

CLINICAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are well into Spring Semester, 2017 and the Clinical Health Psychology Program is in high gear. In this, our first program newsletter, I want to express my gratitude and amazement at the quality and dedication of our faculty, students, and staff. They are fabulous to work with and are making, and will continue to make, a strong positive impact on our profession and health care overall. Throughout the newsletter there are stories of the work going on in labs and updates on what our faculty and alumni are doing. Please take the time to browse these features and catch up or acquaint yourself with these many activities.

Speaking of alumni, if you can believe it, we have 9 successful PhD graduates from the program who are now employed across 5 states. They are truly ambassadors of the best kind and they represent us very well. We are so proud of each one of them, the true founders and pioneers. Their accomplishments will span generations – they will always be the first! Please read up on their work in other sections of the newsletter.

This fall we were honored to welcome Dr. Amy Wachholtz to our core clinical faculty as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Wachholtz comes to us from the University of Massachusetts Medical School where she was Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Director of Health Psychology. Dr. Wachholtz brings a number of significant areas of strength to our faculty and expands both our breadth and depth of coverage. We are truly delighted to have her on our team. Please view her feature on Page 2 for additional details.



Message from the Director continued...



Dr. Jonathan Shaffer

Those of you who have been away from the program for a year or two may not be aware of our other recent faculty hire. In Fall Semester, 2015 we welcomed Dr. Jonathan Shaffer as a core member of the clinical faculty. Dr. Shaffer came to us from a postdoctoral fellowship at Columbia University where he was a core member of an internationally renowned research team investigating biopsychosocial factors in cardiovascular disease. Dr. Shaffer received his PhD in Child Clinical Psychology from St. John's University after completing his internship at Nassau University Medical Center. Dr. Shaffer also holds a M.S. in Biostatistics/Patient-Oriented Research from Columbia University. Jonathan is actively involved in research and his lab focuses on: 1) the role of biopsychosocial factors in cardiovascular disease; and 2) the design and evaluation of psychosocial and behavioral interventions for cardiovascular disease. Dr. Shaffer holds a K23 Career Development Award from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and recently received funding from the Women's Health Research Center to develop a smartphone intervention for patients with spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD). Dr. Shaffer also has clinical interests with cardiac patients, particularly those with heart failure. He too brings a wealth of knowledge and talent to our program. We are, indeed, quite fortunate to have such amazing ability on our faculty.

Other notes of interest:

- We currently have 3 students completing APA Accredited Internships
- All 5 of our intern applicants matched at top sites this February including University of North

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Carolina – Chapel Hill, Missouri Health Sciences Psychology Consortium, Kennedy Krieger/Johns Hopkins University, University of Colorado School of Medicine, and Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System.

- Applications to the program increased 88% between 2014 (the year the program was accredited) and 2016, reaching 173 applications for the 5-6 slots (3% acceptance rate in 2016).
- In 2016 applications to the CHP program accounted for 67% of all applications to doctoral programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and 27% of applications to all 20 of the college's graduate programs, including master's programs.
- In 2016, 98% of applicants were from outside Colorado.
- The program is now thoroughly integrated within the fabric of the Denver community with students currently working on 30 different outside research and clinical projects spanning a truly astounding array of topical areas within clinical health psychology and behavioral medicine. A brief sampling includes: sleep disor-

ders, wellness programming, interventions for breast cancer, integrated primary care practice and scholarly work on public policy surrounding integrated primary care, and neuropsychological evaluations of memory for women going through menopause.

- Similarly, in addition to the state-of-the-art work that students do in the on-campus Psychology Clinic, they are also located throughout Denver as they provide clinical services in external practicum placements. These too cover a variety of placements including:

Denver Veteran's Administration Medical Center
 Children's Hospital Colorado
 National Jewish Health Pediatrics
 Barbara Davis Center for Childhood Diabetes
 Denver Health
 Aurora Mental Health Center
 Wellshire Behavioral Services
 Mental Health Center of Denver
 Salud Family Health Centers
 CREST Women's Mental Health and Wellness Center
 Exempla St. Joseph's
 Lowry Family Health Center
 Presbyterian St. Luke's
 Spectrum Health

Hope Health and Wellness Clinic
 University of Colorado Hospital
 Westside Family Health Center

- The Psychology Clinic has added two important features: 1) Student therapists will

now use the OQ-Analyst, an evidence based therapy outcome measure that will provide better tracking of patient progress in therapy to help guide adjustments to treatment plans as well as provide outcome data; and 2) The students will now also be able to use

psychophysiology/biofeedback systems to provide improved services in this regard. The equipment can record up to 10 channels of activity including heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, electroencephalography, Galvanic skin response, and electromyography.

