

# Counseling Psychology Newsletter

Vol. 2, Iss. 1

Spring, 2017

## Department of Psychology and Counseling

### An Intern is Born

The internship application process is an exciting and bittersweet experience. A student's accomplishments are put under a microscope as each site attempts to find students who match a particular skill-set. Direct client hours, assessment experience, grants obtained, and training experiences are but a few of the activities that these sites take into account. As a recently APA accredited program, we were interested in exploring the experiences of our most recent internship applicants, Evan Anderson and Tiffany Wierzbicki.



### Research Spotlight

Research is a vital duty of the counseling psychology. As such, our program develops research abilities in order to approach our student's compassion for helping from a scientific standpoint. In this issue, the research spotlight shines on second-year student Amy Hufstedler and her research on military culture and student veterans.

### First Year Reflections

The first year within a doctoral program can be quite the adjustment process. Yet, these semesters also prove to be some the most memorable. Catherine Allen, Robyn Oglesby, and Mattie Bogoslavsky were accepted into the PhD Counseling Psychology Program last year and have nearly finished their first year. We sat down with our youngest cohort to talk about their experiences and development.

## An Intern is Born

Evan Anderson and Tiffany Wierzbicki were both accepted to internship sites upon their first application. The following interviews give an account of their experiences as well as their future plans.

### Evan Anderson

#### Where did you get accepted for internship?

I was accepted at the Child Study Center, Pediatric/Child Clinical track. The internship is a collaboration between the University of Texas at Austin and Dell Children's Medical Center that combines my two passions: working with children and integrating psychological services within medical settings. I will provide diagnostic clarification through assessment, work with children and parents in the emergency, oncology, and hematology departments, and use brief therapy and Parent Child Interaction Therapy to help families navigate a myriad of disorders.

#### What was the site visit for like for you? Did you have a good feeling about it when it was over?

My site visit for CSC was very positive and welcoming but assessing the candidate's clinical abilities was their top priority. They presented candidates with three case studies and asked about diagnostic impressions, treatment suggestions, and a case conceptualization according to my theoretical orientation. Interviewers also assessed my comfort level working with M.D.'s and working with chronically ill/terminal patients. All the interviewers left at least ten minutes of time for me to ask questions about the site, Austin, or anything else I wanted (I talked about disc golf for about five minutes in one of my interviews!). After a tour of Dell Children's Medical Center and lunch, the interview was over.

I left the interviewing knowing this was my dream internship but it seemed like too much to hope for so I budgeted my excitement. The hospital was breathtaking in its design, the faculty was positive and forward thinking in terms of mental health in medical settings, and all the interns got free reign of the cafeteria at no charge! It was a best case scenario! I felt good about how I had presented myself but wondered if I could compete with all the big name schools that were present for the interview. However, as I was walking out to the parking lot I was chased down by one of the supervisors whom I had not met with so she could meet me before I left. She had passed about 5 other interns to get to me so that was a big confidence boost for me.

#### How does your acceptance at this site influence your career development/what are your hopes for the site?

This match is a game changer for my family and me. As someone who recognizes psychology's future within medical settings, I could not ask for a better training venue. Interns from this site have a history of attending prestigious fellowships and receiving jobs working within hospitals or other settings of their choice. I hope to springboard from this site into another hospital-based, child focused fellowship and eventually work in that setting as my career.

#### Now that it is all over, what advice would you give to those applying next year?

I cannot emphasize enough the need to start your research process early. It took me months of sorting through sites to find ones that fit my professional goals and abilities, but it made all the difference when it came to interviews. Check in often with students who have recently been through the process and edit your letters and essays like crazy. Be excited about the process and recognize that UCA is preparing us to compete with larger, better established schools. You got this!



