

SPGSO Update

2007-2008 SPGSO Officers

Amanda Sullivan, President
Vanessa Gaio, Vice President
Joseph Mahoney, Secretary
Morgan Hall, Treasurer
Tiffany Kong, Webmaster
Carlos Calderon, NASP Representative
Sheryl Fosterling, APA Representative – R.I.P.
Kara Sujansky, Social Chair
Holly Augustine, First Year Representative

Linda Caterino, Advisor

By Kara Sujansky

Sheryl Mei Fosterling (9/1/84-3/30/08) was a very bright student and a good friend to many. A graduate of California State - Los Angeles, she came to Arizona in the summer of 2007 to pursue a doctoral degree in school psychology at Arizona State University. Sheryl wanted to enter a profession where she could help others. In particular, she was interested in the unique struggles of minority students in the current education system. Being a minority herself, Sheryl could identify with these children and was passionate about ensuring that their educational experiences were equal to those of their peers.

Upon her journey, she welcomed new people into her life wholeheartedly, which allowed those of us who only knew her for a short time to care about her deeply. Even in the stressful environment of graduate school, Sheryl was able to joke and make others laugh. She would always lend an ear or a hand when asked. It is very unfortunate for us to have lost someone so special with such great potential for future good. She will truly be missed by everyone who had the privilege of having her in their lives, whether it was for a brief time or many years. Ψ



In Memoriam Sheryl Mei Fosterling: 1984-2008

Our Friend



Reprinted from SPGSO Update, Fall 2007
'Meet the New Cohort' by Holly Augustine

Sheryl moved to Arizona from Culver City, California. As an undergraduate Sheryl studied at Santa Monica College then transferred to California State University, where she graduated this Spring. While enrolled in college, Sheryl worked part time as a tutor for K-2nd grade and also taught summer prep classes for second graders. She is currently interested in minority issues in education, including the impact of prejudice on students, and would like to work in urban schools and continue to do research after completing her degree. Sheryl has two children, a dog named Suey and a cat named Chico.



Pursue Opportunities to Develop Your Niche

By Bryant Jensen

For me, the graduate school experience has been filled with challenges, but also ripe with wide-ranging professional opportunities. I would like to share a few of these opportunities, with the intent of encouraging students in our program to follow your passion while continuing to explore career options in schools, academia, government, the corporate sector, nonprofit organizations, and private practice.

Like Sheryl, Selena, and others, I chose to attend the ASU program over others because of its reputation for emphasizing multicultural issues in child learning and development. At the time I applied for the program, I had spent a few years living in Latin America, and had worked in a couple education programs serving Hispanic immigrant children and families in the U.S.—particularly those of Mexican origins.

After my first semester in the program I found several of my questions concerning culture, language, student learning, classroom processes, and educational policies unanswered. And it did not seem to me that our required course load would directly engage them. All the while, I remained confident that children of Mexican origins attending schools in the U.S. were often misunderstood and underserved. I regularly reflected on how the knowledge and skills I was acquiring in a school psychology training program could move understandings forward and, therefore, improve educational opportunities for these children.

At this point, I felt inclined to branch out. I contacted professors from other programs and departments and eventually landed a research position with a well-regarded Mexican-American scholar. I attended seminars and searched out professional opportunities within and outside of the university. During this process I came across a funding opportunity to conduct a small research project in Mexico. I applied and was awarded the grant (Later I was made aware that I was the sole applicant ☺).

Looking back, my two-month research experience in Mexico in 2004 was pivotal. First, the findings were relevant to educational policy and practice for children of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. In addition, it also introduced me to pressing issues faced by children of poor families in developing countries, and the shortage of cross-national research efforts available to improve their educational opportunities. This experience eventually led me to apply for a dissertation fellowship which would allow me to continue researching associations among student literacy development, family background variables, and school quality for Mexican and Mexican-American children. Since I was fortunate enough to receive the funding, I've spent the past 7 months in Mexico combining large database analysis with student case studies to answer my research questions.

Several skills I gained from school psychology coursework and practicum experiences have been indispensable as I continue to gather data and conduct analyses. Training in statistical methods, for example, has allowed me to manage the large databases and properly interpret quantitative results. Clinical skills gained from many practicum hours have made me more perceptive when interviewing parents and teachers, and more effective in assessing children's literacy skills and family backgrounds. Moreover, understanding the complex and interacting individual- and

classroom-level features that shape student learning has helped me to integrate findings from large dataset analyses, and to conceptualize the child case study element of my study.