There is much more to discuss but that can be saved for another time. Now I encourage you to read the features in the rest of this newsletter as you enjoy a refreshing beverage in some exotic and wonderful location (or just a local coffee shop).

Sincerely,
 Kevin

NEW FACULTY MEMBER, AMY WACHHOLTZ, PHD, JOINS CLINICAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM



Dr. Amy Wachholtz

The Clinical Health Psychology program welcomed a new Assistant Professor in Fall, 2016. Dr. Amy Wachholtz comes to us from the University of Massachusetts Medical School where she was an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Director of Health Psychology at the UMass Medical Center. Dr. Wachholtz graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from Boston University where she specialized in Bioethics. She continued her education to earn her PhD in Clinical Psychology from Bowling Green State University where she had a dual specialization in Behavioral Medicine and Psychology of Religion. She completed her internship through fellowship training at Duke University Medical Center where she focused on medical psychology and pain management.

She also recently completed a post-doctoral Master's degree in Psychopharmacology. Her research and clinical interests focus on 1) biopsychosocial-spiritual model of chronic pain disorders and 2) the complexities of treating of co-morbid pain and opioid addiction in both acute pain and chronic pain situations. Her research encompasses psycho-physiological research methods such as EMG, Galvanic skin response, and heart rate as well as psychotherapy treatment development based on psycho-physiological studies. She also enjoys working with medical patients experiencing pain issues and palliative care needs. She enjoys teaching students of all levels both in the classroom at the University of Colorado Denver and in laboratory settings.

RELATIONSHIP STUDIES LAB

The Relationship Studies Lab is led by Dr. Beth Allen. Current graduate students in the lab are Jessica Kenny, Arjun Bhalla, and Kelly Soberay. Alumni of the lab are Dr. CJ Bathgate and Dr. Lisa Betthausser. Although the mission of the Relationship Studies Lab includes various topics related to couple functioning, the main focus in the lab over the last few years has been on the experiences of military couples post deployment. We are just wrapping up data collection on a Department of Defense funded study called Relationships Among Military Personnel (RAMP; Dr. Allen is PI) and are beginning to analyze the data for publication. Dr. Allen is also Co-PI on a 10 year, NIH funded study of a marriage education workshop for Army couples. Dr. Allen continues to publish and present regularly in this area, including giving three talks at the 2016 American Psychological Association conference.

Current students in the lab are deeply involved in these projects, as well as other areas of interest. Their accomplishments are impressive! Congratulations to them all for remarkable hard work and dedication. In addition to their successes in their coursework and clinical work, and their commitment to helping the program and each other in various ways, they have been incredibly productive in their research.

Continued on page 3...



...Relationship Studies Lab continued from page 2

- Jessica Kenny has successfully defended her thesis, is preparing two first author manuscripts to be submitted for publication, and has accrued a total of 20 research presentations at local, regional, national, and international research forums. Jessica enjoyed being outside and hiking all around Colorado and Alberta and British Columbia, Canada this past summer. She is currently training for a marathon.
- Arjun Bhalla has also completed his thesis, which has just been accepted for first author publication in *Computers in Human Behavior*. He is also preparing additional manuscripts for publication and has collaborated or led a dozen research presentations at regional, national, and international conferences. Outside academics, Arjun traveled to India over Christmas last year and crossed seeing the Taj Mahal off his bucket list. Also, he advanced from novice to intermediate skier last season and is taking his skills to a new level this winter.

