College News

School of Counseling Students/Graduates Recognized for Highest 2017 Professional Counselor Licensure Examination Pass Rate in Ohio

The School of Counseling students/graduates have been recognized for the highest 2017 professional counselor licensure examination pass rate in the State of Ohio. The National Counselor Examination, utilized as Ohio’s professional counselor licensure examination, is completed throughout the year by final semester counseling internship students and recent graduates.

School of Counseling students/graduates had the highest number of 2017 cumulative examination completions in Ohio (N = 68), much higher than the average Ohio university number of examination attempts (Range = 1 to 47). School of Counseling students/graduates had a 92% examination pass rate, much higher than the national average of approximately 78%. For comparison, regional university examination pass results were as follows: Cleveland State University = 64%, Walsh University = 77%, Kent State University = 78%, Youngstown State University = 80%, Malone University = 80%. Fully online counseling programs fared worst: Capella University = 69%, Walden University = 70%.

Dr. Robert C. Schwartz, College of Health Professions Interim Associate Dean and Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Coordinator explained that “these outstanding results not only exemplify the quality of School of Counseling students, but also the world class training received at The University of Akron. School of Counseling instructors, a state-of-the-art training clinic, and effective teaching methodologies (e.g., practical skill-based learning versus fully online knowledge and memory-based education) have resulted in extraordinary student/graduate success.”
For Minority Health Month 2018, the Summit County Public Health Office of Minority Health hosted an April 7 Healthy Choir Showcase with choral groups from surrounding communities to gather for education and fellowship. The main goal was to address the many preventable chronic diseases that are prevalent within minority populations.

Prior to the showcase and in between presentations, a health fair was available from various healthcare organizations providing screenings and education on all things health-related. The University Of Akron’s College of Health Professions was a key stakeholder in the event, offering information about its varying clinics serving public physical and mental health.

The College of Health Professions has a core diversity mission, found at http://www.uakron.edu/health/about/index.dot. The College is proud that its graduates are prepared to address the needs of an evolving health care system and value the opportunity to serve health needs and promote wellness opportunities to an increasingly diverse community.
On Saturday, March 23, one student and three faculty members from the School of Social Work were honored for their achievements and contributions to the field of Social Work at the Annual Gala for the National Association of Social Workers Ohio Chapter. Linda McArdle, a recently retired Professor of Instruction in the School of Social Work, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award for her decades of social work practice in health care and higher education.

Crystal Dunivant received the Outstanding Service Award for her exceptional work as a part-time instructor and faculty liaison in the UA School of Social Work as well as her work in mental health at Community Support Services in Akron.

Gabrielle Faggella Fuller received the Social Worker of the Year award for her expertise in clinical social work, with a specialization in treating anxiety disorders. Ms. Faggella Fuller is also a part-time instructor in the School of Social Work, and teaches advanced graduate courses in clinical social work.

Maria Dixon was honored as the Social Work Student of the Year, most notably for her work at BeST Center at NEOMED (Best Practices in Schizophrenia Treatment). Dixon is a graduate social work student, and will be graduating with her MSW degree in May.

Pictured in the Photo, from left to right
Gabrielle Faggella Fuller – Social Worker of the Year (Akron Region)
Crystal Dunivant – Social Worker of the Year (Canton Region)
Maria Dixon – Social Work Student of the Year (Akron Region)
Linda McArdle – Lifetime Achievement Award (Akron Region)
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Nutrition Center hosting a Wellness Retreat

When: Saturday April 28, 2018 from 8am to 1pm
Where: Bath Nature Preserve (UA Field Station), 4240 Ira Avenue, Akron OH 44333
Cost: $30 regular attendees, $20 student attendees
Contact Person: Kathy Schupp, 330-972-5548 or kschupp@uakron.edu

Agenda:
8:00am = Registration
8:30am = Yoga session (bring yoga mat)
9:45am = Snack break (yogurt bar, fruit, granola)
10:00am = Horticulture therapy session
10:45am = Yoga session
11:45am = Vegetarian lunch (roasted garlic asparagus soup, quinoa salad, truffles, raspberry lemonade)
12:30pm = Guided meditation

College of Health Professions Faculty Appointed to State-Wide Health Sciences Panel

Christine Graor (School of Nursing) and Christin Seher (School of Nutrition and Dietetics) are congratulated for being selected by the Ohio Department of Higher Education to serve on a prestigious Ohio Health Sciences Cluster Faculty Panel. The Panel is part of a state-wide steering committee for the Ohio Guaranteed Transfer Pathway initiative, which by state law establishes guaranteed transfer pathways from two-year to four-year degree programs in an equivalent field. This effort is directly related to Ohio’s initiatives in college affordability and degree completion, mandated by the Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

Christine and Christin will not only represent The University of Akron, they will also help promote educational attainment in their fields state-wide. The College of Health Professions thanks them for their service.
Counseling Professors Speak in Seattle

Dr. Heather Katafiasz and Dr. Rikki Patton presented “Finding the Fit: Applying Multisystemic Therapy’s Fit Circle to creating a Leadership Development Plan he American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy’s Leadership Symposium on March 10 in Seattle. Katafiasz, left, and Patton in the photo at right, are assistant professors in the marriage and family counseling/therapy master’s and doctoral programs in the School of Counseling.

