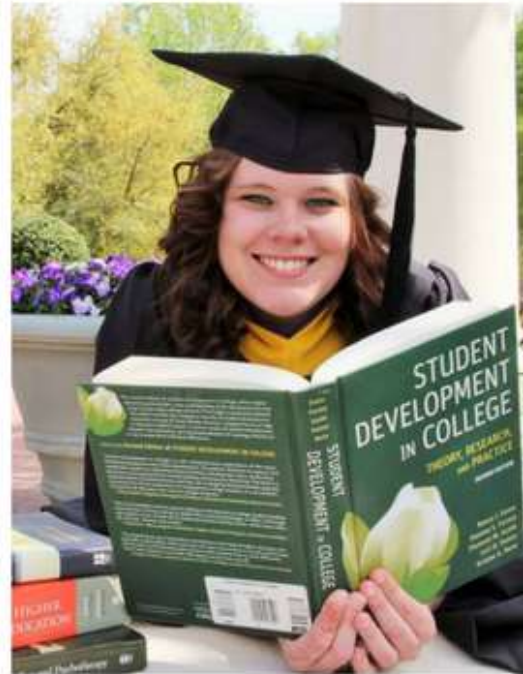




CSPA Class of 2016





UCA CSPA CLASS OF 2016

There have been quite a few changes within the University of Central Arkansas CSPA program this year, but with each change we have moved closer to our goal of delivering an education to students that inspires them to make a difference in the lives of others.

This past Fall we added Dr. Jesus Cisneros to the staff, making us a staff of 3 permanent faculty, each with different areas of specialization that fit perfectly with the course needs of the CSPA curriculum. Students in the CSPA program will engage and interact with faculty who each have practical experience in the areas they are teaching.

With three faculty members teaching on a permanent basis in the CSPA program, the program is now very well-supported to deliver its curriculum. The three faculty members include Dr. Susan Barclay, Dr. Patricia Smith, and Dr. Jesus Cisneros.

Dr. Barclay has her Doctorate in Higher Education and her Masters in Professional Counseling. Dr. Barclay worked as a counselor on a university campus for a number of years before joining UCA's program as a faculty member. She primarily teaches the counseling theories and skills courses in the program. Her research interests are in career counseling, career and college readiness, identity development, and student success. Dr. Cisneros earned his

Doctorate in Education Policy and Evaluation and his Masters in Higher Education Administration. He has experience in housing and residence life and student services. Dr. Cisneros primarily teaches student development and administrative courses. Dr. Cisneros serves on the United WE Dream board and is the cofounder of DREAMzone, an organization that prepares educators with skills and resources to respond to the needs of undocumented students. His research interests are in the areas of understanding the needs of undocumented students and the LGBT population on college campuses.

Dr. Patricia Smith received her Doctorate in Higher Education Administration and her Masters in College Student Personnel Administration. Her work as Assistant Dean has well prepared her to share her experiences in administration. She primarily teaches administrative and finance courses for the program. Her research interests include effective assessment practices and honors education.

Keep up to date with any announcements by following us on [Facebook](#) under [University of Central Arkansas CSPA Alumni](#) group or on [Twitter @CSPA_UCA](#).

UCA CSPA 2016

Copy Editor Patricia Smith

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2016 was the CSPA program's first time to travel to Brazil for the summer study abroad



2016 Graduate Perspectives

Hello all, my name is Di'Anka Moton

and I am a graduate of the College Student Personnel Services and Administration Program as of April 30, 2016. Reflecting back on my journey, I laugh because I never thought I would see this day. I was living in Atlanta, Georgia looking for a program that fit my interest. I knew that I did not want to enter into a master's program that did not satisfy me and what I wanted to do with my life. Finally, I made myself look at UCA's program and I instantly fell in love. Everything they offered, I wanted. I decided to apply, look for a graduate assistantship, and planned to move out of my gorgeous apartment in Atlanta.

I walked into the classroom having no clue what type of people I was going to encounter. I was very intimidated and did not think I would be able to compete with the people that sat in these chairs beside and across from me. I felt alone and I did not think I would form any type of lasting relationships with them. I wasn't dressed professional enough and I didn't have a name badge like most of the housing students. Boy, was I in for a surprise!

The most lasting memory from this program was the service learning project Dr. B had us complete for our Cultural Differentiation class. At this moment I felt like this was the project that expanded my thinking and really challenged who I wanted to be as a student affairs professional. I sought to start a student-led program that promoted diversity further than the organizations on campus. I wanted it to be expanded into the

classroom, the basketball court, all the way into the administration offices. Dr. B supported my ideas and allowed me to be creative. When we presented our ideas to many of the UCA professionals, I received very good feedback. This is when I knew that I was capable.

