

M.AKING A.DVANCES IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

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Greetings from the Graduate Coordinator

We reached a milestone this year that escaped our attention. This past fall we welcomed our 10th graduate class. Our graduate program has entered its second decade, and I am pleased to report that we are developmentally on target. As children are prone, our growth has been accompanied by some developmental spurts along the way. We've added a graduate program in Clinical Psychology to join our program in Forensic Psychology, have added some key community partners within our network of practicum placements and have welcomed some new faculty within our fold. But as we stand poised to enter our adolescence, our biggest developmental challenges lay ahead. We have been hard at work at a reorganization of our graduate programs, expanding some of the tracks to 60-credit hours, which will allow our students to be eligible for licensure as Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC). The plan is to launch these changes in 2016, in our 12th year, just as we enter adolescence and begin taking on some of the leaps into autonomy that adolescence brings.

These are exciting developments for our programs, and they have come with the expected growing pains and struggles that such developmental advances bring. The proposal for the expansion, which is still winding its way through the various levels of approval that such changes require, seeks to preserve what we do best, while enhancing the options for our students for their future. That's what adolescence is about. It is a phase of development that prepares the child for their future adult life. It equips them with the tools and skills needed for them to embark on the journey into adulthood. The reorganized program will provide students interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in clinical or experimental/applied psychology with better research training and experience to prepare them for advanced study and careers as psychological scientists and doctoral-level practitioners and will provide enhanced clinical training and experience for students interested in a career as a LMHC in general clinical or forensic mental health settings. The new program will require a more intensive investment in training on the part of our students and in the mentoring of our students by our faculty. Our students and our faculty are ready and prepared for the challenge. I'll leave it for another time to provide the details about the specifics about the program, as some of these details are still being worked out. While the final product is still undergoing some fine-tuning, our commitment to making this necessary change is unwavering.

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From the Editor:

I would like to devote this issue's editorial column to a discussion of the value of critical thinking in our graduate program. Over the last week, two of our second-year students defended their thesis projects - Melissa McWilliams and Kristan Russell. Melissa's thesis, *The Role of Intellectual and Academic Abilities in Detention Placement among Dually-Diagnosed Juvenile Offenders*, examined the moderating effects of IQ and academic skills in the relation between dual diagnosis and court-involved, non-incarcerated juveniles' detention placement. Kristan's thesis, *Activating Schemas Through Cross-Examination: Understanding Attitudes Towards Rape* investigated the effect of information salience on perceptions of victim and defendant responsibility in the context of rape allegations and cross-examination. Each project was conceptualized through theory and demonstrated higher order thinking, similar to the level of thinking expected when conceptualizing a dissertation topic.

We all recognize the importance of training students to think critically. In our program however, the key is to train our students to apply critical thinking skills to research and practice whenever possible. Research indicates that as critical thinking skills improve, students' ability to understand the research process improves (Collins & Onwuegbuzie, 2000). This is observed in their ability to synthesize, evaluate, and apply research in their respective fields (p. 14). Alternatively, as students' research skills increase, their critical thinking skills also increase. Ultimately, the benefits of this process are observed when students' research questions demonstrate higher order thinking, similar to those conceptualized by Melissa and Kristan.

Judith Platania

Greetings from the Graduate Coordinator, *continued*

In the meantime, we are preparing to launch our ninth class to graduation in May, and their accomplishments are deserving of special recognition. The American Psychology-Law Society conference was held in San Diego this past March. As has become a regular event, we were well represented by our students at the conference. **Kristen Russell** presented her Master's Thesis at a symposium session. Her paper presentation was entitled, *Activating schemas through cross-examination: Understanding attitudes towards rape* and her research project was supervised by **Judith Platania**. **Cory Linder** and **Jaclyn Neddenriep** had a poster at the Friday evening poster session. Their poster, *The Recidivism of Juveniles Convicted of a Homicide Offense*, attracted some attention from conference participants interested in this issue as it is related to recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions regarding the constitutional violation of automatic life sentences for adolescences convicted of murder. Their research was supervised by **Frank DiCataldo**, and a manuscript for publication is in the works. Please join me in congratulating these students on their research accomplishments.

