From the Director

Happy Summer! The Division of Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology has had a terrific and productive year with 40 students enrolled in our master’s degree program. One of the highlights of this year was that we were able to fund 16 of our students to present at state and national conferences. The majority of them had poster presentations, but four students were invited to give oral presentations at the spring state conference. All the students did a terrific job and the professionals at the conferences enjoyed getting to know them. This was a great experience for everyone and I know we will have even more students presenting next year! In related news, nine students were co-authors on nine peer-reviewed publications.

Another highlight of the year was the new Lunch and Learn Series that Dr. Judy Schmidt initiated. Six times throughout the academic year, experts in topics of interest to the students came to UNC and talked with students over lunch. (Students had to bring their own lunches and one of my goals in being a graduate student who would have appreciated a free lunch!) In related news, nine students being a graduate student who would have appreciated a free lunch!) is to raise money to provide lunch at these monthly seminars. I remember over lunch. (Students had to bring their own lunches and one of my goals is to raise money to provide lunch at these monthly seminars. I remember being a graduate student who would have appreciated a free lunch!)

The spring semester has ended, things are beginning to slow down, and 14 students are now in their internships. All 14 will graduate in July and in the fall we will have 24 returning students and 16 first-year students. We just finished interviewing three candidates for our open faculty position and I will let you know who joins us in our next newsletter.

We are beginning to form an alumni development committee. Mark Fleming, Jay Peters, Suzanne Rohan Jones, and Yolanda O’Neal took part in the first phone meeting. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact me at eburker@med.unc.edu or 919-966-9125. We would love to have you! We have some small goals (lunches for students, money for graduation ceremonies) and some larger goals (a professorship).

In addition, if you will be in the area, please let me know. We’d love to have you come by to meet the current students and talk about your career.

Eileen J. Burker, PhD, CRC
Associate Professor and Director
Division of Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology

Thank You, Donors

We would like to thank the following individuals and corporations for contributions to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Division of Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology program from April, 28, 2011 to May 30, 2012. The generosity of our donors helps us provide the educational resources we need to maintain the excellence of our program.

Carol E. Andrews
Charles Bernacchio
Mariellen Mory Combs
Karen Ann Drilling
Mark Christopher Fleming
Suzanne Rohan Jones
Bree Kalb
Brenda Marion Nevidjon
Jay Lytton Peters
Janice Snuggs Sanders
Patricia Susan Sikes
Benjamin Clyde Staples
Jane Anthony Summey
Betty Jane Teichman
Andrea Sutton Thomas

Dr. Mark C. Fleming RCP Annual Scholarship
Mark Christopher Fleming
Richard H. Peters RCP Annual Scholarship
Jay Lytton Peters
Towering Pines Foundation

RCP Students and Donors Honored at Annual Event

The Department of Allied Health Sciences hosted its fifth annual Student Scholarships and Awards Brunch on November 12, 2011, at the Rizzo Center in Chapel Hill. Each DAHS division had the opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments of its scholarship recipients and the generosity of its scholarship supporters.

Melissa Martell Senior received the Dr. Mark C. Fleming Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology Annual Scholarship. Dr. Fleming (’98) made a generous gift and commitment to the UNC Chapel Hill Division of Rehabilitation Counseling & Psychology to fund the scholarship, which will be awarded annually to a deserving student with financial need and promise for future clinical excellence. Dr. Fleming currently serves as the Director of Behavioral Health Services with Corizon, the largest healthcare company of its kind providing medical, mental health, and pharmacy services to state level department of corrections and county jail programs across the nation. Dr. Fleming’s areas of research interest and clinical expertise include trauma, severe mental illness, multicultural counseling, co-morbidity, the mental health needs of incarcerated individuals, the psychology of men, and an integrative approach to the mental health needs of his clients. Previously, Dr. Fleming served as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Individual and Family Studies and as Assistant Director for the Center for Counseling and Student Development at the University of Delaware. Upon leaving the University of Delaware, he served as the Director for the Center for Counseling and Student Development at Coppin State University. Dr. Fleming received his B.A. in Psychology with a minor in African American Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and holds a M.S. in Rehabilitation Psychology and Counseling from UNC Chapel Hill. He received his Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling Psychology from the Pennsylvania State University.