Their presentation focused on the isomorphic application of a therapeutic intervention, the fit circle, to help emerging and established leaders develop their own fit circle as they endeavor to create their own leadership plan.

Exercise science professor recognized for teaching and research

Dr. Laura Richardson, professor of instruction exercise science, received the American College of Sports Medicine award as the 2017 Clinical Exercise Professional of the Year at the 2017 Midwest ACSM Fall Meeting in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The prestigious award recognizes clinically certified professionals working at the forefront of the field promoting the advancement of therapeutic exercise. Richardson is an ACSM registered clinical exercise physiologist with more than 20 years of clinical experience as a practitioner in health care working with patients diagnosed with immunological, metabolic, pulmonary, neuromuscular, cardiovascular and orthopedic disorders.
Speech-Language Pathology Faculty Member Speaks in Mexico

From Feb. 28 through March 3, Dr. K. Todd Houston provided a series of lectures and hands-on training on the topic of telepractice and cochlear implants in Mexico City, Mexico. Houston, a professor in the School of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, spoke to an audience of staff members of the Latin America division of the Cochlear Corporation, the world's leading manufacturer of cochlear implants.

The goal was to expand service delivery to unserved and underserved populations with hearing loss in Mexico and the countries of Central and South America. Telepractice allows clinicians to provide diagnostic and treatment services that would otherwise be unavailable to some families of children with hearing loss and adults who are deaf and hard of hearing.

This initial training is the first step in developing a core group of professionals with the knowledge and skills to provide evidence-based telepractice services and to meet the growing need for consistent and effective hearing health care services.

School of Nutrition & Dietetics Hosts Home Run Recipe Challenge with Akron’s RubberDucks March 20th

The School of Nutrition & Dietetics, through their Nutrition Center, will host the second annual Home Run Recipe Challenge with the Akron RubberDucks. The event is built from last year’s RubberDucks request that students create healthy ball park food items. The food challenge is held in conjunction with National Nutrition Month. The RubberDucks also use this as time to recruit for summer jobs.

The event will be held on Tuesday March 20 in the Student Union Piano Lounge. Judges this year will be Brian Manning (Food and Beverage Director from the RubberDucks), James Phillips (Executive Chef from the RubberDucks), Don Smith (Department Director of Nutrition at Summa) and last year’s winner Miranda Petrigash.
On February 16, 2018 a successful interprofessional poverty simulation workshop was completed focusing on counseling, nursing and social work student training. Sheri Hartman, Lori Kidd, Greta Lax, and Rose Resler, among many others, were key College of Health Professions faculty and dean’s office representatives.

This 14th poverty simulation (which was inaugurated in 2014) included approximately 100 students who were grouped to experience life challenges affecting persons from lower socioeconomic statuses. Community partners ranging from public housing and homeless shelter personnel, to bank and grocery store staff, to law enforcement officers simulated real-world experiences so students could better identify with the struggles of their clients/patients. Students then participated in facilitated group exercises that processed their experiences and honed in on knowledge and skills useful as healthcare professions.

Lori Kidd explains that “We are proud of the collaboration between The University of Akron College of Health Professions and our community partners, and truly believe that we are making an impact in our students’ understanding of, empathy towards, and interactions with low income persons.”
The poverty simulation project began in March 2014 with a visionary nursing director sending two nursing faculty members for a facilitator training offered by the Missouri Association for Community Action. The potential value of such a simulation in teaching health care providers so captured our imaginations that we strongly recommended purchase of the simulation kit (CAPS) for use at our own university. We then assembled an initial core team of interested faculty (Dr. Lori Kidd, Dr. Sheri Hartman, Rose Ressler and Dr. Jina Sang) from other schools in our College of Health Care Professions to help implement the simulations. The first simulation took place in November, 2014.

The initial goals of the poverty simulation were to effect a change in awareness and attitudes towards low income persons. We also enlisted help from the regional, federally funded Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Director, Greta Lax. AHEC’s primary mission is to build academic and community educational partnerships; thus, the Center Director quickly put us in contact with the local metropolitan housing authority Bridges out of Poverty program and its graduates. The graduates—persons working to improve their low income situation—assist in our simulations by playing “staff” in community resource organizations. Their efforts during the role play and small group debrief portion (where students process their simulation experiences and volunteers share some of their personal experiences with poverty) of the simulation have been invaluable. For their time and effort, they are provided minimal stipend utility vouchers through AHEC funding.