### Biography

Evan Anderson is from Richmond, Virginia. He received his BS in psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Master's in school psychology from the University of Central Arkansas. Currently, Evan's research is focused on tele-health, efficacy of brief and strengths-based therapies, and community-based interventions for adjudicated youth. Clinically, Evan plans to work in primary care settings with pediatric and adolescent populations providing consultation, assessment, and functional restoration

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## Tiffany Wierzbicki

### Where did you get accepted for internship?

Tulsa Center for Child Psychology out of the Northeastern Oklahoma Psychology Internship Program consortium (APA-accredited)

### What was the site visit for your placement like for you? Did you have a good feeling about it when it was over?

Kind of. I did feel good about it. I really liked the site, and I felt like it was a good fit for me, both personally and professionally. I liked the people I met and the area, and the professional opportunities there could not have been a better match for my interests/ambitions. That interview felt better to me than the other interview I had-it was a bit more conversational and I got a better feel for what the people there were like. It was a bit more laid back, which made me feel more comfortable-although of course I was still nervous. That being said, I wasn't sure how they felt about me. I was optimistic, but not confident that I did a good job 'selling' myself or that they liked me. Part of that is my personality, but I include it to say don't feel bad if you don't feel an immediate and life changing connection - things could still work out.

### How does your acceptance at this site influence your career development/what are your hopes for the site?

I really think this placement will help me grow tremendously in my professional training. The way that APPIC is structured ensures that all sites will help trainees progress. All sites are required to have didactics and a lot of supervision, and most sites use a developmental model of supervision-which basically means they meet you where you are at and help you grow towards becoming a more independent practitioner. For this site and my career goals specifically - this site will allow me to gain more experience with evidence based treatments for children, has a lot of assessment opportunity, has the opportunity to learn more about related services for children (OT, speech, etc.), has training in PCIT, ABA, and even an adorable therapy dog! This site is unique in that it is a private practice, so I will learn more about the logistics of private practice as well.

### Now that it is all over, what advice would you give to those applying next year?

I could go on and on, and would be willing to for those interested. If I was going to pick the most important things, I would say: 1) start early. a lot of work goes into this process, more than I had anticipated. I was juggling that and my dissertation (along with everything else) and I think I could have done better if I had given myself more time. I would recommend starting as early as the summer before, but I would say NO later than August. I started in September and struggled. 2) mentally prepare for a demanding process. This took a lot of time and energy, was expensive, stressful, exhausting, and emotionally taxing. Be prepared for this, rely on your support system, and don't let the negative things that happen (rejection, poor interviews, etc.) make you feel too bad. 3) take advantage of the people around who have been through this. There is so much to this process and it is overwhelming until you learn what you are doing. I had a few people who had went through the APPIC process that I constantly berated with a million questions - and it was very helpful. Use their experience to your advantage. I would definitely be willing to help, and I'm sure there are others who would as well.



### Biography

Tiffany Wierzbicki is originally from central Ohio, but grew up in north-eastern Arkansas. She has a BS in psychology and a MS in Mental Health Counseling from UCA. Most of her research thus far has been on romantic jealousy, in particular the social and evolutionary influences on gender differences in the experience of romantic jealousy. Her clinical interests include therapy and assessment, particularly with children, adolescents, and the college student population.

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*"I really think this placement will help me grow tremendously in my professional training."*

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# First Year Reflections

Catherine Allen, Mattie Bogoslavsky, and Robyn Oglesby reflect on their first year in the PhD Counseling Psychology program.



## Biography

Catherine Allen is originally from the Pacific Northwest but has lived in Arkansas the past several years. She has a BS in Biology as well as Psychology. She is currently working on her PhD in Counseling Psychology. Catherine's current research involves juvenile delinquency and white collar crime. Clinically, Catherine plans to work with criminal populations to reduce recidivism rates for individuals with personality disorders.

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## Catherine Allen

### What were your expectations coming into your first year and how did they line up with your experiences?

When I first came into the program I expected nonstop homework and tests that would keep me up for all nighters and make my life miserable. As it turns out, there is a whole bunch of work in grad school (fewer tests, though) but it's all manageable. The classes are much more focused on actual teaching and less so on covering material just to get through it which means the homework feels less like busy work and more like practice. I also never expected to get so close to people in the program. I assumed they would be like usual classmates (say hi to them in the hall and occasionally get together to study) but not close friends. Everyone works together and is helpful rather than competitive. Even the older students or those in a different program are quick to help us first years with questions about the program or classes. It's a great because they all get what you're going through; there's a feeling of solidarity.

### Do you feel like you have grown as a professional over the past year? How so?

Absolutely. If nothing else, I have been exposed to the expectations of a professional. The professors treat you as a professional and it feels natural to step into that role. I have learned a lot about how to interact and collaborate with others and maintain a professional relationship.

