



# School Psychology Bulletin

*Fall 2016*

## Greeting from the Editors

Hello School Psychology Students and Alumni!

To our new cohort at the start of their graduate school careers, our practicum students gearing up for a busy but rewarding year, our interns working hard in the field, and our successful alumni near and far, we wish you all good luck!

This fall's edition of the newsletter includes some exciting new sections such as a recap of the PRIDE and SURF programs as well as "Alumni Answers," so be sure to check those out! We have also added a section of "Congratulations" to keep us better connected as students and alumni.

Thank you to everyone who helped us by contributing to this newsletter! Be on the lookout for our spring edition!

Best,

Jessica Smolarz and Brooke Sanchez

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## Important Dates

**October 21:** MSPA Fall Conference

**November 14-18:** School Psychology Awareness Week

**November 23-27:** Thanksgiving Holiday, University Closed

**December 12:** Last day of classes

**December 14-20:** Final exams

### Questions or Concerns?

Stop by the GA office (LA 1101) or contact the School Psychology GAs:

Jessica Smolarz: [jsmola1@students.towson.edu](mailto:jsmola1@students.towson.edu)

Brooke Sanchez: [bsanch5@students.towson.edu](mailto:bsanch5@students.towson.edu)

## Fall 2016 Office Hours

### School Psychology GA Office

Monday: 10:00 AM– 3:00 PM

Tuesday: 11:00 AM– 4:00 PM

Wednesday: 10:00 AM– 3:00 PM

Thursday: 1:30 PM-6:30 PM

### Test Library

Monday: 10:00 AM– 3:00 PM

Tuesday: 12:00 PM– 4:00 PM; 7:00 PM-8:00 PM

Wednesday: 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

Thursday: 10:00 AM– 12:00 PM

Friday: 11:00 AM– 1:00 PM

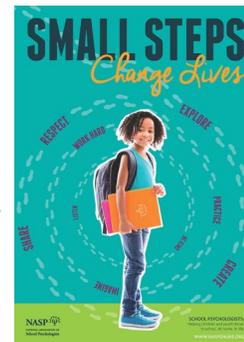


## NASP Updates

Hello Fellow School Psychology Graduate Students,

I am excited to be Towson's new NASP Student Leader for the 2016-2017 school year. I will be sending you information about different resources, opportunities, and activities available to us as graduate students.

If you haven't already, I hope you will join me and become a NASP member. Your membership will give you the opportunity to connect with fellow graduate students and school psychologists from across the country, and provide online and print resources to help you stay up to date in the field. Membership will give you a substantial discount on the annual convention registration, and on the new edition of *Best Practices in School Psychology IV*. The cost of becoming a NASP member as a graduate student is \$70, with the option of an installment plan that to pay your dues over three monthly payments if you [join or renew online](#) by November 9th.



School Psychology Awareness Week (SPAW) is around the corner. This year, SPAW is November 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, and the theme is "**Small Steps Change Lives!**" You can find out more about [School Psychology Awareness Week](#) and let me know if you have any ideas for activities on campus that week, or are interested in helping me plan in any way. I will be getting in touch with you again soon to provide more details about opportunities throughout SPAW on campus and in your schools.

As you head to your practicum and internship sites, I encourage you to look at NASP's back to school resources. Information is available on many topics including issues related to [Disproportionality](#), and tips for [Promoting Children's Mental Health](#).

Feel free to email me ([mwolan2@students.towson.edu](mailto:mwolan2@students.towson.edu)) with any questions about NASP membership, or if there is anything else I can help with.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Wolanski, NASP student leader

## NASP 2017 Annual Convention

Connect with other school psychologists at NASP's annual convention next year in San Antonio! Explore more than 1,000 sessions on topics relevant to the field of school psychology. Visit <https://www.nasponline.org/professional-development/nasp-2017-annual-convention> for information!



