

Diversity Matters!

A Quarterly Newsletter



Produced by:
The Diversity Committee (DC)
The Multicultural Interest Group (MIG)
Department of Psychology

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Welcome back! We are excited to start 2013 with this issue of Diversity Matters! It has been one year since the newsletter's inception and we would like to take this opportunity to highlight the progress made by the department with a dedication to diversity. For example, we are excited about research from new faculty member Omar Gudiño, who focuses on development of treatments for ethnic minority youth exposed to traumatic events. Departmental groups, such as PACE and MIG, have been committed to diversity issues in the classroom and community. In addition, students are getting involved at conferences and presenting important work, such as treatment effectiveness programs for under-served couples. It is important to note we have made strides within the department and we have also taken these values out into our community and the field at large. We are excited by the involvement of the department in these activities and we are anxious to see where we are this time next year. Keep up the great work!

Developmental Psychology Graduate Students
Emma Espel and Lisa McFadyen-Ketchum



Faculty Spotlight: Omar Gudiño

Author: Laura Rindlaub



Dr. Omar Gudiño joined the Child Clinical faculty as Assistant Professor in September of 2012. His research and clinical interests include the development of treatments for ethnic minority youth exposed to traumatic events, as well as models of risk and resiliency.

How and when did you become interested in your program of research?

I always knew I wanted to work with kids. Also, because of my own experiences growing up I had a lot of questions about culture and immigration. Once I got to college, a class on Culture and Human Development further integrated my interest in culture and parent socialization practices. When I later did a research placement on child anxiety treatment, it became clear that child clinical psychology was a nice way to bring all my interests together and think about developmental implications in my clinical research.

You grew up in Los Angeles, and remained there, off and on, through graduate school. How did this influence your decision to study minority youth, in particular?

I grew up in Pacoima—a predominantly Latino neighborhood. From the outside, it was known for poverty, gangs, and crime, but as a kid growing up there, the gangs and crime and poverty aren't everything. It's just not how you think of your own neighborhood, of your own school. There was more going on there. So I became interested in the question of how, given all these risk factors, some people did well while others didn't. From an early age, my neighborhood provided personal experience with different research factors, for example immigrant families at different levels of acculturation, and how complex these systems can be. Once I took the Culture and Development course I found that I was learning the tools and the models to begin to understand my experience and those of other individuals.

This is your first year as an assistant professor here at DU. What is the main project you're starting in your new lab?

One of my long-term goals is to improve the quality of evidence-based services that are available to ethnic minority kids who face adversity. First, we're focusing on older adolescents who have been exposed to traumatic events. In a defined, efficient, effective way we're helping them to understand what's happened and to develop the skills to navigate their environments and to address post-traumatic stress symptoms, anxiety, depression. We're also going to target some of the resiliency factors: help them manage their emotions, cope with some of the stressors, feel a sense of mastery and empowerment in their lives. In addition, we'd like to have simpler models for delivering these skills, which I think is the big challenge. We have the tools to address all of this independently, but it's not realistic for the communities in its current format. As we move forward it is important to think about what components of the treatment are essential and for whom, in terms of how to personalize the intervention for these kids.

Can you reflect on your impressions of the department?

One of the things I think is great about this department is the extent to which diversity is really a department initiative, and it's been amazing to see the level of student involvement. Everywhere else I've been, the ethnic minority associations are composed of ethnic minorities, who study ethnic minorities, who publish in ethnic minority journals... One of my goals has been to argue that issues of diversity should not be an area of specialization but are actually crucial for the ecological validity of our work. I think there's been a lot of progress in the field, and this department is a great place to be – it's been impressive to see the level of interest from the students and from the faculty. Here, we see actual steps taken, from the admissions process, where we ask applicants how diversity informs their work, to student and faculty involvement, and there is clearly a real dedication to these issues. I've been very impressed!