### What are your career aspirations as a counseling psychologist?

Is it cheesy to say I want to make a positive impact in people's lives? Yes? Oh, okay. I'm really interested in working with offender populations. I'm still back and forth between adult populations or youth populations but I'm pretty set on the criminal populations. It seems to me that criminal populations get pushed so far down on most people's list of who "deserves" help when really they are probably some of the most in need. I am interested in interventions that could help reduce recidivism rates and help offenders find hope in building a life as a productive citizen.

### Share an interesting experience you have had during your first year.

I'll share a funny experience. It was the first month of grad school and we were about to have our first quiz. I was convinced it was going to be outrageously difficult and stayed up most of the night to study because I felt so underprepared. As it turned out, it was one of the easiest quizzes ever. It was five questions that served as a brief, general review of things we had covered in undergrad. That experience helped me realize grad school is just as hard as you make it and I'm more competent than I give myself credit for. (NOTE: I'm not saying you don't have to study in

grad school. I'm just saying studying 15+ for a 5 question review quiz is a little excessive)

### What advice do you have for those coming into the program?

Come in ready to work and ready to learn. Don't be scared to ask classmates or professors for help or advice.

## **What were your expectations coming into your first year and how did they line up with your experiences?**

I knew that it would be hard work and I expected that most of my time would be spent studying and writing papers. I did not expect to be having as much fun or enjoying what I am learning as much as I am. I had no idea that I would build real relationships with the people that are in the program. I will admit that it is a lot of work and that I have had to focus quite a lot of time on school, but the things I am learning have been so interesting to me. My passion for studying and learning about psychology and what it means to be a psychologist has greatly intensified over the course of my first year.

## **Do you feel like you have grown as a professional over the past year? How so?**

I feel like this first year in the program has taught me what it means to be a professional. I am learning more and more everyday what it means to be a professional Counseling Psychologist. This learning has not only taken place in class, but also by working with and being around the department faculty. One thing that I really enjoy about the program is the ability to build relationships with faculty members. It is nice to be able to interact with professionals on a daily basis and ask them questions and receive guidance from them.

## **What are your career aspirations as a counseling psychologist?**

My ultimate goal is to work as an adolescent psychologist. I have a passion for working with teenagers. One particular area that I have been looking at focusing on is Eating Disorder treatment. The more that I study about Eating Disorders, the more I develop a passion for and a draw to help those who are impacted these disorders. I would also love to work locally, somewhere like Arkansas Children's Hospital. Arkansas is my home and I recognize the need for better mental health services and legislation in the state. I would love to get to also play a role in advocating for a greater emphasis on the importance of mental health in the state of Arkansas.

## **Share an interesting experience you have had during your first year.**

One interesting experience that I had came from being a Graduate/Teaching Assistant. In my second semester of graduate school I had the opportunity to give a lecture to the undergraduate research methods classes that one of the professors I work for teaches. It was interesting for me to get to see that side of education; to go through the process of preparing and presenting a lecture. I was intimidated at first to know that I would be lecturing in front of people who were my age or older than me. I was spending probably too much time worrying that they would not listen to me and being terrified of saying something stupid. However, my lectures were not the train wreck I was worried they were going to be; I actually think they went well. The experience helped me to gain a lot of confidence that lecturing and explain the principles of psychology to other people may actually be something that I could be good at.

## **What advice do you have for those coming into the program?**

If I could summarize my advice in one word it would be balance. Yes, the program is A LOT of work and will take up a good deal of your time, but you also need to have fun. My first year in the program has been one of the most stressful, but also most fun times in my life. I would also encourage people to build relationships with others in the program. I have loved having friends that will both drill me on diagnostic criteria the night before a psychopathology test, and go to trivia night every Tuesday.



## **Biography**

Robyn is a native of Central Arkansas. She has received her B.A. in Psychology and Sociology. She is interested in conducting research examining the impact of social media on mental health and plans on working with adolescents and individuals with eating disorders

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*“One thing that I really enjoy about the program is the ability to build relationships with faculty members. It is nice to be able to interact with professionals on a daily basis and ask them questions and receive guidance from them.”*

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## Mattie Bogoslavsky

### **What were your expectations coming into your first year and how did they line up with your experiences?**

Coming into the program, I wasn't entirely sure what to expect. I heard from certain stories that a lot of my free time would disappear and be replaced with tedious, unenjoyable work. However, now that I have spent my first year here, I've come to see that while a lot of my free time is indeed gone, it has been replaced with work I enjoy because I know that this is what I want to be doing with my life. And even with the hard work, I have found time to make friendships and keep up with different hobbies.

