California State University, Long Beach

Gerontology Newsletter

VOLUME 4

FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR...

Barbara White, DrPH, RN

This issue of our Gerontology newsletter displays evidence of our growth and accomplishments over the past year, among which are:

1. Gerontology Master’s student Rosemary Lewellan received the first Outstanding Project Award for the College of Health and Human Services at this year’s commencement.

2. Gerontology Master’s student Martha Mowatt received the outstanding thesis award from the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences.

3. Lisa Lares was recognized on the Dean’s List of University Scholars and Artists.

4. Gerontology Master’s student Donna Griggs demonstrated leadership in the planning, marketing, and coordination of the first annual College Wellness Week “Passport to Healthy Aging.”

5. The Program experienced exponential growth of our Gerontology Certificate option thanks to the efforts of the Coordinator, Dr. Maria Claver.

6. Faculty Casey Goeller has encouraged us further into the digital world in hybrid and on-line learning.

7. Two of our Master’s degree alumni, Cynthia Schlesinger and Melanie Weir are now teaching sections of our GE course, Perspectives on Gerontology.

8. We have growing collaborations with campus and community organizations.

9. Students and faculty have presented at research conferences and annual professional meetings.

10. This year we awarded our first Jeanne Bader Scholarship in honor of the previous Director of the Gerontology Program.

In this coming year we are scheduled for a five-year Program Review. In preparation for that we will be surveying current and past students as well as support faculty and community liaisons to assess our program and its effectiveness. We hope that you will all participate, if asked, in this important step in our history. These reviews will provide us direction for the next five years.

Professional Conferences

Maria L. Claver, PhD, MSW

One of my graduate students recently asked me about the appropriateness of attending a professional conference as a student. Of course, my response was: “wildly appropriate!”

I found myself recommending that my student test the waters by attending a smaller conference before tackling a large national conference. It is on that note that I write about the most recent annual meeting of the California Council on Gerontology and Geriatrics (CCGG). The mission of this state-wide organization is to “address the needs of a diverse aging population” and they do so in several ways that meet the needs of faculty members, students and direct care providers. Speakers and panelists tackled a range of topics including the Older Americans Act, preparing for a career in aging, and the aging network.

Perhaps most exciting was that four of the research poster presentations at the conference came from CSULB! I presented a poster about the intergenerational workforce, Alumnus Tanya Ezrol’s poster was about intergenerational programming, and Alumna Rosemary Lewellen presented on elder abuse. Alumna Ellen Wong participated on a panel about preparing for a career in aging.

I would like to encourage students and alumni to actively participate in conferences by presenting a poster or workshop. You have much to contribute to the field and I think you will find that it’s not as intimidating as you might think.
Program Announcements

PROGRAM STATISTICS

Enrollment
36 current Masters students
45 Certificate students

GRADUATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

The gerontology program is pleased to announce that this year, seven students graduated from our masters program:

Sherry Bloom, MS
Summer 2011
Graduate Project: A Web-Based Resource for Instructors Using Improvisation Techniques with Older Adults

Tanya Ezrol, MS Fall 2011
Thesis: Intergenerational Program Participation: A Case Study

Emily Kreindel, MS
Fall 2011
Graduate Project: Developing an Interactive Community Educational Workshop Regarding Assistive Devices

Rosemary Lewallen, MS
Fall 2011
Graduate Project: Development of an Elder Abuse Awareness Training and Elder Abuse Recognition Tool for Meals On Wheels Volunteers

Martha Mowatt, MS
Fall 2011
Thesis: Influence of Health Beliefs and Behaviors on Disease Management and Treatment Compliance: The Experience of Older Latinos with Type 2 Diabetes

Lisa Lares, MS Spring 2012
Thesis: Student Facilitation of an Evidence Base Health Promotion Program

Ying-Han (Olivia) Liu, MS Spring 2012
Thesis: Spiritual Well-Being and Acculturative Stress Among Older Chinese Immigrants in the United States

In the certificate program, 4 students graduated.

GERONTOLOGY FACULTY’S RECENT SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES...


SAVE THE DATE

College of Continuing and Professional Education’s (CCPE) fall class "Family Caregiver Training and Support Seminar on Saturday October 20 and 27 from 9am-1pm. The seminar will again be taught by Dr. Brenda Freshman and Rebecca Perley (Healthcare Administration) and , Drs. Maria Claver and Barbara White (Gerontology and Nursing). Further information can be obtained from CCPE at CSULB.

