appropriate use of interpreters in assessment was explained and examples of test-specific classification matrices, and case study were illustrated in order to teach nondiscriminatory interpretation with the Culture-Language Interpretive Matrix (C-LIM).

## **VASP Fall Conference**

This year's fall conference was restructured into a full day webinar. Participants were able to attend the following three zoom presentations from 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

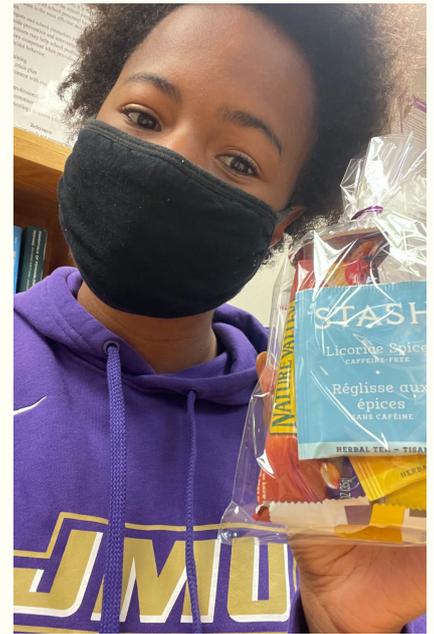
Social Justice with Charles Barrett, Ph.D.

Ethics with Eric Mesmer, Ph.D.; Melinda Cruz, Ph.D.; Emily Dove, Ed.S.; and Jennifer Mabry, Ed.D.

Trauma and Covid-19 with Terri Sisson, Ed.S.

# Students Preparing for SPAW!

NASP has changed the catchy acronym from SPAW, School Psychology Awareness Week to National School Psychology Week (NSPW). However, we get to use SPAW one last time. This year, SPAW takes place November 9-12 with the theme: The Power of Possibility. The school psychology community celebrates this week every year through various activities, initiatives, and programs.



It has been a JMU tradition to spread awareness of the school psychology profession on Campus with fun activities during this week. The JMU School Psychology program has a tradition of gifting home baked cookies to school psychologists in surrounding counties to show appreciation for their valuable efforts and contributions to the community. This year students continued this JMU tradition and packed prepackaged snacks. In addition, representatives of the program shine a light on school psychology by sharing informational flyers and presenting in JMU undergraduate courses and surrounding High Schools.

# Faculty Spotlight !



The program's own Debi Kipps-Vaughn has had great academic achievement in the last year. She was awarded the 2020 Distinguished Teaching Award from the Department of Graduate Psychology, the title of Professor as well as being the principal Investigator for the SAMHSA grant.

Debi is completing her 13th year here at JMU as a professor but attended JMU to receive her master's and Education Specialist degrees in School Psychology as well as her Psy.D. She came to our program after working as a licensed clinical psychologist for some years.

Debi holds a lot of passion for the projects that she is involved in whether it be preparing young school psychologists to be the best practitioners in the field to research and scholarly interests. So, it's no surprise that Debi's teaching and projects receives recognition.

The current project that Debi is working on is titled the Substance Use Education Project. For the past three years the JMU school psychology program has been ahead of the game with regards to training practitioners to be able to work with children and adolescents struggling with substance use disorders. Because this is something that school psychologists are often faced with yet don't have the training to provide service for, the school psychology faculty here at JMU believed that it was important to integrate training for this into the classes in this program. Because of the Opioid Crisis there is a high demand for service providers who are trained to work with populations struggling with substance use disorders. Debi is using the SAMHSA grant to expand the training that has been incorporated in the school psychology program to all programs in the JMU college of Health and Behavioral Studies (CHBS). She hopes that this training project will not only help health practitioners help those struggling with substance use disorders, but to have confidence and aspire to help these individuals.

The school psychology program is proud of Debi's passion project that will help many people in the years to come and wants to congratulate her on this opportunity and making the most of it!