- Kelly Soberay is working on her thesis in the program as well as a number of research projects within the Military Suicide Research Consortium. In fact, she has won awards related to military suicide, including a recent VA co-investigator award for a Suicide Prevention Campaign. She is lead or co-author on two 2016 publications and a remarkable thirteen 2016 conference presentations. This is on top of her prior 15 publications and presentations. Over the summer, Kelly, her husband, and two toddler boys packed up and moved to Golden where the family now enjoys mountain hikes and the fresh air of near-by horses outside their front door.

We are so very happy for and proud of our lab alumni:

- **Dr. CJ Bathgate** and her husband happily welcomed little Jackson Thomas Bathgate into their lives on August 29th! Mother and baby are well and hopefully getting great sleep. CJ would know something about that, as she is Faculty at National Jewish Health in Sleep Medicine, and has two recent first author publications in the journal *Sleep*,

as well as four abstracts or presentations in 2016 focused on sleep. CJ is also serving as a health psychologist for their nationally ranked Cystic Fibrosis Program. She received a three year grant from the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation to provide patient care. CJ also earned her full psychology license in July 2016. All this is on top of her years of impressive accomplishments while a student in the CHP program, including extensive research productivity and earning the 2014 award as the “Outstanding Ph.D. Student of the Year,” across all UCD Ph.D. programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Did we mention that she ran a half marathon at 26 weeks pregnant?

- We are thrilled to congratulate **Dr. Lisa Betthausser** on her 2016 graduation from the program, and on her acceptance of Clinical Research Psychologist position with Rocky Mountain MIRECC! In addition, Dr. Betthausser has been appointed as a Clinical Instructor with the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus. She is serving as the Co-Chair for the APA Program Committee for Division 22, Rehabilitation Psychology, for 2017, and will serve as Chair of this committee in 2018. Dr. Betthausser is a co-investigator on a funded study related to adolescent sport-related concussions. Dr. Betthausser’s body of empirical work is impressive, including twenty three publications or conference presentations that she has led or co-authored. When not engaged in work, she enjoys exploring the great Colorado outdoors with her 4 year old son (a hardcore camper and hiker) and their dog, and will celebrate her graduation with an adventure to the Azores Islands (Archipelago in Portugal) in October.

We are proud of everyone’s efforts toward serving clients, helping inform the field, contributing to their communities, and always striving to do their best in this meaningful area. Please feel free to visit our lab website Relationship Studies Lab to keep up with what we are up to.

HEALTHY COUPLES LAB

Dr. Krista Ranby

Dr. Ranby published an article in the *British Journal of Health Psychology* entitled *Incorporating husband influences into a model of physical activity among older women*. In it, she shows how considering multiple types of influence from a relationship partner on physical activity engagement significantly improves prediction of behavior over and above established intrapersonal predictors (i.e., intention, planning, self-efficacy).

Dr. Ranby was also one of 20 researchers chosen from across multiple disciplines to participate in a Sandpit retreat with the National Cancer Institute in May. While there, participants engaged in different activities

designed to stimulate research ideas that would have a large impact on reducing the cancer burden. She and three other researchers from the event recently received a collaboration grant from NCI to continue developing a theory about how physical activity can be enhanced on a population level by considering the ways in which we interact with the built environment.

Dr. Ranby was recognized at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in August in Denver by the APA Committee on Early Career Psychologists. She received an Early Career Achievement Award given in recognition of achievements and demonstration of astute leadership in the field of psychology.

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...Healthy Couples Lab, continued from page 3.

Jennalee Wooldridge, a fourth year student in Dr. Ranby's lab, successfully proposed her dissertation entitled "A couples-based approach for increasing physical activity among adults with type 2 diabetes" and is currently finishing up data collection. Jennalee received three awards related to this project including the Division 38 Graduate Student Award, APA dissertation award, and Qualtrics Behavioral research award. Jennalee has completed over 20 conference presentations, 10 peer-reviewed publications, and is currently working on a first-author publication with Dr. Ranby. Jennalee also works as a research assistant with Dr. Masters at the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center. In addition to research, Jennalee is currently an extern at the Eastern Colorado VA Medical Center, working with chronic pain patients. Jennalee was engaged over summer and is using her spare time to plan her wedding!