Kelly Marie Nelson received the Richard H. Peters Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology Annual Scholarship, which was established by Jay Peters (’00) in loving memory of his father. Richard H. Peters was born in 1920, in Toledo, Ohio. He attended Scott High School and transferred to Hill School to complete his high school education. This prepared him for the challenges of Yale University, where he majored in political science. Mr. Peters 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.
Sally Archer  
I was born and raised in Charlotte, NC. After graduating from East Mecklenburg High School, I attended UNC majoring in psychology and minoring in medical anthropology. After working in Charlotte for a year, I was so happy to be accepted to UNC's Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology program. Through this program I have learned so much and am really excited to be able to pursue a career as a rehabilitation counselor when I graduate in July. I am currently completing my internship at Freedom House in Chapel Hill and Durham and have developed a passion for working with those with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders. After graduation, I hope to obtain my CRC and eventually my LPC and LCAS.

Luz De La Serna Buzon  
Originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina, I moved to the U.S. when I was 15. During this time, I decided that I wanted to become a counselor, as through my numerous relocations I had witnessed countless individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. I graduated from NC State University with a bachelor's degree in psychology. As an undergraduate, I worked with a girl who had a developmental disability and helped her to become a counselor. Throughout my practicum and internship experiences at UNC, I had the opportunity to work with individuals with SPMI. My current interests include working with individuals suffering with depression, anxiety, PTSD, and other mental illness.

Sena Moran  
I am from Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. After studying psychology and specializing in neuropsychology at the University of Florida, I developed an interest in rehabilitating individuals with mental illness. As a student in the UNC Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology program, I served as a research assistant, worked at the UNC Pain Clinic as a pain management counseling practicum clinician, and am now interning on the Carolina Outreach ACT team in Durham. In the future, I plan to get my CRC and LPC in Florida.

Gina Johnson  
A native Texan, I grew up in Austin and attended the University of Texas. After completing a bachelor's degree in psychology, I accepted a research position with the University of Virginia Psychiatric Department. Working in a research setting strengthened my interest in psychiatric disorders and helped me clarify my desire to provide direct counseling services to individuals with these disorders. I feel strongly that the education and clinical experience I have received through the RCP program has prepared me well for this type of work. Through my master's project, I also identified an interest in working with women who have postpartum depression. After completing my internship at New Leaf Behavioral Health, I plan to remain in the area and pursue clinical licensure as a counselor.

Leah Cox  
Raised in Salisbury, NC, I graduated from UNC Wilmington and am currently both a Licensed and Certified Recreation Therapist. I worked with numerous disability programs, which helped me to decide to pursue a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The RCP program at UNC has helped me to add many more therapeutic skills and techniques to my repertoire (counseling, psychological assessments, holistic treatment approaches) and allowed me to combine the best of both skill sets. I completed my practicum at the UNC Burn Center and am currently completing my internship in UNC Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. I hope to continue to help better the lives of individuals with disabilities and plan on eventually pursing a PhD in an area related to this.

Rachel Espey  
A lifelong resident of North Carolina, I grew up in Gastonia and earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Appalachian State University. I was drawn to rehabilitation counseling and psychology due to exposure to mental illness and a desire to work with individuals with disabilities. Through this program, I gained the knowledge and skills to pursue a counseling career. I also worked as a research assistant for Dr. Eileen Burker, further developing my knowledge of the research process and passion for obtaining new information. My practicum and internship at New Leaf Behavioral Health allowed me to provide mental health counseling to a variety of individuals and groups and to create collaborative treatment plans. I plan to continue working with individuals with psychiatric disabilities, obtain my CRC, and pursue licensure (LPC).