### **Do you feel like you have grown as a professional over the past year? How so?**

I definitely feel more confident in my future abilities as a professional after this year. A lot of that is due to the classes where I am learning about how my profession works. These classes have forced me to throw myself into the profession with little to go on, which I think has helped me to push myself to learn as much as I can as quickly as I can.

### **What are your career aspirations as a counseling psychologist?**

As a counseling psychologist, I would like to eventually end up working at a clinic with substance abusers and possibly patients with psychotic disorders, such as Schizophrenia. These tend to be cases that are harder to handle as far as our own mental health goes, but I like to think of myself as someone who can handle it well enough to be there for them as they need it.

### **Share an interesting experience you have had during your first year.**

Probably the most interesting experience I can think of right now didn't really have much to do with school. There was a night three other Graduate Assistants and I decided to go out to dinner to try to get to know one another better (since we knew we were going to be stuck with each other for a while). Randomly, we decided to go to Old Chicago in Downtown Conway. Once we were seated in the bar area, we noticed there was an announcer guy over the music system asking questions and having people write down their answers and bring them to him. We asked our waiter what was going on, and they informed us that every Tuesday night they held trivia in the bar. We joined in (about halfway through the game sadly) and decided we would make it a tradition. So for the most part since that night, we have all gone to trivia every Tuesday night to unwind. I just love to think that, if we hadn't gone that night to dinner, we would never have found out about one of our favorite friend traditions now. Fate, right?

### **What advice do you have for those coming into the program?**

Don't be afraid! Everyone here wants you to succeed. If you do your best and push yourself past even what you think is your best, you'll do just fine.



### **Biography**

Mattie Bogoslavsky grew up in North Little Rock, AR. She has a BA in psychology and a BFA in Musical Theatre from Ouachita Baptist University. Her past research has included impressions of the LGBT community as well as different writing styles of LGBT-plot-based plays versus heterosexual-plot-based plays. Her future research interests lie in rape culture and impressions of young adults diagnosed with psychotic disorders. Clinically, she plans to work in in-patient care, providing assessment and therapy, particularly with young adults and adults diagnosed with psychotic disorders as well as substance abusers.

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*“Don't be afraid! Everyone here wants you to succeed. If you do your best and push yourself past even what you think is your best, you'll do just fine.”*

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# Research Spotlight: Amy Hufstedler



## Biography

Amy Hufstedler is originally from Little Rock, Arkansas and moved to Conway four years ago. She earned her BS in Psychology from UCA in 2015 and anticipates her MS in Mental Health Counseling from UCA in May 2017. Her research interests include veteran and active duty service members' well-being and mental health, as well as factors contributing to student veteran success. Additionally, she is interested in determining how military ethos and military cultural identity can affect various outcomes. Her clinical interests include adult populations, particularly working with military and their families, as well as college students.

### What is the focus of your research?

I'm hoping to expand the empirical knowledge of student veterans and what factors contribute to their well-being and academic success on campus.

### How is your research related to Counseling Psychology?

Counseling Psychology has placed an emphasis on multicultural competency and an understanding of the effects of cultural identity. However, there is a significant gap in this area when considering military culture and military ethos, and hopefully my research can help to bridge this gap.

### How did you first get involved/interested in research in the area?

I have a significant number of friends and family members in the military, and understand that there is a desperate need for better mental health care for our veterans, service members, and their families.

### What are your hopes for the outcomes of your research/what are the broader implications of your research?

Student veterans face many additional challenges on top of the already strenuous load of the average college student. Eventually I would like to use research to help determine what factors indicate success and challenges for student veterans, to help influence policy and programs that will ease their transition and make their experiences on campus better.

### How do you believe your research impacts society as a whole?

I truly believe that our veterans and active duty service members deserve the best mental health care possible, and I hope that my research can contribute to making that a reality.

### What advice would you give to someone interested in pursuing research in the same area as you?

Reach out for advice. Reach out to veterans, active duty service members, psychologists and researchers in the field, etc. so that you have a first person perspective of their experiences and needs.

*"I truly believe that our veterans and active duty service members deserve the best mental health care possible, and I hope that my research can contribute to making that a reality."*