To be honest, I do not feel I have quite found my “niche”. But I think I am getting closer. Perhaps many students in the program do not wrestle with the question of “what you’ll do when you grow up”, but I have throughout graduate school. Being enrolled in an APA-accredited school psychology program with strict requirements, in my opinion, has its pros and cons. On the one hand, we are given intense training to tackle specific problems and, therefore, are promised job security in a market that is starving for more school psychologists (particularly in schools and universities). On the other, we are not made aware of the broad career options available to us, given the skills and knowledge we will have acquired upon graduation. For me, identifying these options has come as I search out and encounter professional opportunities along the way.

To those of you yet unsure where you see yourselves professionally in ten years, let me offer a few bits of advice—ways to take advantage of your opportunities as graduate students in a large research university.

1. Follow your passion.
2. Instead of thinking how your course load does not relate to your passion, focus on how it does relate.
3. Choose your electives wisely.
4. Search out and spend time with faculty who have at least similar interests as yours (whether in your program/department or not).
5. Do not fret being different.

Unfortunately, I never met Sheryl before her untimely passing. I have been told, however, that she was passionate about eventually studying the impacts of prejudice on diverse student populations. I hope we are able to infuse this same passion in our own work. ♣

NASP CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2009 Annual Convention
Boston, MA – February 24th-28th, 2009

Workshop Proposals
Due June 13th

Presentation Proposals
Due June 27th

Requirements: Presentation Abstract (125 words or less); Summary (maximum 800 words)

NASP 2008 Highlights

By Lori Long

This year, NASP took place in New Orleans during Mardi Gras. Current students and faculty from our program who attended the conference included Amanda Sullivan, Jenny Tarbox, Vanesa Gaio, Rachelle Beard, Dr. Wodrich, and Dr. Caterino. Recent alumni of the program, Kelly Parent, John Balles, and Amy Scott, were also in attendance and provided a wealth of information about applying to internships, getting school psychologist and faculty positions, and how to survive our theses and dissertations.

NASP was an exciting and slightly frightening experience for many of us. I arrived in New Orleans following the Mardi Gras parades and made my way through a sea of garbage and beads covering the streets. Later in the evening, Rachelle, Vanesa, and I threw on some beads and made our way down Bourbon Street, only to realize that we were really conservative and not cut out for Mardi Gras "New Orleans style". But it was fun pretending.

The conference offered many opportunities for networking and meeting well-known school psychologists such as Cecil Reynolds and Thomas Fagan. Following a session hosted by Dr. Wodrich on pediatric issues in school psychology, I had the opportunity to meet with another student who was conducting research similar to my own. We discussed some of the challenges we had faced and shared ideas. In addition, while presenting my posters, I had the opportunity to talk with other practitioners and researchers about related topics and get ideas for future research.

Finally, there were several sessions that I attended where I was able to gain information, such as ideas for behavioral interventions, which I used at my practicum site and in my teaching the following week. I also learned some valuable information on studying for the Praxis in School Psychology from the test developers themselves. Overall, the experience of NASP, both socially and academically, was well worth the trip to New Orleans. I would recommend that all students take the opportunity to present their research or attend to get some of the latest information in the field of school psychology. ♣

***** Congratulations *****

2007-2008 Theses & Dissertations

Sandi Dial

An Investigation of the Relationship between Social-Emotional
Functioning and Academic Achievement in Special Education
Students

Lori Long

Children Surviving a Brain Tumor: Perceptions of their School
Experiences

Lakisha Nosov

Examining Cattell-Horn-Carroll Cross-Battery Test Selection
Patterns in Diagnosing Learning-Disabled Students

2008-2009 Internships

Alicia Luckey

Washington Elementary School District (AZ)

Jenny Tarbox

St. Joseph's Hospital & Sangamon Area Special Ed. District (IL)

Weddings

Tiffany Kong – March 29, 2008

Carlos Calderon – May 31, 2008

Genevieve Smith – July 2008

Immigration as a Mirror

By Carlos O. Calderón

When I came to the U.S. to start my university education, I wanted to be a psychiatrist. I wanted to understand "how the mind works." Little did I know that my life experiences as an immigrant would modify and expand not only my worldview, but my professional interests as well. In this brief commentary, I will touch on some psychological and social aspects related to the psychology of prejudice – the topic that made me fall in love with psychology as an undergraduate in 1999.

