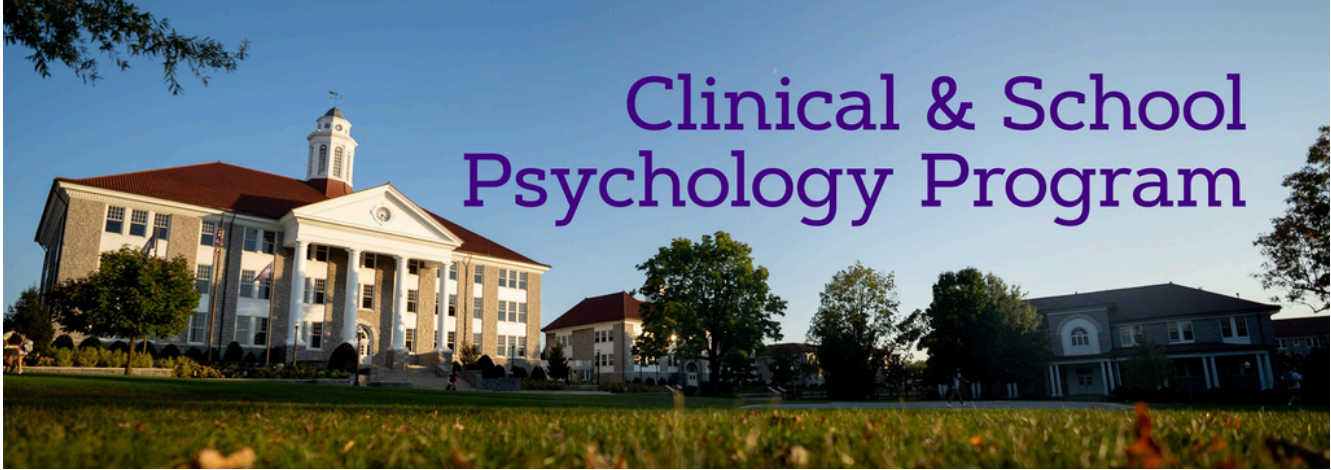


Alumni Newsletter

JMU COMBINED-INTEGRATED PSYD PROGRAM



[February, 2025]



Welcome to the very first edition of our alumni newsletter!

On behalf of faculty and students of the Clinical & School PsyD Program, we're thrilled to reconnect with alumni and build a space where we can share exciting updates and strengthen our alumni community. We have been heartened by the enthusiastic response from our alumni regarding this newsletter.

In this issue, we'll review recent changes to the program, including the addition of new faculty, the retirement of a valued faculty member, and expanded practicum placement opportunities.

You'll also find an overview of initiatives in advocacy, outreach, and accessibility, highlighting the meaningful work being done by students and faculty. Additionally, we feature student research highlights and professional development opportunities.

We're committed to strengthening our alumni community, and this issue explores new ways to engage with fellow graduates and current students. We hope to highlight ongoing achievements of both students and alumni that continue to shape our program's legacy.

Finally, we introduce the C-I Development Foundation, a donation fund which supports various program initiatives that enhance student success and professional development.



As alumni, you know firsthand the impact of a strong support system. Whether through connections, mentorship, sharing your experiences, or generous contributions, we deeply appreciate your continued interest in being an active part of this community.

Wishing you all the best,

*David Szwedo, PhD &
Cameron Piper, MA*

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WELCOMING NEW FACULTY



Dave Szwedo, PhD

In Fall 2023, the program welcomed two new core faculty members, Associate Professor and Program Director Dave Szwedo, Ph.D., and Assistant Professor Caitlyn Owens, Ph.D. Dr. Szwedo earned his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Virginia and previously taught for 10 years in the JMU Psychology Department. There, he taught upper level classes in Clinical Psychology and was the Director of the Undergraduate Field Placement Program. Dr. Szwedo is broadly interested in how adolescent relationships with family, friends, and romantic partners shape future relationships, social and emotional adjustment, and physical health. He explores these questions using data from an ongoing longitudinal study following participants from early adolescence into mid-life.

