As you read this issue of our Gerontology Program Newsletter, you will see evidence of our Program’s strength, growth, and accomplishments over the past year. This is due to our dedicated program and support faculty; to our Master’s and Certificate students who continually amaze and edify us with their creativity, enthusiasm, and scholarship; and to the support of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and our College Deans. Thank you, also, to our alumni who have supported us as program mentors, guest lecturers, and donors. We are all part of a community that recognizes the impact of the field of gerontology on our personal lives and on the lives of our local communities, the State, the nation, and the world. To our alums who are looking for ways to stay connected: When contacted to contribute to the CSULB Annual Fund, please consider designating your donation to the Gerontology Program. This will help us to support the Program in areas that are, otherwise unfunded, including teaching materials, scholarships, conference stipends for students, and special events. Thank you.

As many of you are well aware, the rapid aging of our population is a global phenomenon. While some countries have been preparing for this demographic shift, others have quite a bit of work to do. Global aging presents financial, caregiving, health care, labor, and political challenges.

We can learn a great deal from the manner in which other countries are preparing to care for their growing older adult populations. During Spring Semester, 2010, students in GERN 474: Aging and Diversity learned about global aging issues by partnering with gerontology faculty from other countries. This hybrid course included mostly on-line sessions through Elluminate, which allowed students to participate in lecture through discussions and presentations. We covered six main topics: Caregiving, Death & Dying, Health Care, Spirituality, Economic Support, and Retirement & Social Engagement. For each topic, there was one week of lecture and discussion facilitated by the instructors (Dr. Claver & Mr. Goeller) and then the second week was taught by the students. Students collaborated with global partners from Taiwan, Canada, and Mexico to complete their assignments. The work completed throughout the semester has been showcased through the creation of a “wiki” (which we have titled, “Geropedia”). It is our intent that Geropedia will be a work in progress that can be augmented, edited, and honed by gerontology students throughout the world for semesters to come.
Program Announcements

Enrollment
- 46 current Masters students
- 25 Certificate students
- 14 new Masters students

Graduation Announcements

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

Barbara McClinton, MS Spring 2010
Graduate Project: Preparing for the Third Age: A Retirement Planning Course Outline For Lifelong Learning Programs

Gina Rossi, MS Winter 2010
Thesis: Anesthesiology, Geriatric Surgery, and the Risk of Post-Operative Cognitive Dysfunction

In the certificate program, there were 10 students graduated last semester

Furthermore, we would like to congratulate our program lecturer William Goeller, MS. He also earned his second masters degree in Educational Technology. His graduate project was Satisfaction and Usability Evaluation of Various Pedagogical Strategies in a Hybrid Gerontology Courses.

Program Scholarship Announcements

Congratulations to the following students who have received Gerontology Program Scholarships this Spring to support their education in the 2010-2011 school year.

- Cherise Arzaga
- Elizabeth Dobson
- Tanya Ezrol
- Preeti Jagadale
- Emily Kreindel
- Caitlin Nguyen

We are grateful to this year’s scholarship funders:

- Dorothy L. and Margaret A. Fornia Gerontology Scholarship
- Swanner Fosnight Scholarship in Gerontology
- Housing Opportunities Program for the Elderly (HOPE)

Other Student Achievements

- Jessica Brenner received a scholarship from the Alzheimer’s Association to attend their national summit in Washington D.C. in March 2010.
- Emily Kreindel received a Roger F. Greaves & Health Net Scholarship from CSULB.
- Donna Lien was selected for the Graduate Dean’s list of University Scholars and Artists at CSULB this year.
- Mayuko Yasuda received the American Association of Japanese University Women (AAJUW) scholarship.

Experiencing the Action Summit in D.C...