KRISTIN KILBOURN LAB

Dr. Kristin Kilbourn's lab has been very busy over the past year. We have had a number of alumni who have moved on from internship to post-doc positions as well as one alum who is working in a local private practice.

- **Anna Cejka** – Anna was in the first group of CHP students and she was the first student from our lab to graduate. Anna successfully completed her internship in Casper, WY and she is working in a private practice in Parker, CO. Anna and her husband Nathan, who has his own dental practice in Parker, have two active boys. Roman is 7 years old and is attending second grade and Miles is 4 years old and attends pre-school. In her spare time Anna enjoys riding her horse and spending time with family.

- **Shannon Madore** – Shannon was also in the first year group of CHP students. She completed her dissertation last year. Her project was titled, Caregiver-Patient Relationship and Stress Response in Multiple Myeloma, and was accepted for presentation at the annual American Psycho-oncology Society meeting in San Diego last March. She completed her internship in San Diego at Sharp Medical Center and graduated from our program last December. She is currently living in Portland, OR with her husband, Michael and their two children, Vera (age 3) and Michael (5 months). Shannon is currently working on her two year postdoctoral fellowship with the Portland VA's Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care (CIVIC). The mission of CIVIC is to conduct research that empowers veterans to improve their health by enhancing their active participation in health care. She is involved in research projects in the areas of palliative medicine, patient-physician communication in oncology, and chronic pain/medical marijuana. She also provides mental health services in geropsychology and psychosocial oncology.

- **Jessica Geller** – Jessica recently completed her internship at Yale University and graduated this summer. Jessica's dissertation project was titled, Dyadic Predictors of Psychosocial Distress in Patients Undergoing Autologous Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant. She is now in a post-doc in psychosocial oncology at



the Denver VA Medical Center.

- **Kellie Martens** – Kellie completed her dissertation in May, 2015. Her dissertation was titled, What Matters Most? Predictors of Quality of Life and Life Satisfaction among Young Breast Cancer Survivors. Her dissertation was accepted for presentation at the annual American Psycho-oncology Society meeting in San Diego last March. Kellie recently completed her internship at Henry Ford Health Sciences and graduated this summer. She is currently completing a post-doc at the Detroit VA Medical Center. After completing her post-doc she plans to return to Henry Ford where she plans to serve as a staff psychologist in Oncology. Kellie is married to Josh, who is working in Detroit as an environmental engineer and has two daughters, Hannah, age 8 and Kaydence, age 9.

- **David Avram** – David's big news is that he was recently married to his longtime partner Cristina. Congratulations to both! David has been very busy over the past year working in various caregiver research projects on the medical campus and on the downtown campus. At the medical campus he has been collecting survey and biomarker data from patients and caregivers on the inpatient palliative care unit. On the downtown campus he has been working with an outside organization (Mylifeline.org) to collect and analyze data from a nationally

representative sample of caregivers of cancer patients. He is also working to generate ideas for his dissertation proposal and expects to apply for internship next year.

- **Lauren Languido** has been working on the Healthy Babies R-01 project for the past few years and will be transiting to a new PCORI project that involves delivery of a psychosocial intervention to lung and head and neck cancer survivors and their caregivers. Lauren successfully completed her thesis proposal last Spring and plans to defend her thesis this Fall. Her thesis is titled Predictors of Health-Related Quality of Life and Benefit Finding in Latina Breast Cancer Survivors.

- **Alaina Carr** just joined our lab this year. She comes to us from Boston where she worked with an extremely busy and productive research group (psychosocial oncology and palliative care) at Massachusetts General Hospital. Alaina completed her undergraduate work at CU Boulder and is happy to be back in Colorado. She is currently working on a project testing the feasibility of a web-based stress management intervention for caregivers as well as a study examining the relationship between chemobrain and various biomarkers in post-menopausal breast cancer patients.