### Be on the lookout for studies and presentations by Towson staff, students, and alumni!

- A study done by Dr. Mortenson that examines the impact of exercise or motivational interviewing on the behavior, attention, and prosocial acts of children in the PRIDE program (see page 4 for more on PRIDE).
- Ryan Stickel and Dr. Mortenson ran another study that considered the impact of performance feedback on job performance with high school mentors who were supporting the PRIDE program over the last two summers.
- A longitudinal analysis of the impact of PRIDE completed in conjunction with Bill Plank, a graduate student in Towson's Experimental Masters program
- Dr. Bartels' paper entitled "Getting Your School Teams on Board with FBAs."
- A presentation from Amy Jagoda ('04), Kim Muniz ('04), and Juralee Smith titled "Getting On Track: A Comprehensive Behavior Progress-Monitoring Tracker Template."
- A mini-skills session by Pamela Cocol-Brown ('09).



## MSPA Updates

Hello everyone!

I hope the school year has started off well for you. I am one of the student representatives for the Maryland School Psychologist Association (MSPA). MSPA is a great way to learn about the profession in Maryland and to network with school psychologists from all of the different counties.

As we are all students, joining MSPA only costs \$20 a year. Membership comes with many benefits including the MSPA publication *Protocol*, which includes articles and offers great information on upcoming events and news relevant to school psychologists. MSPA offers some great conferences, including one this October about legal and ethical issues in school crisis, and another conference in the spring which should be announced relatively soon. The conferences are always on a Friday, so there is no need to worry about missing class, and they are usually within an hour of Towson.

Another benefit of membership is attending the executive board meetings. These meetings are held in different locations once a month and provide an excellent opportunity to network with current school psychologists from different counties. They also provide good information on current news in Maryland for school psychologists. As a member you can also join one of the committees that MSPA has including legislative, public affairs, diversity, and school safety.

The MSPA website provides a lot of useful information and I suggest you take some time to explore it and learn more about the organization. If you have any questions about MSPA, please feel free to email me at [slesko1@students.towson.edu](mailto:slesko1@students.towson.edu).

I hope everyone has a good semester and school year!

Sincerely,  
Steve Lesko, MSPA student representative

### MSPA Conference—October 21, 2016

**Topic:** Legal and Ethical Issues in School Crisis.

**Presented by:** Scott Poland, Ph.D.

Co-Director of Suicide and Violence Prevention at Nova Southeastern University, Founding member of the NASP National Emergency Assistance Team, Past NASP President, Past Prevention Director for the American Association of Suicidology.

**Location:** Martin's West  
6817 Dogwood Road  
Windsor Mill, Maryland 21244

**To register, visit:** <http://www.msponline.org/event-2252644>

### Interested in attending a conference, but can't afford it?

Check out the website of the [Graduate Student Association \(GSA\)](#) to apply for a GSA award and receive money toward attending or traveling to a conference.



## PRIDE and SURF programs

Thank you to everyone who participated in PRIDE or SURF over the summer! PRIDE and SURF are both four week long programs held at Friendship Valley Elementary School in Carroll County. PRIDE, run by Dr. Mortenson, involves working with and collecting data on students who have emotional and behavioral challenges. SURF, run by Amy Jagoda (who graduated from Towson in 2004) involves working on enhancing the social skills of students with autism spectrum disorders by practicing social skills and incorporating typical peer models.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered during the summer to assist with these programs! Your hard work and dedication were appreciated! Also, for those of you who are interested in participating, there are opportunities to help out with the PRIDE and SURF programs next summer!

If you are interested in learning more about either of these programs or if you want to volunteer, contact:

**PRIDE:** Dr. Mortenson ([bmortenson@towson.edu](mailto:bmortenson@towson.edu))    **SURF:** Amy Jagoda ([ALJAGOD@carrollk12.org](mailto:ALJAGOD@carrollk12.org))



The PRIDE staff (in green) included Towson students Melinda Bellafiore, Allison Morton, Shannon McGrath, Caroline Pellerin, Susan Folsom, Nickolette Hanzigiannis, Steven Lesko, Ryan Stickel, and Brian Grim. The SURF staff (in tie-dye) included Towson students Michelle Wolanski, Jessica Smolarz, Adriana Pizzadili, and Kim Dorsey.



