

Diversity Matters!

The newsletter of the Inclusive Excellence Committee and Multicultural Interest Group



UNIVERSITY of
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ARTS, HUMANITIES
& SOCIAL SCIENCES
Department of Psychology

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Welcome to the Fall issue!

Allison Stiles & Anne P. DePrince, Guest Editors

We are pleased to welcome you to the Fall issue of Diversity Matters! In this issue, you'll find two articles related to inclusive excellence in the **classroom**, from faculty and graduate student perspectives. In exciting **research** news, you also have the opportunity to meet IRISE postdoctoral fellow Dr. Maria Islas-López.



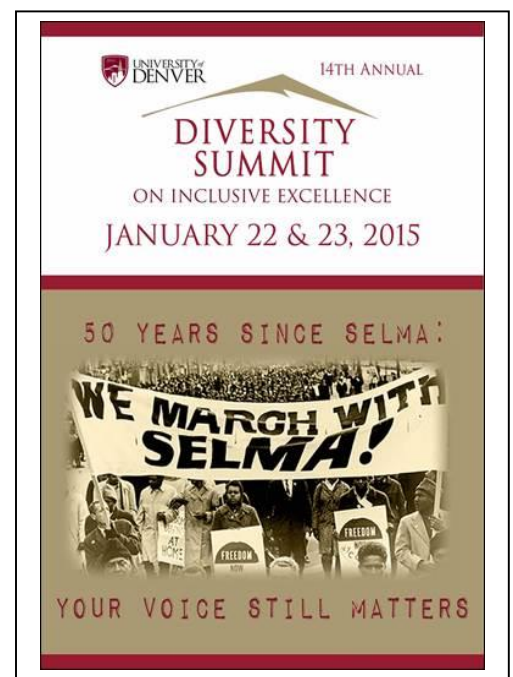
Please also take a moment to check out the “Inclusive Excellence Calendar” for upcoming inclusive excellence events. In addition to those events, we hope you will note that the Diversity Summit time of year has changed. This year’s summit, “Fifty Years Since Selma: Your Voice Still Matters,” will be held January 22-23, 2015. The Summit theme is inspired by the 1965 non-violent, multiracial march in Selma, Alabama that helped spark a national movement toward equal voting rights. The summit will focus on actions that generated advancements in equality 50 years ago, and what can be done to continue advocating for social justice today. This is an exciting opportunity to learn about endeavors within the DU and Denver community to incorporate IE and diversity into practice. If you are interested in presenting, workshop proposals can still be submitted on a rolling basis (read more [here](#)).

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In the news...

Graduate student Skyler Leonard was featured in the July AHSS Newsletter in the story, “PhD Student Promotes Inclusive Excellence through Research in Clinical Psychology.” Read more [here](#).





Graduate Psychology Course Targets Cultural Competence in Behavioral Health Services through Community Engagement

Omar Gudiño, PhD, Assistant Professor

In spring 2014 the Department of Psychology offered a graduate course titled, *Multicultural Issues in Mental Health* taught by Omar Gudiño, PhD. This course was designed to provide an overview of theory, research, and practice issues related to the mental health of diverse groups and to promote self-awareness, knowledge, and skills for working with diversity issues across the various professional roles of a psychologist.

With support from the DU Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning (CCESL), Dr. Gudiño partnered with the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health (CDHS OBH) to offer this as a service learning course. The course was designed so that students benefited directly from the knowledge and experience of community partners who are actively involved in delivering services, influencing policy, and advocating for diverse and under-served communities. An additional goal was to provide students with the opportunity to act both as producers and consumers of knowledge through a series of community-engaged learning projects.

One of the community-engaged projects students produced was a resource handbook titled, *Evidence-Based Practice with Diverse Populations: An Assessment and Treatment Review*. Despite a growing emphasis on the use of evidence-based practices with diverse populations, it is often difficult to determine what evidence is available to support to the use of specific measures and treatments with a given population. To address this need, students reviewed the literature on evidence-based practices with an eye towards their use with diverse populations (broadly defined). Students were charged with summarizing the scientific evidence in a format that would provide useful and practical information for practitioners and researchers. In an effort to disseminate this knowledge, the handbook was distributed to local mental health agencies and is also being disseminated electronically through the official state website of CDHS (www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDHS-BehavioralHealth/CBON/1251631918685). Through this project students were able to develop skills in reviewing and evaluating the scientific literature as it applies to diverse communities and communicating their knowledge for the benefit of the community.