We have a larger than usual number of graduates going on to doctoral programs to earn their Ph.D. and Psy.D. **Daniel Lizotte** was accepted into the Ph.D. program at Palo Alto University. **Melissa McWilliams** will be attending the Ph.D. program in School Psychology at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. **Heather Yany** has been accepted to the Psy.D. program at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (now known as William James College). **Jaclyn Neddenriep** and **Cory Linder** will be attending the Psy.D. program at the University of Denver, one the first Psy.D. programs in the country. **Amber Maiwald** has been accepted into the Psy.D. program at Antioch University. **Marissa Bykowski** will be attending the Psy.D. program at Spaulding University. Please join me in congratulating and offering best wishes for these students as they graduate our program and pursue doctoral study next year.

We will be graduating 16 students in May. We congratulate them all on their hard work and accomplishments while they were here with us. Please join me in congratulating them all on a job well done. We have enjoyed the opportunity to work with them and wish them all the best as they leave us and embark on their future careers.

Here's to a smooth end of the spring semester and to a very welcomed turn in the weather. It was a long and hard winter here in New England. I wish everyone a pleasant and enjoyable summer.

Thank you all.

Frank DiCataldo, Ph.D.

Class of 2008 and forward

Graduates of our master's in forensic psychology continue to thrive in educational and professional settings.

Class of 2009

Jillian (Rowback) Rivard joined the psychology faculty at Barry University in Miami Shores, FL in August 2014 as an Assistant Professor.

Class of 2010

Allison Hollis is a residential case manager at Newport County Community Mental Health Center.

MacKenzie Lambine received her Ph.D. in Forensic Psychology from the University of Middlesex (U.K.) in April.

Class of 2011

Rebecca Nelson is enrolled in the Ph.D. Program in Clinical Psychology at the University of Rhode Island.

Stephanie Donovan (Oglesby) is Evaluation Manager at The Connection, Inc. in Hartford, CT providing community-based treatment for problem sexual behavior.

Class of 2012

Courtney Meyer is enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Human Sexuality at Widener University. She is currently Academic Coordinator at International Chiropractic Pediatric Association.

Anabel Morales is a second-year law student at New York Law School.

Lauren Whittle is currently employed as an In-Home Therapist with Arbor Fuller Hospital.

Class of 2015

Marissa Bykowski will be attending the PsyD. Program at Spaulding University

Cory Linder and **Jaclyn Neddenriep** have been accepted into the PsyD. Program at the University of Denver.

Daniel Lizotte has been accepted into the Ph.D. program at Palo Alto University.

Amber Maiwald will be attending the Psy.D. program at Antioch University in fall.

Melissa McWilliams will be attending the Ph.D. program in School Psychology at the university of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY-LAW SOCIETY – 2015

This year's meeting of the American Psychology-Law Society (AP-LS) San Diego, CA.

Conference Presentations included:

Russell, K., & Platania, J. (2015). Activating schemas through cross-examination: Understanding attitudes towards rape. Paper presented at the American Psychology-Law Society Conference, San Diego, CA.

Linder, C., Neddenriep, J., & DiCataldo, F. (2015). The recidivism of adolescents convicted of murder. Poster presented at the American Psychology-Law Society Conference, San Diego, CA.

Preview of Featured Publication

http://forensicpsychologyunbound.ws/OAJFP/Volume_7_2015_files/Gamache%20et%20al%202015.pdf

An Examination of the Individual and Contextual Characteristics Associated with Active Shooter Events

Kyle Gamache*, Judith Platania and Matt Zaitchik

Abstract

In recent years, the US has experienced a substantial number of mass shooting incidents. This type of shooting incident has been termed “active shooter event” and encompasses shootings that occur in school settings as well as public settings and workplace venues. Much of the recent published literature addressing active shooter events appears to focus on tactical issues, such as training for and responding to this type of incident. Very little research, however, has examined the individual and contextual characteristics associated with active shooter events. In the current study we examine a number of factors related to 88 active shooting events involving 92 perpetrators. Our findings indicate a history of psychological and behavioral issues reported in more than 50% of the active shooters studied. In addition, 60% of shooters had evidence of additional stressors beyond those associated with psychological and behavioral issues. These findings highlight the need to continue to explore potential risk factors associated with this form of violence.