CaLM (CARDIOVASCULAR AND LIFE MEANING) HEART LAB



Dr. Kevin Masters

In Fall Semester, 2016 the CaLM Heart Lab welcomed **Christina Rush** as a new first year student. Christina comes to us having received her BA in English and Spanish from Ohio State University and her MA in psychology from American University. Christina also has extensive experience working in research labs that focused on both cancer and cardiovascular disease, including time at the NIH. She is interested in mindfulness, quality of life, and components of religion and spirituality that contribute to well-being in patients and healthy populations. Christina, along with Stephanie and Kaile, will be presenting a poster at this year's meeting of the Society of Behavioral Medicine.

In July, 2016 **Stephanie Hooker** began her clinical internship year at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, IL. Along the way Stephanie received her MS in Clinical Psychology from Syracuse University and her MPH in Applied Biostatistics from the Colorado School of Public Health. She continues to be extremely productive in research developing exciting new projects and bringing them to fruition. Stephanie was just accepted into a postdoctoral fellowship at the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Minnesota.

Lacey Clement, Kaile Ross, and Megan (Grigsby) McGugan have all successfully proposed their dissertations and matched for internship. Kaile was recently second author on a publication in American Psychologist. Lacey was awarded a Society for Health Psychology Dissertation Research Award for her dissertation examining medical decision making concerning left ventricular assist devices (LVAD) in heart failure patients. As you likely surmised, Megan was recently married and seems to have a little more jump in her step these days!

Christianne Biggane is in her 2nd year and is developing a very exciting thesis examining the possible role of indoor environment expo-

sure in dampening stress. We look forward with anticipation to what this research will produce.

The lab also has weekly research meetings that include **Dr. Jonathan Shaffer**, **Dr. Jennifer Boylan** (amazing new faculty member in Health and Behavioral Sciences Department) **Jennalee Wooldridge**, and Dr. Shaffer's new students **Adam Harris** and **Amy Frers**.

A new research project has been funded by the Women's Health Research Center to develop a smartphone application using cognitive-behavioral intervention techniques among patients with spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD). SCAD is a somewhat unique cardiac disease that primarily affects young women. **Drs. Masters and Shaffer** are working in collaboration with the SCAD Alliance on this project. We hope to have exciting news in about a year!

Data collection was finally completed for the Couples and Hearts Study, a laboratory investigation of the possible influence of prayer among couples as a way of dampening cardiovascular response to stress. Now the hard work of cleaning hours of heart rate variability data and rating videotapes of couples' interactions begins.

We have had two papers accepted for publication based on data collected at the Anschutz Health and Wellness (AHWC) Center pertaining to: 1) the effect of incentives on participation, and 2) predictors of membership termination. A manuscript on, and a general instrument to assess, wellness is in submission. We have a major behavior change model that has been developed and is currently being written for publication (**Annie Caldwell**, a postdoctoral fellow at the AHWC has taken the lead on this) and Dr. Masters needs to get his act together and finish the paper on development of a theoretically based intervention – COMAP. Finally, **Stephanie Hooker** successfully defended her dissertation prior to internship and we expect several important publications on meaning and physical activity to develop from her work. In short, the lab is a fun place to be with quite a few projects underway.

ALUMNI

- 2014 **Christina Jayne (Kalinka) Bathgate, PhD**
- 2015 **Dana Brown, PhD**
- Anna Cejka PhD**
- Ava Drennen, PhD**
- Jessica Payne-Murphy, PhD**
- Shannon Madore, PhD**
- 2016 **Lisa Betthausen, PhD**
- Jessica Geller, PhD**
- Kellie Martens, PhD**

ABOUT THE CLINICAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM AT CU DENVER:

The CHP program adheres to the scientist-practitioner model where knowledge that is grounded in scientific evidence is used to understand, treat and prevent health-related problems. Students receive extensive training in psychology research and clinical techniques and, since the program places an emphasis on health, are also trained to assess the psychological factors linked to medical problems and to design interventions that integrate biology, psychology and social factors. The CHP program is accredited as a clinical program by the American Psychological Association.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER:

This newsletter is produced bi-annually in collaboration with the Graduate School at the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus for the purpose of distributing program-specific news, events, and information to faculty, staff, current students, prospective students, alumni, and the community. The newsletter template was designed and populated by the Graduate School. The newsletter content was provided and edited by the program.