For the final class project, students served as cultural competence consultants to CDHS. Specifically, students worked in groups to evaluate how the Office of Behavioral Health “Rules” (policies governing the delivery of mental health services) align with national *Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services* (CLAS) Standards developed by the Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov). Students learned about the CLAS Standards and used knowledge developed through course readings and discussions to identify areas of strength in the OBH Rules as well as areas for improvement. Students then summarized their findings in a final consultation report, including recommendations, which they presented to CDHS. During the final class meeting, representatives from CDHS attended the course so that students could discuss their findings and recommendations with the community partners.

Graduate Course, continued from page 2

These are just two examples of how students engaged directly with community partners to broaden and deepen their understanding of diversity issues while generating knowledge to be applied in the service of underserved populations. Although these projects required much effort on the part of students, the potential for directly impacting the wellbeing of diverse communities was a source of motivation and satisfaction for students. Likewise, our partners at CDHS appreciated the thoughtful feedback provided by students and valued “working together to achieve similar goals” of addressing the mental health needs of diverse communities. We are grateful that this partnership was beneficial for student learning, supporting CDHS in achieving its mission, and for contributing to the public good.

[This article also appears in the Winter 2015 issue of the CCESL Public Good Newsletter.]

Undergraduate Topics Course Disparities in Mental Health Services: Prevalence, Causes, and Future Directions

Eliana Hurwich-Reiss & Shelby Scott

Graduate Students



This fall, 5th year Clinical Psychology graduate students Eliana Hurwich-Reiss and Shelby Scott taught a weekly two-hour undergraduate course focused on disparities within the mental health system. Working to alleviate disparities in the availability of, access to, and dissemination of high quality evidenced based mental health care to marginalized populations has been an ongoing research and clinical passion of both Eliana and Shelby’s throughout their graduate studies. Eliana and Shelby developed the course materials based on knowledge gained during their respective master’s projects, trainings they have attended, and their graduate courses in Multicultural Psychology and Teaching.

Each class included a combination of lecture and small and large group discussion. The course began with a broad lens focusing on systemic oppression and privilege in the U.S.. Students participated in a variety of self-reflection exercises and discussion. The class continued by examining individual, family and community level risk and protective factors contributing to mental health disorders. The class then transitioned into exploring barriers to accessibility and utilization of mental health services, and understanding how evidenced based practice in psychology and cultural adaptation can help to alleviate disparities. The class culminated with a closer look at the experience within the mental health system for certain groups within the U.S. (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, LGBTQ, religious minorities, individuals with disabilities, women). Each student was also required to choose a specific group within the U.S. and present to the class on how this group’s intersecting identities may influence their experience within the mental health system. Students chose a variety of interesting intersecting identities including LGBT Christians, racial minorities in rural communities, Somali refugee children, homeless veterans, Hispanic and African American teen mothers, and Native American undergraduate students. The class was also fortunate to have expert guest presentations from Metro State’s Brandi Scott on Microaggressions, and the Kempe Center and University of Colorado School of Medicine’s Robin Kimbrough-Melton, JD, on policy and health disparities.

Introducing Dr. María Islas-López

Qualitative Methods Meet a

Quantitative Department

Skyler Leonard, M.Ed.

Graduate Student



Dr. María Islas-López is the Interdisciplinary Research Incubator for the Study of (In)Equality (IRISE) postdoctoral fellow working with Dr. Omar Gudino in the Services for At-Risk Youth and Families (SAYF) Research Laboratory and Dr. Julia Dmitrieva in the Social Context and Development Lab. Her fellowship is part of an IRISE initiative to develop interdisciplinary research that contributes to Inclusive Excellence and focuses on historically underserved populations. María studied at The National Autonomous University of Mexico and received her B.A. in sociology before attending Rutgers University and receiving her Ph.D. in sociology.