PACE Update

Author: Jessica Technow

Psychology Advocates for Community Engagement (PACE) was founded last year by the current third year class under the direction of Dr. Stephen Shirk with the overarching goal of increasing awareness of mental illness and disseminating evidence-based treatments to the community. The group is pleased to announce that within the brief pilot period last spring we were able to see rapid improvement in the high school students served.

Englewood High School, a classically underserved population, was very receptive and welcoming of us. Due to the success of our pilot project and our collaboration with Ms. Lindsey Geiger, LMFT, Englewood High School welcomed us back this academic year, and we have continued to offer individual therapy to their students.

The adolescents we work with in Englewood often present with an array of co-occurring problems, including depression, trauma, and substance abuse. Thus far we have been fortunate to offer services to these students free of charge. This was an important component of PACE and in an effort to maintain free services Dr. Shirk applied for and was awarded a grant from the Public Good Fund within the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CCESL) at the University of Denver.

The grant will support the development of PACE and an integrated therapy program to address these comorbid disorders that are so often seen in school-based clinics. In the future we hope to expand the reach of PACE at Englewood High School to include parenting workshops, relationship education programs, and/or mental wellness education programs. If you are interested in joining our efforts or would like more information, please contact Shelby Scott at Shelby.Scott@du.edu.

Assistance for Everyone: Why students of color and other under-represented populations may have difficulties in disclosing disability and asking for accommodations.

Michelle McCandless, MSW DU Director of Disability Services

Author: Yen-chen Chang



In September MIG hosted a talk from the Associate Director of University's Disability Service Program (DSP), Michele McCandless, MSW. The mission of DSP is to problem-solve with students, and provide appropriate accommodations, such as adjusting exam formats or providing note takers. McCandless currently works with 700+ DU students who have a documented disability and have requested learning assistance.

Among those 700 students, racial/cultural minorities are consistently under-represented. For example, African American males, a group who already face racial stigma, are less willing to share information concerning their mental health with professionals or seek appropriate DSP accommodations, due to the fear of double discrimination. Additionally, Asian American students or international students from Asian countries have the lowest percentage among those seeking services, in part due to the greater emphasis on academic achievement within the Asian community.

With the leadership of Michelle McCandless, DU's DSP has been working to de-stigmatize disability services through the concept of universal design in the classroom. Universal design contends that if any design is good for the individual with a disability, it will benefit everyone. For example, the ramp next to the stairs in front of the psychology building was originally designed to provide wheelchair access. It turns out to benefit users with strollers, heavy baggage or trolleys. Thus, DSP encourages classes to adopt different styles of learning in order to accommodate learners with various needs.

Extreme Community Makeover– MIG Volunteer Event

Author: Jiquan Lin



Organized by the Multicultural Interest Group (MIG), psychology graduate students, friends, and families volunteered with the Extreme Community Makeover (ECM). The event on 10/20/2012 enabled us to partner with under-served individuals in the community to improve their homes and neighborhoods. ECM focuses on the importance of the harmony and association among people within the community. It was a great opportunity for us to step out of classrooms and labs to connect with community members, spend time with friends and family, and do something new that we might not have the chance to do in daily life.

Our mission for the day was to help a community member, Kenny, to paint the outer part of his house which included walls, window frames and doors. Kenny was a very positive and passionate person (you could tell that from the bright colors he used: red, yellow and pink). He patiently instructed us how and where to paint. The dedication and cooperation among volunteers made for an effective and productive day. We were able to paint much of the outside wall, windows, and door frames in the morning session alone. All in all, we helped to successfully fulfill the ECM mission, and we celebrated Kenny's birthday together by bringing him a delicious chocolate cake. We were thankful for the great experience MIG and ECM offered us, and were happy to connect with people in the community.