Caitlyn Owens, PhD

Dr. Owens joined the program this Fall as a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, specializing in School Psychology. She earned her Ph.D. from North Carolina State University and has brought with her an interest and expertise in working with children and schools to the program. Dr. Owens is broadly interested in understanding the causes and consequences of family distress on children's development. Her research combines qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the complex relationships between risk and protective factors. Throughout her career, she has worked with families experiencing homelessness and those involved in the child welfare system. Dr. Owens is particularly interested in using parenting interventions to promote positive social-emotional development in children.



SAYING GOODBYE

Anne Stewart, PhD

At the end of the 24-25 academic year, the program says goodbye to one of the program's founders: valued faculty member and Director of Clinical Training, Dr. Anne Stewart, after 30 years of service. Through her many roles, Dr. Stewart's impact on the C-I and JMU communities has been expansive. Her legacy is perhaps best captured by her membership in the inaugural JMU "Be the Change" Hall of Fame. This initiative honors JMU faculty, students, and alumni living Gandhi's counsel to be the change you want to see in the world, a belief that is manifested in Dr. Stewart's accomplishments in teaching, discovery, knowledge integration, and service.



NEW BEGINNINGS

Seeking New Faculty

The Clinical & School Psychology doctoral program in the Department of Graduate Psychology is seeking a professional psychologist to join the core faculty in August, 2025. This 10-month, tenure-track position will be filled at the assistant professor level. Responsibilities include teaching two doctoral practicum courses per semester, supervising clinical cases at the JMU CAPS Clinic, and chairing/serving on dissertation committees. Scholarship contributions are welcomed but not required for this role. Find more information here:



New Partnerships

Augusta Resources for Resilience, Opportunity, and Wellness



CONNECT • COLLABORATE • CULTIVATE
arrow-project.org



Practicum Placements

Beginning in Fall 2024, the program renewed its practicum relationship with the University Counseling Center. At the same time, the program also established a relationship with the ARROW Project, a grassroots community mental health organization based in Staunton, Virginia. During their first year, students spend one semester at each placement, participating in a combination of individual and group clinical work. The ARROW Project joins the list of sites where more senior students can tailor their practicum placements, offering opportunities for both therapy and/or assessment work.



Meet the Newest Alumni

Class of 2024

Emery Q. Brautigan

Rhea E. Nesbitt

Shelly-Ann Peart James

Shir Wasserman

Tara Rajagopal

Tiffany Pempek Rahl

Meet the Newest Cohort

2024 Incoming Cohort

Bryan Ramirez

Cameron Piper

Katherine Grisdale

Maria De Los Angeles Martinez

Natasha Chait

Nisa Khaldun



ADVOCACY



Richmond Advocacy Day

Several first year students and Dr. Caitlyn Owens joined Swipe Out Hunger at the Virginia State Capitol to advocate for the Hunger-Free Campus bill. The bill would establish grant funding for colleges and universities addressing student hunger on campus. The group met with several legislators to advocate for the needs of the JMU community, bringing a unique perspective on this issues as educators, clinicians, community members, and students of psychology. In the time since these advocacy efforts, the bill has passed in the Virginia House of Representatives.



ACCESSIBILITY

psychtrainees4change

Students in the program are promoting the accessibility of psychology-related information by using an Instagram account to share important psychology related information, tips, and insights in an engaging and easily digestible format. These efforts aim to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and public understanding, making psychology more accessible to a broader audience in a responsible, engaging way.

We hope to increase awareness around mental health and psychological research in everyday life. Follow and share for updates, resources, research, and fun diversions!

OUTREACH

Counseling Center Workshops

In Fall 2023, another new initiative between the JMU Counseling Center and the Clinical and School Program began. Through this partnership, program students have had the opportunity to offer Counseling Center Outreach Workshops to undergraduate students. A popular offering facilitated by C-I students is the two part Anxiety Toolbox series, providing students experience in both outreach and psychoeducation efforts.