## Alumni Answers

**Recent alumni answer the question: “What aspects of Towson’s program are you finding useful in your career?”**

I am very grateful for all of the knowledge and experience that I gained while in Towson’s School Psychology Graduate Program. As a school psychologist in my third year, I look back fondly at my time at Towson. Towson’s training in **consultation, particularly academic consultation**, has greatly prepared me for my work in city schools. I find that my unique skill set in academic consultation is seen as an asset by my school teams, especially when discussing early intervention. Consultation has allowed my school teams to reduce inappropriate referrals for special education by first using Tier Two interventions. I also work in a program designed for students who have Emotional Disabilities and I am often conducting FBAs and developing BIPs. **Towson’s training in conducting school-based FBAs** has proven to be incredibly valuable. I have even been able to share my training in FBAs and BIPs with my school teams by providing professional development. Towson holds the bar high and I couldn’t be more appreciative. Seeing my work as a school psychologist produce outcomes for my students is so very self-rewarding and I have Towson to thank for that.

- Katelynn Eyster (2014 Graduate)



The number one most helpful resource introduced to me at Towson was the **Competing Behavior Pathway**. Make 100 copies and keep it with you at all times! It is a great visual to help teams understand why a behavior may be occurring and what others might be doing to maintain the behavior without even realizing it. I’ve also found that when the team collaborates to fill out the CBP our time is more solution focused and positive.

- Eloise Bralove (2015 Graduate)

As a proud Towson University graduate, I am pleased to write about some aspects of Towson’s program that I am finding particularly useful in my career. What comes to mind most readily is the knowledge and skills gleaned through the **functional behavioral analysis course**. As a school psychologist, you are likely the most knowledgeable professional on staff when FBAs are involved. Though you may know the least about a particular student, the interviewing techniques learned in that course have proven helpful when I am attempting to extract relevant information from teachers, parents, and support staff. Additionally, the **competing behavior pathway** that all students in the FBA course receive has proven to be an invaluable tool. I’ve already used it several times this school year to help parents and educators conceptualize the relationship between behavior and interventions. By using this resource, I’ve found that my IEP teams are better equipped to develop behavioral interventions

-Victoria Moore (2016 Graduate)



## Alumni Answers (continued)

What aspects of Towson's program are most relevant to my career? That's surprisingly difficult to answer. Surely knowledge about **educational law, data collection and analysis, and counseling theory** are put to use everyday. The importance of multidisciplinary collaboration is stressed during IEP meetings and committee activities. Ironically, I have to say the most useful tool has been the first thing we learned about in grad school: using the **problem solving flowchart**. It's been invaluable during consultations and SST meetings in helping teachers and support staff understand the process of designing and evaluating interventions. I still have a copy of the flowchart casually hanging in my office just in case a teacher stops by to say, "I just don't know what to do about..."

- Carli Ragoo (2014 Graduate)

As someone who did practicum, internship, and now who is currently employed with Baltimore City, I know things get hectic quick. I believe the training that I received at Towson allows me to be an effective and efficient school psychologist even in less than optimal circumstances. You will never have the amount of time that you would like to have to get things done. However, because I looked at the **problem solving flowchart** and "**The Dr. Bartels Triangle**" a million times, and sat through many **consultation meetings** with Dr. Mortenson, I feel confident in being able to get what I need in a short amount of time.