OTHER STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- Lisa Lares was selected for the Graduate Dean’s list of University Scholars and Artists at CSULB this year.
- Rosemary Lewallen was awarded the College of Health and Human Services Outstanding Project Award
- Martha Mowatt was awarded Family and Consumer Sciences Departmental Outstanding Thesis Award

- Nathalie Sevilla
- Shawna Henry
- Katherine Watson
- Katie Ho
- Evelyn Guevara
CHHS Wellness Week Celebrated “Your Passport to Healthy Aging”

Students, staff, and faculty enjoyed a wide range of free events and healthy aging activities celebrating the inaugural College of Health & Human Services (CHHS) Wellness Week held April 23-28, 2012. As Dr. White points out, “Healthy aging begins at birth,” so it was especially fitting to showcase Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) as the week kicked off with an open house that included the preschool and self-guided tours. Thank you to FCS department chair Wendy Reiboldt, Ph.D., and Professor Maria Claver, Ph.D, MSW.

A series of campus wide Burma Shave style signage and the CHHS passport centerfold featured University Art Museum campus sculpture maps guiding participants to healthy aging happenings. Highlights included hands-on demonstrations at the nationally acclaimed CSULB Archery Fieldhouse and Range, Donald P. Lauda Wellness Lecture at The Pointe, hourly campus health walks, healthy aging expo, and CHHS King & Queen FUNdraiser. Event proceeds went to programs for veterans and their families through the neighboring Long Beach Veterans Administration.

The community was also invited to get their CHHS passports stamped when they joined in on the Center for Active Aging’s Fit & Fun for Everyone demonstrations, learned Tai Chi, and interacted with visiting experts. “Your Passport to Healthy Aging” prizes were also awarded thanks to the American Legion Riders, Chapter 716, and Student Recreation and Wellness Center Associated Students, Incorporated (ASI), and Wells Fargo Bank.

Bringing a distinguished close to the week-long focus on healthy aging, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) held an open house and on Saturday held a symposium featuring two world-renowned scientists. OLLI members also participated in Wellness Week with fascinating memoir readings, Longevity Stick demonstrations, and a quartet of talented recorder performers whose beautiful music also added richly to the healthy aging expo.

Special thanks to our popular dean of the College of Health & Human Services Ken Millar for asking the CHHS student council to focus on healthy aging with added collaborative support from the office of development team of Tyson Reyes and Sireeth Torres, and OLLI volunteers including executive director Barbara White, DrPH, RN. Their extra efforts together with dedicated student volunteers, guest panelists, lecturers, and exhibitors from the campus and community made for a rewarding week that continues to make a difference. Article and photo courtesy Donna M. Griggs

Update from the Gerontology Academic Honor and Professional Society

The Gerontology Academic Honor and Professional Society (GAHPS) kept very busy this year hosting and attending several events. In the fall, GAHPS hosted their annual canned food drive for Thanksgiving to benefit the Long Beach Senior Center where they were very much needed and appreciated. GAHPS also reached out to the community through the Long Beach Meals On Wheels. Every month, GAHPS members volunteered to go help prepare, pack and distribute food for the homebound elderly. GAHPS also played an important role in the Long Beach Memory Walk for Alzheimer’s this year. Many GAHPS members walked and donated to the cause, raising over $1,500.

The 2012 annual California Council on Gerontology and Geriatrics conference was held at USC giving GAHPS the opportunity to sponsor ten members to attend the local conference. One of the key highlights of the conference was seeing our very own Dr. White and Dr. Reiboldt on a question panel. Although we were at the home of the Trojans, Long Beach students were definitely well represented.

GAHPS ended the year with their annual end of semester spring party that was held at Long Beach State. Several scholarships were awarded to students from the Gerontology program and officers for the 2012-2013 academic year were introduced.
The California Council on Gerontology and Geriatrics (CCGG) addressed “Campus, Community & Industry Partnerships, Promoting Jobs in Aging” at their 32<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting April 13, 2012. The event at the University of Southern California emphasized CCGG’s message of excellence in education, workforce and service to an aging population. CCGG promotes a statewide aging plan based on communication among researchers, educators, students and legislators. Founders Betty and James E. Birren attended.

The Conference focused on policy, curriculum and jobs. Maria Henke, CCGG President, opened the meeting with a call to action on new legislation and recognition of trends in the social, political, and cultural arenas as they influence careers in aging. Martha Roherty, Executive Director of the National Association for States United for Action in Aging and Disabilities (NASUA) spoke at length on the status and impact of the Affordable Care Act on senior healthcare delivery, providers and the gerontologist role.

Lora Connolly, MSG, and Director of the California Department of Aging, further elaborated on the Department’s current planning and preparation for change. L.A. Care Health Plan’s Lisa Kodmur, MPH, and Program Director of Services for Seniors & People with Disabilities motivated job seekers to explore the opportunities created by changes in Los Angeles County. CalOptima’s Gertrude Carter, M.D. offered personal anecdotes and insight to the future of health care in Orange County.