Anxiety Toolbox Student Workbook



C-I Development Fund

The C-I Development Foundation is a donation fund which supports various program initiatives that enhance student success from broad, program-wide professional development opportunities to supporting student specific development and scholarship through travel grants. Here are just a few highlights of how students have been actively producing research for presentation at national and regional conferences, and the professional development opportunities being provided by the program.



Professional Development

The program purchased access for a TF-CBT training course for students. TF-CBTWeb2.0 is a self-paced online training for mental health professionals and students that was developed in close collaboration with the creators of TF-CBT. It features 11 modules covering TF-CBT foundations and treatment components through detailed explanations, video demonstrations, and clinical resources.

Upcoming Student Conference Presentations



"The Long-Lasting Effects of Interpersonal Relationships: Long-term Links From Adolescence to Adult Physical Health Outcomes."

"Interactions Between Online Communication and Other Social Qualities as Predictors of Romantic Satisfaction."

"The Development of Self-Worth Throughout Adolescence."

"Adolescent Intimacy and Ego Development: Links to Future Relationships and Well-Being."



The program is also offering a no-cost training in projective assessments through a series of three workshops offered by Jason Stout, PsyD. Students will have access to RPAS to gain hands-on experience in entering and scoring Rorschach assessments.



Student Travel Experience

2nd year student Lauren Shoss has attended and presented at several research conferences during her time in the program, including the 2023 Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) Annual Conference in Orlando, FL, the 2024 AASP Annual Conference in Las Vegas, NV, and the 2024 and 2025 Mid-Atlantic Regional AASP Conference at Rowan University, NJ.

"So you feel like an imposter... welcome to the club! Normalizing, navigating, and overcoming imposter phenomenon as students and developing professionals. "



"These conferences have provided me with un-paralleled professional development and networking opportunities to meet fellow students, professionals, and mentors. It is through these conferences that I have discovered the widespread opportunities that I can pursue after graduation, opening my eyes to the ever-changing landscape in my up and coming field of interest. Those whom I have met at these conferences have become colleagues, mentors, and peers, and have had a tremendous impact in shaping my trajectory of personal and professional growth. I've been fortunate to present on a couple of different occasions now, which has given me the chance to hone in on areas of interest, familiarizing myself with the process of conducting research and consolidating it in a way that is digestible and relevant to my audience. We've been able to present on some lesser-discussed topics, which have not only supported my growth and learning, but have opened up much-needed dialogue and reflection amongst students and professionals in the field at-large. I've also greatly appreciated these opportunities to collaborate with my amazing fellow students. Working together to build these presentations from the ground up, and traveling together to these conferences has brought us closer together, strengthening the sense of community and support within the program." - Lauren Shoss



Getting Involved





As alumni, you have firsthand experience with how valuable the opportunity for professional development, skill building, and research experience was during your time in the program. Students in this program accomplish a lot within a few short years, wearing many hats in the interest of discovering and actualizing the psychologist they hope to be.

We invite those who are interested and able to help current students make the most of their time in the program. A donation to the C-I Development Fund will provide critical support for students to attend conferences, have low or no cost access to clinical training and professional development opportunities, and more.

Mentorship is a critical aspect of navigating an ever-changing professional landscape for psychologists in training, and offers another meaningful opportunity for alumni to give back. We invite you to consider mentoring a current graduate student or fellow alumni and encourage you to tailor this opportunity to your own style and capacity. If you would like to be involved, we request that you fill out information using the link below. Your information, including experiences, areas of interest, and style of mentorship, will be visible to current students.

Finally, we invite you to join the JMU Clinical & School PsyD Alumni page on LinkedIn. Our hope is that this group will provide a designated space to engage with fellow program graduates, make connections, and share exciting updates, opportunities, and accomplishments.

Thank you for reading!

<p>FACEBOOK</p> 	<p>LinkedIn Group</p> 
<p>DONATE HERE</p> 	<p>MENTORSHIP LINK</p> 

To reach as many alumni as possible, we invite you to share this newsletter and any associated links with fellow alumni who you think may be interested.