JESSICA BRENNER

My trip to Washington DC for the Alzheimer’s Action Summit was life changing. There I was able to meet countless advocates from all over the country that have the same passion as I do: to find a cure for Alzheimer’s disease. We came together and discussed how we could gain the support of Congress for several bills which would increase funding for research and family support on a national level. I met with several congressional leaders (from Los Angeles districts) at the House of Representatives to rally their support. This was a wonderful experience and I would encourage all those interested in putting an end to this terrible disease to become an advocate through the Alzheimer’s Association and make this amazing journey.
Dr. Maria Claver was chosen as a recipient of the 2010 Learning Award for Graduate Education. This award was established in 2009 to recognize faculty who use and value service learning educational experiences for students in masters and doctoral programs. Dr. Claver is now recognized as one of the leaders in developing experiential learning opportunities that provide students a rich opportunity to build on their classroom knowledge, to develop skill sets transferable to real-life employment experiences, and provide interaction with community partners and older adults. Her service learning project brought agencies from the aging network, students, and older adults together at over 12 locations. An exciting accomplishment of her projects was the decision by the Long Beach City Council to sign a partnership agreement with the University that allows all senior centers in the city to provide CSULB service learning and internship opportunities.

Through this experience, students gain not only the traditional classroom knowledge but also empathy for older adults in difficult circumstances. This award was established in 2009 to recognize projects of undergraduates working with older adults that bring creativity to the educational process. This award recognized both the faculty and students who participated in the project.

Dr. Claver, Janette Greenwald, Donnetha Wallace, Lisa Tran, Carrie Jacoby, and Gretchen Dinger organized a May Day Tea for older adult members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute on campus. A tea of traditional fare, live jazz music (provided by one of the SPO members), fancy hats, and lively conversation brought the generations together for a pleasant few hours. Again, we would like to show our deep gratitude for Dr. Claver’s contributions to our program since she came to CSULB in 2007. These acknowledgments were published in the SPO national newsletter Spring 2010. (Available on our website: http://www.csulb.edu/colleges/chhs/departments/fcs/programs/graduate/SigmaPhiOmega.htm)

GERONTOLOGY FACULTY’S RECENT SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES...


On April 9th, the California Council on Gerontology and Geriatrics’ annual meeting was held at UCLA’s Covel Commons Hall. As California is widely recognized as one of the three rapidly aging states along with Texas and Florida, CCGG has been involved in gerontology education and workforce development in the State over the past three decades. This year’s Conference highlighted the needs of our diverse and growing senior population. The meeting was attended by about 180 educators, legislators, service providers, and older adults.

This year, the CSULB gerontology program is especially proud because our program director Dr. Barbara White presided at the conference as the current CCGG president. Furthermore, our program faculty Dr. Maria Claver and alumna Ellen Wong, MS (2008) appeared as panelists in the breakout sessions. The meeting began with Dr. White’s warm welcome announcement. The first presentation “Meeting the Needs of California’s Diverse Aging Population” featured Dr. Jo Ann Damron-Rodriguez (UCLA) and Laura Trejo (LA Department of Aging). Presenters stressed the importance of cross cultural training for service providers. Breakout sessions were another highlight of the morning program. In both sessions, distinguished panelists’ expertise successfully raised all the participants’ enthusiasm.

Dr. Claver appeared in the session titled “Innovative Evidence Based Programs—They Work—Are You Teaching Them?” In this session, professional gerontology educators explored creative ways to incorporate Evidence Based Health Promotion (EBHP) models into their programs, curricula, and practice. Dr. Claver shared her innovative approaches and health promotional program plan in collaboration with Partners in Care. Her course will be implemented and offered as one of our program electives in the fall 2010 semester (GERN499/599 Special Topics).

The second session’s theme was “Careers in Aging—Educational and Employment Pathways”. Ellen Wong, MS who works as a Resident Service Coordinator at Plymouth West, which is managed by LOMCO (Living Opportunities Management Company), willingly shared her job seeking success through her networking strategies. As her graduate project was about careers in gerontology, her talk inspired many in the audience and after the session, many people approached her to ask questions. During lunch, all the attendees enjoyed informal networking with a lot of animated conversation. Their enthusiasm filled the hall and CSULB students also successfully expanded their network to other gerontology students and professionals. Ellen has also been elected as a member of the CCGG Board of Directors, 2010-2012.