The second semester of my second year I realized that I had come so far. I learned to work within the pain of the death of my sister, the movement from one assistantship to another, a summer housing internship, and many quizzes and projects from Dr. M, Dr. B, Dr. Smith, Dr. Rockwell, and our new professor, Dr. Cisneros. I could not believe the relationships I gained within my cohort; I loved these people like I loved my family. They became members of my family. We banded together for Rob's thesis journey and the completion of the deadly composition test. I will forever be grateful for this journey and the people within it. I thank every mentor and every professor that allowed me to cry, vent, and sometimes throw tantrums. Each person had a hand in creating the new and improved Di'Anka Moton.

Last, the TRIP TO BRAZIL for our study abroad program also forever changed my life. I was able to appreciate and understand the Brazilian culture. The love and patience that was given to us was mind blowing. It was amazing how much the people gave to ensure that we had a lasting impression of their way of life. The food, the music, the dance, the beach, and the relationships will forever be buried in my heart. I am so fortunate that I was able to have this experience.

Thank you UCA for this CSPA program.
Di'Anka Moton, Class of 2016

Congratulations!!! Class of 2016

Catherine Buercklin

Robert Butler

Nathaniel Cochran

Jordan Habenschuss

Daynica Harley

Jillian Johnson

Brandyn Jordan

Brittany Lemke

Sherita McGee

Kayla McIntosh

Di'Anka Moton

Brianna Williams

Where do I start to discuss this

phenomenal year in the CSPA program at The University of Central Arkansas? What stuck out to me the most this year were the number of opportunities. The opportunity that I loved the most this year was my experience writing a thesis. I loved it and hated it at the same time. Writing the thesis brought upon a challenge that I could not have imagined. A challenge that brought upon growth and development, but most importantly it brought upon solidarity. In my nature I prefer to be the lone wolf of the pack and depend solely upon self, but my cohort did not allow that, my professors did not allow that, nor did the first year graduate students. They all rallied around me to support and push me to finish. There were days I wanted to quit or take a break from it, but many of them texted or called me to hold me accountable. They reminded me that the reward is in the process!

Taking on the challenge to write the thesis set a benchmark for me that took my faith to the next level. It made me realize that I was capable of speaking at the TEDx form at the University of Central Arkansas, and believe that I could raise support for me to study abroad in Brazil with the CSPA program. Coming into the university, my desire was to become an entrepreneur; after two years of studying at the University of Central Arkansas, that desire has increased because of the CSPA program. My professors: Dr. Barclay, Dr. Smith, Dr. Cisneros, and Dr. Mrozek revealed to me that everything I was learning in class can carry over to me starting a consulting company.

I remember walking into Dr. Barclay's office and I told her I was going to drop out of graduate school and pursue my dream to be an entrepreneur. She never told me what decision I should make (which I loved about her), but she challenged me to think hard about the pros and cons. The best part about it is she gave me encouragement and advice on how to start my own business.

Ultimately I stayed and finished, but that speaks to the support I received from my professors at random times of need. They all came through in some way or another. Dr. Cisneros consistently reminded me to finish the thesis. What I appreciated most about him, is he knew the right things to say to make me tick. He figured out how to motivate me and what makes me tick. In his own way, he challenged me to finish the thesis.

Some of the best memories that came from my experience was studying abroad in Brazil. Can I just be honest and say there is nothing like that trip! I recommend that every cohort participate in the study abroad, especially if it's in Brazil. It was beautiful to experience firsthand how other universities operate. I loved the unknown of being unfamiliar with the language. It was beautiful to be with my cohort and for us to be immersed in a different culture. If I'm honest, it was initially tough to be part of a country where I did not know the language or understand the culture, but the beautiful part was that I was not alone. I was comforted that my cohort members had the same type of confusion and initial discomfort that I experienced. It made me appreciate international students who take the risk to study abroad here in the United States. It gave me a strong desire to make sure their needs are met now more than ever. These students need support, just like the support I received in the CSPA program. If you have support, whether it be cohort members or someone in a leadership position, it makes the risk of the unknown that much better.

Robert Butler, Class of 2016

Theses Defended in 2016

Butler, Robert, *Types of Relationships and College Student Academic Success*. [Quantitative].



GASP UPDATE

by Brandon Harris , GASP President

The Graduate Association for Student Personnel, known as GASP, is the graduate student organization for the College Student Personnel Services and Administration (CSPA) Master's program. The purpose of this organization is to provide those interested in the field of Student Affairs with academic and professional development, social enrichment, and an opportunity for community outreach designed to enhance the educational experience. This organization brings together university students interested in student services, administration, staff, and faculty who share a special interest in student development. This student-led organization provides the opportunities and resources for CSPA students to push themselves further as new professionals and learners.