Imagine that you live in a country where only one language is recognized and valued, and you happen to speak that language. Imagine that you live in a place where, although several ethnic groups co-exist, only one of those groups is portrayed in the media, and taught in the classroom, as being "mainstream," and you happen to belong to that mainstream group. That is how I grew up in my country, just south of the U.S. border. In Mexico there are dozens of languages spoken representing more than 60 ethnic groups, including Native American peoples and African-Mexicans, among other diverse communities. As an adolescent belonging to a relatively well-positioned group, I could "see myself" on T.V. shows, find inspiring figures in Mexican history books that "looked just like me," and go to any trendy store or restaurant and be treated with respect and without suspicion. I assumed that all Mexican citizens had equal opportunities, regardless of race or ethnicity. I thought that the fact that indigenous groups in the southern states did not speak Spanish as their primary language was an aberration, and that the millions of "non-mainstream" Mexicans who lived in poverty had chosen to be poor. I was 15 years old. What did I know?

Come 1998, I was ready to immigrate to the U.S., ready to "assimilate" into this country, ready to be an American. And what happened? In the eyes of many people, I was just a "non-mainstream" American. I became the minority, the one with the funny culture, the funny looks and all the "aberrations" that come with people that look, speak, and act differently. My high school counselor did not expect me to go to college, for example. That is part of our universal human social psychology. It is the same here, in Mexico, and in China. But the fact that we humans are "wired" to categorize and stereotype people, and treat them differently (most often unwillingly, unaware of our own thoughts and feelings) should not be an excuse for our cognitive and behavioral imperfections. Rather, the psychology of human prejudice is a fascinating and important topic that should be considered by every responsible school psychologist working with our increasingly diverse student population.

As I share this story, I would like to invite my fellow school psychology students to reflect on social psychological issues, to practice their perspective-taking skills, and to always put the interests and well-being of children and families before anything else. I had the honor of discussing these issues with Sheryl on many occasions. I know she cared about diversity, culture, and prejudice in academic settings. I am sure she would have made important contributions in these areas. ♣

EDP 310/311: A Great Teaching Opportunity in our Division

By Joseph Mahoney

In graduate school, the typical Teaching Assistantship is rewarding primarily in the financial sense. At best, you get along with the course's instructor, and you don't have to work all of the weekly allotted hours. At worst, the instructor can't remember your name, and the job takes up more of your life than it's supposed to. However, friends, there are alternatives to this bleak status quo. One of those alternatives is right here in our Division of Psychology in Education. The assistantship is for an undergraduate course called EDP 310/311: Educational Psychology. Your supervisor is Dr. Jill Stamm, but you're not her "assistant" per se. You're the instructor: the students, the syllabus, the teaching, are all up to you. For the most part, you're in the driver's seat.

Do you prefer jobs that involve more autonomy? Do you find working with younger people to be a rewarding experience? Do you value the transmission of knowledge through direct instruction? If so, EDP 310/311 might be the right assistantship for you. The reason for the dual course numbers is this: EDP 310 is for Non-Education majors, and consists of a variety of elective 1-credit courses. Meanwhile, EDP 311 is a full-semester, 3-credit course that is required for Education majors. A unifying thread between the two is the separation of the semester into what are known as modules: they're essentially 5-week "mini-courses". Education majors must take three specific modules in succession, while Non-Education students may take one or several, whatever suits their needs.

Both 10- and 20-hour assistantships are possible with EDP 310/311. For a 10-hour position, you are required to teach two modules a semester. A 20-hour position involves teaching four modules a semester. In your first year as an instructor, you're likely to be assigned to module topics that match your background experience. However, after proving your effectiveness, a variety of options become available to you. Would you rather work with Education students, or the general college population? Would you prefer to teach students about, for example, motivational theories, or multicultural issues? Your personal strengths can become a valuable asset to the course.

As aspiring school psychologists, the relevance of this job to our program isn't too much of a stretch. There is an obvious benefit for those interested in faculty positions: real teaching experience at the undergraduate level. Even if your plan is to become a practitioner, your knowledge of and enthusiasm for schooling and education will serve you well as an instructor of EDP 310/311. Plus, for those who get to work with undergraduate Education majors, there is a subtle, added benefit: the ability to vicariously impact the lives of children. Your work with future teachers can enhance their ability to act as positive change agents for the schoolchildren they will serve. Is that enough to convince you? For more information, give Dr. Stamm a call at 965-5366, or stop by her office in Payne 311D.

Ψ

Dates to Remember

ASU Final Exams – May 1st - 7th

ASU Commencement and Hooding – May 8th

NASP Proposals due – June 27th

**Sign-up Deadline for Comprehensive Exams –
July 18th (2 weeks prior)**

Doctoral Comprehensive Exams – August 4th, 6th, & 8th

APA Convention, Boston, MA – August 14th - 17th

AERA Proposals due - TBA