ABCT Conference Presentation

Authors: Eliana Hurwich-Reiss and Shelby Scott

Eliana Hurwich-Reiss and Shelby Scott presented as part of a symposium titled *Increasing Positive Outcomes with Couples from Diverse Backgrounds: Addressing Barriers to Services and Adapting Relationship Education Content* at this year's Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) in National Harbor, Maryland. The symposium focused on four groups of underserved couples: lesbian couples, gay male couples, low-income Spanish-speaking immigrant couples, and African-American couples. Each presentation addressed perceived barriers to participating in relationship education programs as well as current knowledge about how to adapt program content to better serve the unique needs of their respective population.

Eliana Hurwich-Reiss presented findings on the acceptability and feasibility of FUERTE, a culturally and linguistically adapted version of the FRAME (Father Relationship and Marriage Education) psycho-educational program, designed for low-income Spanish speaking families. Eliana discussed specific adaptations implemented in the FUERTE program that were aimed to decrease barriers to participant attendance and to increase the cultural sensitivity of intervention content, delivery, and specific workshop activities.

Shelby Scott presented findings from several focus groups with lesbian women regarding their views of current relationship education options and their preferences for a specialized relationship program that addresses challenges relevant to lesbian couples, such as coming out to family and employers, societal discrimination, and legal barriers throughout relationship development. The symposium was well received, but it also served as a reminder that despite advances in culturally adapted therapies and interventions, more thoughtful research is needed to address the unique needs of couples from different ethnic, racial, and sexual orientation backgrounds.



Written by:
Aleja Parsons

Upcoming Events @ DU or Denver:

| <u>Date/ Time</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>More Details</u> |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|--|
| January 1, 2013 7:30 - 11:00 PM | Freedom of Speech | Gypsy House Cafe | Poetry event hosted by LadySpeech | https://www.facebook.com/ events/468932426485807/ |
| January 4, 2013 7:00 PM | Harlem Globe Trotters | Budweiser Events Center | Exhibition basketball team that combines athleticism, theater and comedy | http:// www.budweisereventscenter.co m/ |
| January 12 - 27, 2013 | National Western Stock Show and Rodeo | National Western Complex | Rodeo's biggest superstars perform amazing feats of athleticism | http://www.denver.org/events/ detail?e=1464 |
| January 16, 2013 7:00 PM | MLKRodeo | Denver Coliseum | The history and heritage of America's black cowboy | http://www.mlkrodeo.com/ index.php/mlk-rodeo |
| January 25, 2013 12:15 PM | MIG Reading Group | Frontier 158 | Article discussion hosted by MIG Discussion leader: Kayla Knopp | Lisa McFadyen-Ketchum lisa.mcfadyen.ketchum@ gmail.com |
| February 1, 2013 12:00 PM | MIG Invited Speaker** | Frontier 158 | Race Matters: Implementing Racial Identity Development Theories into the Classroom Workshop | Rachel Miller rachellynmiller@gmail.com |
| February 8 - 17, 2013 | "Orange Flower Water" | Afterthought Theater | Theater Production | http://afterthoughttheatre.com/ |
| February 16, 2013 10:00AM - 3:00PM | Valentines Day Dinner and Dance for the Homeless | TBA | A day of dinner, and comedy for the less fortunate | https://www.facebook.com/ events/390006124404502/ |



**Cerise Hunt, MSW, MIG Invited Speaker

We are excited to welcome DU Alum Cerise Hunt for her talk on February 1st, entitled *Race Matters: Implementing Racial Identity Development Theories into the Classroom Workshop*. Ms. Hunt is currently a community outreach coordinator at the Colorado School of Public Health, an instructor for Metropolitan State College of Denver's Health Professions Program, and serves as an Executive Committee Founding Member of the Academy for Health Equity. Ms. Hunt's areas of interest include racial and ethnic health disparities, cultural competency, community partnerships and workforce diversity. Please join us for an exciting presentation!

Next Issue!

We will produce the next issue (Vol. 2, No. 3, Spring Quarter 2013) of *Diversity Matters!* In the next few months, if you would like to contribute in any way, please contact Aleja Parsons (alejaparsons@gmail.com) as soon as possible. We look forward to hearing your feedback and to introducing two new student co-editors for the Spring 2013 newsletter!