Currently, the GASP E-board is made up of five CSPA students (pictured right)": Brandon Harris, President; Connie Rodriguez, Vice President; Desiree Johnson-Smith, Secretary/Treasurer; Briana Creswell, Professional Development Coordinator, and Blaise Simecek, Social Coordinator.

GASP is an organization for current UCA CSPA students to network with one another socially and professionally. The GASP organization provides professional

development opportunities as well to promote the co-curricular experience outside of the classroom. This past year GASP has been able to assist members in attending the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) and NASPA conferences. At the 2015 SACSA Conference, GASP was able to host, "UCA CSPA and Friends" social (pictured below). This social was for alumni of UCA CSPA and for current students of the program to network with one another. Something else GASP has continued this past academic year is professional development sessions we host at least once a month. We have had past alumni of UCA CSPA and other student service professionals to present to the members of the organization. These events have assisted our members to receive full time positions and internships at a variety of institutions.

Recently, we had to say farewell to the Class of 2016 at the closing banquet we hosted in April. This was a great event that the GASP E-Board hosted for the graduating CSPA students. The Class of 2016 has played a major role in the GASP organization and in the CSPA program. GASP would like to thank the 2016 CSPA graduates and wish them well in their future endeavors. This fall we will be welcoming the Class of 2018 with our annual social.

GASP has done great work this year and we plan to move forward even further this year as an organization. Some of our future plans are to get undergraduate students involved who have an interest in student services and to continue raising funds for events. This past year, GASP was able to raise funds by having a Kristy Kreme fundraiser.

If you would like more information about GASP or would like more information on how to support GASP, please e-mail gasp.cspa@gmail.com.



CSPA Alumni and Student Gathering at SWACUHO



First Year Take

by Briana Creswell

If you are brave enough to say goodbye, you will be rewarded with a new hello. These words rang through my head as I packed 23-years-worth of life into the back of a graffiti stained U-Haul. With every hour I began imagining the new adventure before me. For the first time I would be moving out my home state and the possibilities were endless! Visions of new friendships, a new home, a new community to fall in love with, a new housing department to open, new classes and a new set of challenges that would push and grow me into a better professional and individual cluttered my head. There was so much to love and I was determined to love it all!

It didn't take long to realize that my goal of loving everything and everything loving me was a bit aloof and would take more time than I had originally imagined. Throughout the first year of my time at UCA I found myself faced with multiple challenges, challenges that I was not sure I would be able to meet. Opening 6 brand new facilities in the mist of all my personal "news" proved to be cumbersome and demanding. Taking over a full time course load was a classic over achiever error. And expecting all students to run joyfully into the office even if it was for a

conduct meeting was also probably a stretch. Who knew, right?

As the months passed I began to experience exhaustion on an entirely new level and my heart struggled to keep up with my expectations. But as I scratched the rocks at what seemed to be the pit of challenges, I began to feel a slow and yes painful, erosion of myself. Slowly, but surely the challenges that surrounded and aggressively eroded the sculpture I had arrived as were beginning to reveal something more defined and complete, a picture of the woman I was striving to be. By my second semester the challenges lessened their demolition process and began to gently chisel. Piece by piece my personal and professional sculpture began to settle.

You see, throughout my first year I found pieces of myself that were not meant to go to the next season of graduate school with me. Certain pieces had been beneficial for seasons my life but their purpose had now been served and so the rocky challenges eroded them. On the other hand, I found pieces of myself that had finally been given the opportunity to be highlighted and toned through that same eroding. Beautiful pieces

that had been anxiously awaiting their turn to shine were chiseled around me. At the end of my first year of graduate school I found a different yet more developed individual. Not all of my expectations were met but as I neared the end of my journey I realized two extremely important things: 1.) Expectations are meant to be shattered. It is through the shattering of our expectations that we find the greatest contentment's and some of life's sweetest surprises. 2.) As we continue to chisel our sculptures we may find that some of the pieces we had been holding to so tightly were a burden all along and without them we are free to find and refine the pieces needed for each individual season of life.

If you are brave enough to say goodbye, you will be rewarded with a new hello. Saying goodbye to Kentucky required all the courage I could muster, staying when challenges arose cleared my soul of every ounce of bravery I had yet finishing what I started and letting challenges take their course blessed me with the most beautiful reward; a story far better than I could have ever imagined and a self far greater than when I arrived.