The session on Job Trends in Gerontology included a career education specialist and an entrepreneur. Successful career pursuits and education planning require internet sophistication and research. This was the message from Cynthia Schlesinger, MSG, VHA-CM from the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Administration. The Let’s Group networking guru Di Patterson, MSG consultant, discussed the next step of relationship building.

Presentations on the value added by a gerontology education included a presentation from CSULB’s 2008 graduate in gerontology, Ellen Wong, MSG, who is a Resident Services Coordinator at LOMCO. Inspirational panelists included employees from Wells Fargo Elder Services and ESKATON.

The meeting concluded with a faculty panel on “From Theory to Practice: Making Curriculum Real.” President Maria Henke announced awards for achievement, scholarship, leadership and business advancement in the field of gerontology. She also recognized the Poster contributions. CSULB was well represented with posters: recent graduate, Rosemary Lewallen, M.S. exhibited her poster abstract on Elder Abuse Prevention, recent graduate Tanya Ezrol, M.S., presented her poster on intergenerational programming and Dr. Claver presented a poster about intergenerational workforce issues.
NAKIA THIERRY

As a Social Work Care Manager at Partners In Care Foundation, I have one of the most rewarding and most challenging jobs that a professional working with elderly individuals can ever have. For the past two years, I have had the privilege of interacting with some of the best seniors in the world on almost a daily basis, which provides me with a feeling of fulfillment and joy, especially when I am able to provide my clients with services that would typically be out of their reach due to income restraints. I have a caseload of 40. It is difficult for me to call the seniors that I work with my “clients” or my “caseload,” because I genuinely view each and every one of them as my extended grandmas, grandpas, aunts and uncles (I even call some of them by these titles upon their request). All of the seniors that I work with are low-income, Medi-Cal/Medicare or HMO recipients. Their monthly incomes from Social Security, disability or pension plans typically ranges between $700-1200.00, which of course, makes it almost impossible for them to obtain the basic necessities needed to continue aging in place within their homes including home/environmental equipment such as kitchen appliances, durable medical equipment (e.g., bath chairs, grab bars, raised toilet seats, bedside commodes), incontinence supplies, medical transportation to attend their medical appointments, purchased or referred home delivered meals, and Medi-Cal covered supplies such as walkers, canes, wheelchair, and hospital beds.

Although my daily schedule varies, my monthly schedule remains pretty repetitive. Throughout each month, I make contact with all of my clients to assess their health and well-being and to make small talk, which hopefully demonstrates that someone is thinking about them, then I type monthly case notes that contains information on every contact that I have made with my clients within the month, I conduct quarterly home visits as well as yearly reassessments in which I evaluate my client’s home/environment, ADL/IADL functioning skills, their health and emotional/psychological well-being and any nutritional risk that they may have. If there are any services that my clients need and cannot afford, Partners In Care Foundation is able to supplement those services. For example, I have some clients with Alzheimer’s disease, and their family members or caregivers provide them with 24 hour home care, which makes it difficult for them to care for themselves. Partners In Care Foundation would step in and provide respite services that would allow a caregiver to come into the home and provide a couple of hours of relief for my client’s family and/or personal caregivers.

Throughout my employment, I have been able to provide my clients with many of the necessities that a lot of individuals take for granted including stoves, refrigerators, microwaves, beds, comforters, pillows, dressers, medical transportation for them to attend their medical appointments, canes, walkers, cane tips, incontinent supplies such as creams, wipes, and gloves that are not covered by Medi-Cal insurance, food, respite services, and DME equipment, which are all covered by funds designated by the state for the Multipurpose Senior Services Program. These services give seniors the opportunity to continue aging in place within their homes without having to be placed into a skilled nursing facility. Of course, like with every job, there are challenges. Some of the challenges that I deal with in my profession include lack of funding and budget cuts that make it difficult to provide my clients with the services that they need. Budget cuts also make it difficult to provide employees such as myself with sufficient pay for the intense amount of work that we do. Other challenges are clients that may need more services than Partners In Care Foundation can provide, which makes them a part of a “high cost” population, which usually means that they may need to go into a skilled care facility to obtain all of the services that they need. Also, there may be lack of family involvement in a client’s total care, as well as seniors who may attempt to take advantage of the free supplemental services that Partners In Care Foundation provides.

Overall, I definitely feel that the rewards of working with seniors outweigh the challenges, especially when I get to hear my clients say “thank you, what would I do without this program, and this service has changed my life.” I can honestly say that working with the elderly population and making a significant difference in their lives, is my passion and something that I look forward to doing for the rest of my life. My dedication for seniors was influenced by my own grandmother who always taught me that as long as I can keep on living, I should always ensure that I have a purpose and meaning behind everything I do. Then she would always leave me with a “shoe fly shoe”……so I’ll do the same!!!