Keywords: active shooter event, risk factors, mass violence

*Class of 2009

Professional Development

Publications

Gamache, K., Platania, J., & Zaitchik, M. (2015) An examination of the individual and contextual characteristics associated with active shooter events. *Open Access Journal of Forensic Psychology*, 7, 1-20.

Presentations

Leguizamo, A., Jeglic, E.L., & Calkins, C. (2015, April). *Validation of the Static – 99 Measures with Latinos: Discrimination and Calibration Analyses*. Paper presented at the 17th annual joint conference on sex offense-specific assessment, treatment, and safe management of children, adolescents, and adults of the Massachusetts Adolescent Sexual Offender Coalition and the Massachusetts Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers. Marlborough, MA.

Campbell, J. & Leguizamo, A. (2015, March). *Framing Diversity for Multiple Stakeholders*. Paper presented at the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Commons Conference, Savannah, GA.

Boonman, C., DiCataldo, F., Nelson, R., & Grisso, T. (in press). Mental health problems in young male offenders with and without sex offenses: A comparison based on the MAYSI-2. *Criminal Behavior and Mental Health*.

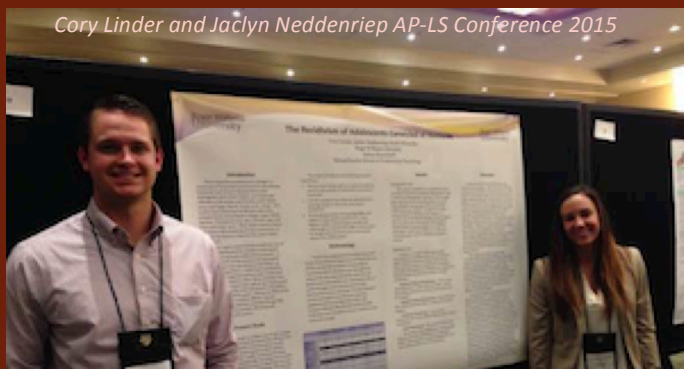
Kaiser, T. S., Subramaniam, J., Phelan, E. E., Mirek, A. K., Pereira, B., Femino, J. & Berman, G. L. (2015, May). *I can justify that inconsistency!* Effects of prosecutor justifications for eyewitness confidence inflation and epiphany explanations. Poster to be presented at the meeting of the Association for Psychological Science, New York, NY.

Our Program Coordinator's Contributions for 2014-2015

Dr. Frank DiCataldo was appointed Chair of the Certified Juvenile Court Clinician (CJCC) Committee for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health in August 2014. The CJCC Committee reviews and approves training reports and plans for candidates seeking certification as CJCCs. The certification is required in order to perform court-ordered evaluations of youth and their families within the juvenile courts of Massachusetts.

Dr. DiCataldo published a technical brief entitled, *What We Know about Juveniles who have Engaged in Sexually Abusive Behavior: A Technical Brief on the State of the Research Literature*, for the National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges in Reno, Nevada. The brief is geared toward juvenile court judges tasked with the responsibility of dispositional decision-making for youth adjudicated for sexually abusive behavior.

Dr. DiCataldo participated in a symposium at the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers annual conference in San Diego in October 2014. The symposium, *Examining the Impacts of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Notification: Emerging Research and its Implications for Policy Reform and Practice*, featured presentations by Elizabeth Letourneau, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, and Andrew J. Harris, Ph.D. University of Massachusetts-Lowell on their soon-to-be published national survey of the negative collateral consequences of sex offender registration and notification of adolescents. Dr. DiCataldo's paper focused on the implications of their research for clinical practice.



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