- Umar Khan (2016 Graduate)

My experiences at Towson greatly prepared me for employment, and I am very thankful for the opportunities I had while at Towson. The aspects that I found most helpful were **practicum and internship**. Both of these experiences gave me the opportunity to have hands on experience within the field while still receiving instruction, supervision, and support through the Towson school psychology faculty. The courses that I found most helpful were the **preschool assessment course and both consultation courses**. As part of my placement, I support a Regional Early Childhood Center (RECC) located within one of my schools. My experiences within the preschool assessment course helped me to feel comfortable consulting, providing direct service, and assessing students within the RECC classes. In addition, at my middle school, I am responsible for chairing the school's Instructional Intervention Team (IIT), which follows the instructional consultation model. My experiences with consultation through Towson prepared me to feel comfortable with this model and gave me the confidence to lead my school's IIT.

- Jessica (Moore) Felix (2014 Graduate)



## Congratulations!

We are excited to congratulate the following Towson students and alumni on their recent news and accomplishments:

- **Sam Chavez ('05)** on his marriage.
  - **Jennifer Lynch ('06)** on having twins and being promoted to principal.
  - **Laura Merrit ('06)** on the birth of her baby boy Clyde in June.
  - **Pamela Cocol-Brown ('09)** on the birth of her baby boy Zachary David on August 8th.
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- **Jodi Perez ('10)** on her doctorate in Special Education.
  - **Rachel Hunton ('10)** on the birth of her second child on June 25th.
  - **Jessica Oterson (Sammons) ('11)** on her July 23, 2016 marriage.
  - **Alessa Rash ('15)** on her upcoming marriage to Eric Christenson on September 30, 2016.
  - **Kaitlyn Wilson ('16)** on her engagement.
  - **Keri Kiewra ('17)** on her marriage to Patrick Horner on August 6, 2016 (pictured left).
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- **David Doane ('18)** on his upcoming marriage to Jen Stewart on October 15, 2016.
  - **Nickolette Hanzigiannis ('18)** on her engagement to Alex Koutras (pictured right).
  - **Becca O'Hea ('19)** on her engagement.
  - **Caroline Davy ('19)** on her marriage to Robert Brunger on June 18, 2016.

Have something to share, but don't see it listed here? E-mail Jess or Brooke to have it included in our next issue!



**ConGRADulations to the Class of 2016! We wish you all of the best in the future!**



## Spring 2017 Schedule

### First Years

Monday 3:30-6:00 PM:

Functional Behavior Assessment  
with Dr. Bartels

Tuesday 3:30-6:00 PM:

Counseling Techniques  
with Dr. Rush

Wednesday 7:00-9:30 PM:

Social Emotional Assessment  
with Keren Kreitzer

Thursday 12:00-2:30 PM:

Cognitive Assessment  
with Dr. Mortenson

### Second Years

Monday 4:20-6:50 PM:

School-Wide Prevention and  
Intervention with Dr. Rush

Tuesday/Wednesday 4:20-6:50 PM:

School Psychology Practicum II with  
Dr. Bartels

Tuesday 7:00-9:30 PM:

Advanced Multicultural Psychology  
with Dr. Rush

Thursday 4:20-6:50 PM:

Academic Assessment  
with Dr. Mortenson

### Third Years

Wednesday 5:00-7:30 PM:

Internship Seminar with Dr. Rush  
And, of course, your internship  
hours!



## Visit Our Facebook Page!

Please find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TUSchoolPsych> and “like” our page!

This page is a way for prospective students, current students, faculty, and alumni to connect. Use it to share ideas and stay up to date on what is happening in the field of school psychology.

Please submit any ideas, pictures, or events that you would like us to highlight to [jsmola1@students.towson.edu](mailto:jsmola1@students.towson.edu) or [bsanch5@students.towson.edu](mailto:bsanch5@students.towson.edu).

## Research Opportunities

There are a number of students who are looking for assistance with their research projects. If you are interested in helping out a study on PRIDE, a study on adults with autism, a study on persistence and gaming, or a study on why African Americans underutilize mental health services, please contact Dr. Mortenson.

## In Our Next Issue...

In the spring installment of the newsletter, we'll share reflections on the NASP convention.

Two students will also share their practicum and internship experience.

If there is anything you would like  
us to add, let us know!