In the afternoon session, the annual awards ceremony recognized Dr. Barbara Gilloogly (American River College) with a lifetime achievement award, and the SCAN Foundation for its support of aging issues. Speaker Eleanor Brown ended the day “inspiring the next generation” with her innovative program for African American Women entitled Life Long: Sisters Staying Healthy. From our program the students and alumni listed below attended the meeting: Emily Kreindel, Brian Riseley, Rosemary Warren, Lorrie Ansalmo, Catilin Nguyen, Wendy Nguyen, Donna Lien, Leslie Vu, Mayuko Yasuda, Karen Schugt, and Ellen Wong.

We look forward to next year’s conference on Friday, April 8, 2011 in San Francisco.
I arrive at work at 8:30 AM. I have one hour to figure out if I have all of the materials needed for the day and gather the four individuals from my group, Circle of Friends, are scattered throughout the building. One hour seems to go by in five minutes and the next thing I know, 9:30 AM is here and somehow, between myself and the caregivers and the physical therapists, the four older adults are all in the same room and we are ready to begin our day.

From 9:30 AM until 11:30 AM, our morning consists of a number of activities including reading the daily newsletter, the Daily Chronicle, and participating in exercise class with other residents. 11:30 AM arrives and it is time for lunch. (I also enjoy lunch with the group because nothing is more awkward than having an individual sit and stare at you while you eat and he or she eats nothing.) After lunch, they return to their respective rooms, and when 1:00 PM rolls around, we resume our activities with games, trivia, and the occasional baking demonstration with a taste test to follow assuming I don’t burn the food or mess up the recipe. By 4:30 PM, we are back in the dining room and I use this time to do a final check of everyone. Once the food arrives, I use this as a distraction to slip away to clean up from the day.

Now, this doesn’t happen every day. There are other activities going on – such as bingo and bible study – that some people in the group like to attend. Additionally, there are scenic drives on the bus and a special outing to a restaurant and/or museum tour on Wednesdays. On top of all of that, a typical day also depends on how any one of the members is feeling. I say this because this group is not just four people randomly chosen from the building – all of the older adults in my group have mild cognitive impairment (MCI), or the beginning stages of dementia. So to say a “typical day” is harder to describe than simply listing some activities. For example, we are supposed to go over the Daily Chronicle from 9:30 – 10:30 AM on Tuesdays. Sometimes that does not happen because we start talking about the colorful map of the world, or two of them have physical therapy, one is at a hair appointment, and the fourth person is so tired, he is falling asleep in the middle of a sentence – while he is speaking. It happens and it is what I love about my job. These four individuals keep me guessing and I would not have it any other way. As mentioned, we do have the structured day of activities and meal time; however, some of the time, it is more of an adventure to see where certain words or phrases take our conversation or activity.

I just started this job about three months ago and already these four individuals have a special place in my heart. They each have their own personality and the group, and my job, would not be the same without them. My official title is “Activities Assistant for Circle of Friends,” but really, I am just another friend in the group to laugh with and remind my friends we are supposed to go lunch.
Sherry Bloom MS (c) worked with an acting company at Laguna Woods and with seniors in an improvisation class. Her goal is to do improvisation with older adults.

“One of my objectives was, to study the effect of acting on mood and behavior in older adults. I have found that acting seems to increase positive moods in the actors. Sometimes they come into rehearsal appearing to be a little bit down in mood, and by the time they are done, they are happy. They are hugging and kissing everyone and smiling too. Even when there are arguments about staging or lines, it doesn’t seem to affect the mood at the end of rehearsal. It reminds me of physical exercise. Usually exercise increases positive moods. Only in this situation, it is mental exercise that is affecting their mood. I think that it may also have to do with letting whatever stress is brought into the rehearsal go, as the focus and concentration centers on the play. There is no room in one’s head to be thinking of any other problems that could possibly be going on in their life.

…. I was completely surprised to find that the older adults were able to improvise as well as they did. Throughout my last class at Cal State Long Beach, I believed that the only aspect of improv that they would really be able to do, would be games and exercises. I was very pleasantly surprised to find that they also were able to do really amazing scenes! Interestingly too, was the fact that the people in the class that appeared to not really be grasping the information that was being given to them, were the ones that did the best scenes. So much of improv is listening, and one woman… just seemed to listen a lot, very carefully at that, but when she was put into a scene, she went with it immediately without even hesitating.”