Simulations take approximately three hours. Students are assigned to “families” who have various financial and health challenges. Their goal is to navigate a mock “month” (divided into 15-18 minute sessions) of living as low income persons. They follow the instructions of their given circumstances by going to school or work and using neighborhood agencies to help them improve their situation. Following the simulation, nursing students (and other students as classroom schedules permitted) attend an additional 2 hour classroom lecture offered by the ARI-AHEC Director and based on content in the manual Bridges to Health and Healthcare: New solutions for improving access and services (Payne, Dreussi-Smith, Shaw, & Young, 2014).

The Short Form of the Attitude toward Poverty Scale (ATP; Yun & Weaver, 2010) was used as pre and post-test to measure changes. Paired samples t-tests were conducted on data. Although total score significance indicating positive change in attitudes has only been achieved during two simulations, individual items showing changes in attitudes towards persons in poverty have demonstrated significance on multiple occasions. After 2017, the instrument was deleted from the simulations as data became redundant and no new information was being obtained. Data regarding the poverty simulations has been presented in poster at conferences as well as podium presentations.
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Following the first year, Dr. Lori Kidd secured additional funding for the simulation by connecting the poverty simulation with a HRSA grant promoting geriatric education with an interprofessional collaboration focus. Although minor adjustments to simulation goals, family members, and debrief questions for small groups were required, the grant provided funding for an additional 3 years. At the time of this writing, thirteen simulations including over 900 health care professions student participants (undergraduate and graduate students in the disciplines of nursing, medicine, pharmacy, nutrition, child life, social work and counseling) have been conducted over a four year period.

Several School of Sport Science and Wellness Education (SSWE) faculty presented at the 88th annual Ohio Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance (OAHPERD) Convention held in Sandusky Nov. 30 to Dec. 1. Sessions included:

- “The Utilization of Concept Maps & One-Minute Papers to Enhance Student Learning” by Dr. John Roncone, associate professor and program coordinator, SSWE Wayne College.
- “BDNF: The Case for Why Your Brain Does Need Fitness” by Dr. Judith Juvancic-Heltzel, associate professor of exercise science, and Dr. Mary Jo MacCracken, professor of sport studies.
- “Panel Discussion: Exploring the Next Step....Graduate School!” moderated by Dr. John Roncone, with panelists Jim Smith, Northmont City Schools; Dr. Alan Kornspan, professor of sport studies; Dr. Mike Duve, visiting assistant professor of instruction, sport studies; Melissa Smith, M.S., assistant professor of instruction, health education; and Tyrone Mosley, Orrville City Schools HPE teacher, and assistant lecturer, Wayne College.
- “Sitting is the New Smoking: Incorporating Movement Throughout the Day Across the Lifespan” by Dr. Judith Juvancic-Heltzel, Missy Driesbach, M.S., assistant lecturer, physical education, and Melissa Smith.
- “Sport Psychology: What Coaches Need to Know” by Dr. Mary Jo MacCracken, Dr. Robert E. Stadulis, emeritus professor, Kent State University; Dr. Bonnie G. Berger, Fellow CC-AASP, professor of sport and exercise psychology; and Dr. Adrian P. Turner, associate professor of physical education/health education, Bowling Green State University.
School of Counseling  Eman Tadros, MS, a student member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and a doctoral student in Marriage and Family Counseling/Therapy Program in the School of Counseling, published a therapist/researcher/educator/advocate article in the Family Therapy Magazine. The story focused on encouraging leadership. As Eman explains “There are plenty of ways to advocate for the field and for your own community or specialized populations. . . . it is our duty to be continuously educating ourselves on contemporary issues, post-modern theories, evidenced-based practices, and new research.”

School of Social Work Faculty Presents at the Society for Social Work Research Conference

Dr. Jina Sang, Assistant Professor, presented at the Society for Social Work Research Conference on January 14, 2018. Her poster presentation was titled, "My child rejects me: Alienated parents from separated or divorced families." In her study, she investigated what alienated parents experience following separation or divorce. She noted that in high-conflict families, where there are high degrees of anger and distrust between parents, parental alienation may occur; that is, children turn against a parent. This study highlights the difficulties experienced by alienated parents as well as coping strategies they use to deal with their feelings and stress associated with parental alienation.

School of Counseling Honor Society Clothing Donation

Chi Sigma Iota’s Alpha Upsilon Chapter (counseling international honor society, The University Of Akron Chapter) completed a holiday donation drive including 2,000 pounds of clothes. Donations were provided to Haven of Rest Ministries in Akron, Ohio. Honor society volunteers were able to secure 1,200 pounds of free clothing donated from Plato’s Closet in Sagamore Hills, and 800 pounds donated from students at UA.

Gabrielle Stone and Natasha Lacey, event coordinators, explained that they are “honored to be able to help Haven of Rest Ministries through Chi Sigma Iota” by providing homeless area residents with warm clothing during the winter season. The donation drive is part of Chi Sigma Iota’s ongoing mission of advocacy and community service. Members celebrated the accomplishment at a social event at Sarah’s Vineyard.