Karie Strader  
I grew up in Charlotte, NC. While attending Appalachian State University for my bachelor's degree in psychology, I worked at Camp Royall and developed an interest in working with people who have autism spectrum disorders. The RCP program was my first choice for ongoing education, and it has been a wonderful journey. I gained experience identifying and fulfilling the needs of people with disabilities while learning about the recent research on best practices. During my internship with the UNC TEACCH Supported Employment program, I developed my skills in advocacy, service coordination, teamwork, and innovation of creative supports. In the future, I hope to continue serving people through counseling and community integration.
Laurel Powell

I became interested in working with young adults with developmental disabilities during my time as an undergraduate studying Special Education at UNC Wilmington. After graduating, I began a fulfilling career as a special education teacher, working with middle school students with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Six years into my career, I developed an interest in supporting students with disabilities as they left the school system and began facing the struggles of adult life with disabilities. During graduate school, I have had valuable, hands-on experiences first in my practicum with the Division of Services for the Blind and now in my internship at Easter Seals UCP. I hope to work in the nonprofit sector, continuing to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities upon graduation.

Shahin Sabouri

I am originally from Iran, but I have lived most of my life in the United States. I received my psychology degree in 2009 from NCSU. My life found a new direction when I was accepted into the UNC Rehabilitation Counseling program. I am very committed to helping individuals with psychotic disorders on the road to recovery. This program has given me the opportunity to learn from some of the best teachers in the field of psychiatric rehabilitation. I’m planning to sit for the CRC certification exam in October and fulfill the requirements for an LPC licensure. I look forward to serving the people of my community through working at a community mental health clinic.

Caley Kropp

I grew up in Statesboro, Georgia, with a loving and supportive family. I attended Erskine College in South Carolina and obtained a bachelor’s degree in psychology with a minor in biology. While pursuing my graduate degree in the RCP program, I specialized in providing holistic rehabilitative care for adults with developmental disabilities. In addition to receiving a great education, I had many formative experiences outside of the classroom. I was a research assistant for Dr. Kelly Kazuakas, completed my practicum with Dr. Eileen Burker and the UNC Transplant Team, and interned with Dr. Karen Sullivan and the UNC Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation neuropsychology team. In the future, I plan to pursue a PhD in clinical psychology and one day work in a hospital setting.

Kelly Nelson

A Louisiana native, I grew up thinking words like “gumbo” and “zydeco” represented quintessential parts of American life. However, upon moving to North Carolina to pursue a master’s in rehabilitation counseling, I quickly discovered I had a few things to contribute to NC’s diversity and this state had a wealth of culture to give back in return. This realization closely parallels how I would soon view my experiences counseling people with disabilities—both individuals can gain from each other’s unique backgrounds. Words cannot convey the ways in which I have been impacted by the relationships formed in my two years at Chapel Hill. The RCP program has provided me with countless opportunities for professional growth and self-exploration in clinical settings, and it is my aspiration to continue giving back to the community.

Amanda Tewell

Originally from Belmont, NC, I now live with my husband in Durham, NC. I graduated from NC State University with degrees in political science and sociology with a minor in women’s and gender studies. I was drawn to the field of rehabilitation counseling and psychology due to its holistic nature and focus on recovery oriented therapy. I spent my internship working at UNC Hospital’s Eating Disorder Unit where I developed a person-centered approach to treatment. My immediate plans include acquiring my CRC and LPC certifications while continuing work with individuals with eating disorders. Ultimately, I aspire to obtain a PhD in clinical psychology.

Caroline Williams

A lifelong resident of North Carolina, I grew up in Winston-Salem and obtained a BS in psychology from Appalachian State. The strengths-based and holistic approach drew me to the RCP program because it offered a unique viewpoint in working with individuals with a wide variety of disabilities. During my time in this program I have been able to develop who I am as a counselor and have acquired a strong foundation in working with individuals with a mental illness. Through my internship at the PTSD Clinic in the Durham VA, I have been able to gain experience in individual therapy, group therapy, and administering assessments. Following graduation, my goal is obtain my CRC and LPC and practice clinical therapy.