Internship Sites for Class of 2017

Marissa Bader- Texas Woman's University, Housing and Residence Life

Jonathan Burgess- Kansas State University, Athletics

Brianna Creswell- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), Educational Programs

Brandon Harris- Salem State University, Housing Operations and Residence Life

Amelia Jaeger- UNIS Educational Group (Brazil)

Desiree Johnson- Texas Christian University, Housing and Residence Life

Dierre Littleton- Texas Woman's University, Housing and Residence Life

Michael Prestin- Plymouth State University, Residential Life and Dining Services

Connie Rodriguez- The University of Alabama at Huntsville, Office of Student Life

Blaise Simecek- University of Central Arkansas, Housing and Residence Life, Camps and Conferences

First Year Take

by Blaise Simecek

During the spring semester of 2015, I was eeks away from graduating with a bachelor's degree from my undergraduate institution. This is an exciting time for anyone, but I was also in the process of figuring out the next chapter in my life: graduate school. I went to placement exchanges, collected business cards, accepted on-campus invites, drove for hours, and had more interviews than I can remember. The process was overwhelming and put knots in my stomach.

One of the institutions I (obviously) visited was UCA. The moment I stepped on campus and walked along the trees and buildings, I knew this was a place that I could call home for the next two years. Luckily for me, the CSPA program at UCA wanted this place to be my home as well. As I received my acceptance letter into the program and completed the initial paperwork for my graduate assistantship, that knot of nerves in

my stomach began to loosen and I could not wait to start!

Once I moved to Conway during the summer, I thought to myself, "this is real, I am about to start graduate school!". Then I realized, "...I am about to start graduate school?!" That knot was back, I was nervous to begin the most challenging period of my academic career (so far). I did not know what to expect from the coursework, from my professors, or from myself. Could I really do this?

Fast forward about halfway through my first semester as a graduate student, and I realized that the answer was 'yes'. I can absolutely do this! I can do this because everyone in the CSPA program at UCA wants to see me succeed, and they have the tools, knowledge, and resources to support my success. The support comes not only from my professors, but from my cohort as well.

They have challenged me, educated me, and supported me just as much as the faculty members have. After only two semesters, I consider my peers in the program, family and my professors, mentors; I have found a lifelong support system. My cohort and professors have helped to loosen that knot of worry that I often find in my stomach during times of doubt.

This program has educated me, enhanced my skills, encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone, and given me the confidence to face any challenge head on, loosening the knots of doubt in my stomach along the way. What I appreciate most about UCA's CSPA program is that in only a matter of months, it has already provided me with tools, knowledge, and experiences to loosen the knots of other worrisome college students and support their success for years to come.



Future CSPA Class of 2017

Brazil Reflection

"The greatness of a profession is perhaps above all, unite men: there is one true luxury and that is the human relations." -Antonie de Saint-Exupéry

That is the quote that welcomed us to what would be our home for the next two weeks. I would have never imagined the adventures that awaited for me in the beautiful country of Brazil. I barely got a wink of sleep the night before we left. There was just so much going through my mind. Before I knew it the time had arrived to head over to the shuttle to go to the airport in Little Rock. Bags packed and passport in hand it was time for the adventure to begin.

Once we landed in Brazil more memories began to form with each passing hour. There's just way too many favorite moments to choose just one. With that being said one of my most favorite takeaways from Brazil would have to be the friendships. I met so many different people throughout the trip. I have been so blessed to have built upon the friendships that I left America with as well. The people of UNIS welcomed us with open arms. Every person was so excited to see us and that we had finally arrived. It just felt so at home. Each person I met in Brazil will forever have a special place in my heart.

I have always been curious as to what the rest of the world is like. We learn so much in school, books, and movies. That is only a part of it though. These small windows in the world are carefully selected so that we only see what others what us to see. I feel like I learned a lot in my first adventure of traveling abroad. I could only learn what I did by being there. This trip definitely sparked me wanting to travel more.

Being thrown into a culture where you could see how much people valued each other made me feel right at home. I loved being around people that cared for each other so much. Also you could see it daily with how they treated us. I love this about this culture. Everyone wanted to be sure that we enjoyed the time that we spent there. It reminded me of family and home in Texas because that's how my family is. So being welcome into that kind of environment was very comforting.

It was such a beautiful adventure. We had the opportunity to explore while we were there. We got to see the campus, the city, a coffee farm, and a coffee factory. A common theme throughout these was the passion that each person had showing them. Each part of our trip was exciting and there was something to be learned. The people were excited to teach us. We also learned some Portuguese during our trip with five classes. It was nice to learn about the language that was being spoken all around us. It was nice to recognize words while we were out that we had learned in class.

I could go on and on for days about this trip. The days just flew by and the memories just kept growing. I'm glad there are many photos that capture so many great times. I am even more thankful for what each of those photos hold and that is an infinite amount of memories. These will forever stay close to my heart. I hope that we are able to continue this trip in the upcoming years and that more and more students are able to go.

By Connie Rodriguez