# Faculty On The Move!



## Welcome JMU's new Clinician in Residence— Maria Toggas

Maria has worked as a school psychologist for fourteen years, all within Harrisonburg City. Maria obtained her bachelor's degree in Psychology and Spanish from the University of Delaware and then continued on to earn her master's and educational specialist degrees in School Psychology also at the University of Delaware. She is a certified school psychologist in the commonwealth of Virginia and a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP). Growing up as an ESOL student herself, she was drawn to the rich cultural and linguistic diversity in Harrisonburg City. She is passionate about helping students, families, and teachers find ways to make school a positive, safe, and welcoming experience. Maria is originally from Pennsylvania but made the Shenandoah Valley her home after meeting her husband, who is local to the area. Maria and her family love spending time outdoors in their garden and exploring all that the beautiful Shenandoah Valley has to offer.

## Don't cry because it's over smile because it happened

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Ashton Trice on his retirement at the end of the 2020 fall semester! Ashton joined the faculty at JMU in 1997. He has been a core faculty member in the School Psychology program in the Department of Graduate Psychology while also teaching numerous undergraduate courses for the Department of Psychology. Ashton has supported many school psychology students at all levels in their research endeavors and served as our program's Research Coordinator. While we will certainly miss Ashton's wit, entertaining stories, and contributions to research projects, we are grateful for his service and wish him great happiness in this next phase of his journey!



**JMU School Psychology program is proud to share  
that despite COVID-19 all Third-year students  
secured an internship !  
Here is where they've landed:**

Kiersten Bell- Hampton City Public Schools, VA  
Bailey Brooks- Newport News Public Schools, VA  
Joshua Knight- Manassas City Public Schools, VA  
Laëtitia Sakponou- Roanoke County Schools, VA  
Emily Smith- Albemarle County Public Schools, VA  
Emily Walsh- Cecil County Public Schools, MD  
Anna Weaver- Greene County Public Schools, VA  
Muna Yusuf- Prince William County Schools, VA

**Recent Graduates: Where are They Now?**

Jacqueline Billy – Albemarle County Public Schools, VA  
Michelle Bryant – Prince George County Public Schools, VA  
Victoria Bunting – Colonial School District, DE  
Kate Curd – Prince George County Public Schools, VA  
Stacey Davidson – Manassas City Public Schools, VA  
Carleigh Fuhrman – Baltimore County Public Schools, MD  
Sarah Lanyi - Seminole County Public Schools, FL  
Aleksa Putnam - Charles County Public Schools, MD  
Jessica Williams-Chase - Green County Public Schools, VA



## Please join us in congratulating the following member of our learning community for his outstanding accomplishments!



Second year student, Aj Levy, M.A., has been awarded the O. Ashton Trice Memorial Scholarship for Academic Excellence.

More about this award, which provides support for summer tuition, can be found at <https://psyc.jmu.edu/school/support.html>.

## When graduates come back for more

Kelsey Cutchins Beard is a triple Duke with bachelor's, master's and educational specialist degrees from JMU in psychology and school psychology. Kelsey graduated from our program in 2013. She is the only **three-time** CoSIDA Academic All-American in any sport in JMU Athletics history. In 2019 Kelsey was added to the JMU Athletics Hall of Fame. Let's shine light on our alumna and celebrate her achievements.



Follow this link to hear more about Kelsey's story  
<https://jmusports.com/feature/clearvision/>

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## Support Future School Psychologists!

To support the School Psychology Program and the training of our students, consider making a contribution to the JMU Foundation. Make a donation by logging onto the School Psychology webpage and click the "Give Now" button. We value your continued support in maintaining our educational excellence by providing funds that go towards professional development and materials for student research. Contributions can also be made specifically to the O. Ashton Trice Scholarship, which awards summer tuition support, and the Patti Warner Award, which also helps cover the cost of summer tuition. To contribute to these awards, click on the "Give Now" button listed next to the description (donations made to the Patti Warner Award need to have "put gift towards the Patti Warner award" in the special instructions box). Please keep in mind, many Graduate Assistantships no longer cover the full 12 credits per semester or any of summer tuition.

If you wish to send a check, please mail them to:

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