Dr. Islas-López is a qualitative-cultural researcher by training. Her work thus pays attention to how people make sense of their everyday lives, the practices through which they do so and how these connect to actions. She is interested in the experiences of children and youth, community well being, and immigrant families. Specifically, she studies the interactions of individuals' cognitions and social contexts. Her dissertation research focused on future-oriented cognitions of immigrant families, examining how these impacted their behavior, and had bidirectional relationships with their social contexts. She is eager to work in a department that is focused on Inclusive Excellence and responsive to the importance of culture. In her teaching, Dr. Islas-López works to incorporate the voices and perspectives of diverse backgrounds. She is currently working on an across-lab project investigating the experiences of recent immigrant families.

Dr. Islas-López is excited to integrate her expertise in qualitative methods with the quantitative perspectives of developmental and clinical psychologists. She describes the differences between quantitative and qualitative methods such that quantitative methods strive to use and create tools and representations that simplify the complex world into measurable data points, while qualitative methods seek to understand this complexity by looking at the meanings people bring to their experiences. This is accomplished through in-depth exploratory research, ongoing conceptualization and theory development. In her work with the SAYF Lab, Dr. Islas-López and Dr. Gudino will hold focus groups of stake-holders involved with mental health services for Latinos in Denver to obtain information about barriers to service use. These findings will inform the development of quantitative measures to use on a larger scale. She views the two methodological approaches as complimentary and states that a combination of the two perspectives can lead to a greater depth of understanding and construction of knowledge.

Throughout her career, Dr. Islas-López hopes to bring concerns of meaning and cognition as central analytical foci into the area of migration scholarship. In her fieldwork in Southern

Islas-López, continued from page 4

Mexico and New Jersey, a common theme among immigrants was the centrality of the future. Individuals would make sense of their life and what was happening to them by thinking about their future or the future of their children. These thoughts have a chain of implications for individuals and social groups. Her long-term goal is to develop a framework for looking at future oriented cognitions of migrant Latino families.

Inclusive Excellence Calendar

What?	When?	Where?	Description	For more information
Elders Dinner	12/2/14 @ 5:30pm	Cable Center	Volunteer Opportunity- In honor of Native American Heritage Month, DU will sponsor a holiday dinner dedicated to Elders in the community.	http://www.du.edu/cm/e/programs-services/heritage-months/native-american-heritage.html
"The Art of Remembrance: 150 Years Since Sand Creek" Art Exhibit	11/8 - 12/3	Denver Art Museum	Remembrance of 150 th anniversary of the Sand Creek Massacre through exhibits by Cheyenne & Arapaho artists	http://www.denverartmuseum.org/calendar/pop-exhibit-art-remembrance-150-years-sand-creek
Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run	11/29-12/3	Start: Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site (Eads, CO) End: CO State Capitol Building	Marking the 150 th year since the Sand Creek Massacre, the run commemorates victims and survivors. All welcome to participate.	http://sandcreekmassacre150.com/get-involved/spiritual-healing-run/
2015 Diversity Summit on IE	1/22 - 1/23/15	DU	2015 Summit Theme- <i>"50 Years Since Selma: Your Voice Still Matters!"</i> - Historical and current actions that promote social justice.	http://portfolio.du.edu/grps
Graduate Research & Performance Summit	1/30/15	DU	Summit on interdisciplinary graduate student research. Submissions accepted until Dec. 1, 2014	http://portfolio.du.edu/grps
Q&A (Queer & Ally) Training/Network	TBA	DU	2-3hr training, led by trained co-facilitation teams for any specific group (i.e., instructors, student organizations, University offices, etc.); open format trainings also held throughout year (TBA)	http://www.du.edu/cm/e/programs-services/lgbtqa/qna.html
"Race: Are We So Different?" Exhibit at the History Colorado Center	Daily until 1/4/15	History Colorado Center (1200 Broadway)	Exhibit aimed at sparking conversations around race as a social construction/tool for advancing some at cost of others. Admission: \$8-12.	historycolorado.org