Nakia has since left Partners in Care Foundation to work as the Dementia Program Director for Whittier Place Senior Living
I am the Resident Service Coordinator at Plymouth West Apartments in Long Beach. Plymouth West is managed by LOMCO (Living Opportunities Management Company), an experienced residential property management company that manages affordable housing properties for elderly and disabled residents in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. I am responsible for coordinating community resources, providing benefits advocacy, planning educational presentations/events for residents, and working closely with the management team to address resident needs. I also oversee the resident computer lab and the budget for resident events. Service coordination interested me because its goal is to connect older adults to services so they can maintain their independence. Affordable housing appealed to me because my office is in the building the residents live in. Residents can come to my office with their questions and I link them to services. My Master of Science in Gerontology provided a framework for me to work with older adults. I developed an understanding of the bio-psycho-social issues affecting the aging population, the policies that affect older adults, and an understanding of Medicare and Social Security. I was able to develop my writing, interpersonal, and communication skills. I also learned how to evaluate data, develop and interpret surveys, how to work in a team, and how to lead and manage groups. I feel the gerontology program prepared me for my current position but it is important to have experience working with older adults. My gerontology degree was enhanced by my Bachelor of Arts in social work and my experience in care management and information and assistance. I got my job by networking. I met my supervisor Jo Stephanie Francisco, an alumna of the gerontology program at the CCGG Annual Meeting in 2008 and stayed in touch with her. While I was a student I also attended the Let’s Group meetings and got to know Diane Patterson and Trina Sauceda, the cofounders. Diane and Trina heard about the opening for a Resident Service Coordinator at Plymouth West and told me about the position. I emailed Jo Stephanie and received an interview and was hired. The most important thing that someone planning to enter this career should know is that you need to be able to work independently, work well with the management team, and be knowledgeable about the community resources and entitlements to be a successful Service Coordinator. I would you encourage for anybody pursuing a career in this field to work with an area agency on aging, senior center or care management program to gain the necessary experience working with older adults and exposure to community services. Special advice I have for a student seeking to qualify for this position is you need to make connections and establish relationships with service providers in the housing industry to gain entry into service coordination.

After finishing my Bachelor’s in Liberal Arts from SDSU, I started teaching developmentally disabled adults. While teaching, I had an opportunity to change positions within the same company and work with seniors. I took that opportunity and really enjoyed my time with the seniors. I knew this was the population that I wanted to work with. So I got a Professional Certificate in Gerontology from Cal State Fullerton and later went on to get my Masters in Gerontology from Cal State Long Beach. I started as a manager in a low income senior HUD housing facility, changed companies and took on a larger facility. I worked as the manager of a facility and after the first year added the duties of starting the Resident Service Coordinator program. Two years later, I was running the Resident Service Coordinator program in the company and was promoted to RSC Supervisor. I enjoy my work knowing that with the assistance of the RSC program our seniors are able to live in their own apartments. As the RSC Supervisor, I manage 14 Service Coordinators at 15 low income senior housing facilities in Orange, LA, and Ventura Counties. As the supervisor, I contact the RSCs weekly, review pertinent issues, resolve a multitude of issues, monitor documentation and paperwork, communicate corporate goals/needs, mediate, arrange training, and anything else that is needed. To be effective at this job, communication/presentation, administrative/management, and organization are the most important skills to have as a Supervisor. I use team building on a regular basis to help achieve corporate goals. Recruiting and hiring a person that fits the position can make a huge difference in the overall outcome. As a supervisor, understanding financial reports is very important. This skill I have had to learn on the job. Leadership and focus are valuable to retain employees and keep them passionate about their job. The most important thing that someone planning to enter this career should know is that, no day is the same. You are dealing with individuals that have unique solutions to their issues. In that same way, this position is different every day. Ethics plays a big role in what can and should be done. Focusing on the corporate and employee goals to the benefit of the residents, staff, and company help to move the company forward to better serve the residents. I have enjoyed creating the Service Coordination program into the best program with the best outcome for the residents, staff, and facility through partnerships with vendors, creation of web based tracking programs, and bringing Service Coordinators to all of our qualifying facilities. I especially enjoy working with my staff that is passionate about helping seniors. People who work with seniors, for the most part, do so out of a love and passion for working with seniors. This career path will not make you millions, but it will provide job satisfaction while being able to provide for my family. I love what I do. I love working with seniors. I love coming to work knowing that what I do makes a difference in the lives of so many seniors.