Scholarship Recipients and Donors Recognized at Annual Brunch

The Division of Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology celebrated the generosity of its scholarship donors and the accomplishments of its scholarship recipients at the annual Department of Allied Health Sciences Scholarships and Awards Brunch on November 3.

Ten RCP students were recognized at the brunch, including four recipients of the newly established GENEX Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology Annual Scholarships. GENEX Services, Inc. is among the nation’s leading providers of fully integrated care management services in the occupational, non-occupational, auto, and group health care markets. Its clients include self-insured employers, insurance carriers, managed care organizations, and third-party administrators.

First-year RCP students Casie Hall of Davis, Calif., Tommi Pait of Greensboro, NC, Katie Aiello of Wake Forest, NC, and Taylor Houchens of Lawrenceville, Georgia, were selected to receive the inaugural GENEX scholarships for the 2012-13 academic year. In his personal statement, Houchens said he was honored, excited, and surprised to have been chosen for the scholarship. “Not only has this affirmed that I am pursuing the right profession for me, but it has also encouraged me to hold myself to a higher standard,” he said. “I am beyond grateful.”

Savannah Carson of Dallas, Texas, received the 2012-13 Dr. Mark C. Fleming Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology Annual Scholarship. Mark Fleming (UNC RCP Class of 1998) made a generous gift and commitment to the UNC RCP program to fund the scholarship, which is awarded annually to a deserving student with financial need and promise for future clinical excellence.

“I am incredibly honored and grateful to be chosen as the recipient of the Fleming Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology scholarship,” Carson said in her personal statement. “As an out-of-state graduate student, this scholarship eases the burden of tuition as well as granting me the opportunity to expand my professional network and learn from a great mentor.”

Dr. Fleming currently serves as the Director of Behavioral Health Services with Corizon, the largest health care company of its kind providing medical, mental health, and pharmacy services to state level department of corrections and county jail programs across the nation.

Lauren Bangert of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, was chosen to receive the 2012-13 Richard H. Peters Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology Annual Scholarship, which was established by Jay Peters (UNC RCP Class of 2000) in loving memory of his father. Richard H. Peters was born in 1920, in Toledo, Ohio. He attended Yale University, where he majored in political science, attended graduate school at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and earned his law degree. After passing his boards, he moved to Cincinnati and began work as a public defender. He eventually moved back to Toledo and practiced law until the time of his death in 2001.

“I was drawn to the Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology program at UNC Chapel Hill because of its focus on counseling individuals with disabilities and the option to specialize in psychiatric disabilities,” Bangert said in her personal statement. “As an out-of-state student, I am extremely appreciative of supporters like Jay Peters who provide such generous scholarships that help with the costs of attending graduate school. Receiving such support from an alumnus of my program is especially exciting.”

Gabby Retta of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Brie Shelly of Chapel Hill, NC, received two of the three June C. Allcott Fellowships awarded to UNC Allied Health Sciences students for 2012-13 academic year. Named in honor of June C. Allcott (1916-1996), the fellowship recognizes students who demonstrate exceptional, ongoing, and new community service.

“I always strive to live by the principle ‘the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others,’ and that is why I am so honored to be the recipient of the June C. Allcott Fellowship,” Retta said in her personal statement. “I can only hope to live up to the namesake of this award.”

Melissa Senior, the 2011-12 recipient of the Dr. Mark C. Fleming RCP Annual Scholarship, was one of five UNC Allied Health Sciences Students chosen for the UNC Hospitals Volunteer Association’s Allied Health Sciences Fellowships. Supported through a generous gift from the UNC Hospitals Volunteer Association, the fellowships are awarded to deserving allied health students who, in addition to having financial need and scholastic ability, exhibit characteristics of emerging professional excellence.
RCP Alumni Share Experiences at Fall Reception

About 65 RCP alumni, current students, and faculty members came together to exchange information and ideas at a reception held September 27, 2012, in Bondurant Hall.

The reception included an alumni panel discussion featuring Vickie Carpenter ('11), Colleen Goodwin ('11), Monty Honeycutt ('99), Jay Peters ('00), and Lauren Wright ('07). After a general welcome and panel introduction by Eileen Burker, Director and Professor, Division of Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology, alumni panel members discussed their careers and endeavors since graduating and then took part in a question and answer session with audience members.

The event was a great opportunity for alumni to catch up with one another and for current students to learn more about what to expect after they complete their degrees.

RCP Welcomes New Faculty Member Enikő Rák

It is with great pleasure that I assume the assistant professor position in RCP here at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am originally from Transylvania, Romania. As an undergrad, I studied Psychology at Babes-Bolyai University. Upon graduation, I became employed at the School for Children with Disabilities in Cluj, where I worked with children and adolescents with developmental disabilities. The time I spent in this school had a profound influence on my career.

In the U.S. I have studied at Western Michigan University, in the Rehabilitation Counseling and Teaching program. While in this program, I worked in the Vision Rehabilitation Clinic doing intakes and assessments. I also became involved with research, and had the great opportunity to be part of a study evaluating the adaptability of GPS technology in the independent travel of persons with visual impairments.

I acquired my doctoral degree in December 2011 from Michigan State University specializing in Rehabilitation Counselor Education. While pursuing my PhD, I worked on several research and program evaluation projects and completed clinical work at public VR. My primary research looks at the construct of health literacy in relation to quality of life outcomes in the population of persons with chronic illness and disability (CID).

In my dissertation research I studied the effects of health literacy, self-efficacy, and knowledge of CID on different quality of life outcomes among individuals with diabetes. My plan is to continue this research in the years to come. I am also working on two projects that I started as a doctoral student, one on international rehabilitation and service delivery models in other countries and another on professional identity development in graduate students in rehabilitation counseling programs. More recently, in 2012 I became involved with a statewide community needs assessment study with the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living. I am very much excited about this position and look forward to working with RCP students to help them attain their professional goals.

RCP Meets WRAL

In September, the RCP Class of 2013 welcomed surprise guest David Crabtree, anchor/reporter for WRAL-TV News.