

The Montana Psychologist

December 2009

President's Perspective

William Patenaude, PhD

While it may appear we are currently in a lull as there is no legislative session this year and many of the important issues pursued over the last year are not in the news, do not let this appearance fool you. Leadership and members of MPA are working diligently to pursue a number of issues as described in the various reports included in this newsletter.

To begin, we are actively looking to increase membership base. This is of utmost concern given that the number of members has dropped over the last several years, the always present financial requirements of the various projects pursued by MPA, and the apparent decreasing financial support being offered by APA. We are not only considering the possible causes for loss of membership but solutions as well. As I have mentioned on multiple occasions, MPA offers a unique opportunity for you, as a psychologist and individual, to exert an influence on the state of psychology in Montana in a very tangible and profound manner. We are currently holding a number of "town meetings" across the state with anticipation of doing several more to help better understand the dynamics involved in the declining membership. We will also likely institute a membership campaign in the future soliciting psychologists' interest in joining MPA. We are always looking for interested and energetic individuals who are willing to dedicate time and effort to the general interests of psychologists in Montana and the individual they treat. As always, if you are one of those individuals, please let us know so that we can take advantage of your energy and interests.

On a number of other fronts, MPA continues to expand and protect the interests of psychologists in Montana. In particular, we are working to minimize the inappropriate utilization and administration of psychological evaluations. In particular, we are working insure appropriate guidelines are used when psychological evaluations are being conducted.

In short, this involves establishment of commensurate, training, experience, and supervision coupled with a demonstration of the same. We are also soliciting interest of various professional groups in the state to help educate others regarding the elements of an adequate psychological evaluation and the appropriate application of the same.

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Campus Dispatch

Duncan G. Campbell, PhD, MPA Academic/Scientific Officer

The present newsletter centers thematically on the benefits we accrue via MPA membership. I maintain that MPA provides a necessary venue for sharing information and concerns that impact psychology stakeholders throughout the state. In keeping with this theme of sharing information, I aim to take advantage of this newsletter entry to disseminate information about two issues relevant to higher education. First, I will reiterate concerns facing our university system that I originally voiced in May. Second, starting with the present column, I launch a regular feature that will expose newsletter readers to the contributions to psychological science made by the students and faculty members who represent our state's universities and colleges. I begin this feature with a description of the recent research activities of Camille Barraclough, MA, Doctoral Candidate in The University of Montana's School Psychology Program.

First, the concerns: My most recent newsletter came in the spring, a time when final exams were approaching, and the atmosphere across campuses buzzed with anticipation and optimism. Last spring was typical in many respects, as our Tribal and Community Colleges, and University of Montana and Montana State University campuses unleashed a host of new graduates destined to do good work. In concert with optimism, last spring also brought substantial concerns and problems related to financial insecurity. For our recent graduates and present students, the current economic crisis coupled with a persistent and troubling financial trend within the Montana University System. More specifically, the past decade witnessed consistent and linear decreases in state appropriations for public higher education. Unfortunately, this trend has conferred new meaning on the phrase, "Last Best Place," which we should probably reduce to just plain "Last," at least when we're considering public educational funding. Indeed, trends regarding our state's failure to adequately fund higher education have progressed to the point where Montana expends the *least amount of funding per student (FTE) of any state*

in the nation (Delta Cost Project, IPEDS, 2006).

As a consequence of continued decreases in public higher education funding, a greater proportion of the educational financial burden has been shouldered by students. This contributes to situations where many students struggle to make ends meet and must work full- or part-time in addition to their studies. Considering the amount of work students are required to do outside the classroom, it is no wonder that our higher education institutions evince some of the lower retention rates in the country.

I have absolutely no doubt that we, as psychologists, recognize the value of higher education. Many of us likely attended our respective state universities and benefitted greatly from the educations we gained there. Given the benefit we have all enjoyed, I would hope that we would work hard to educate our legislators about the potential negative downstream effects of continued failure to adequately fund public higher education. Please make your concerns known!

Now, the good news: As we can all remember, the stress of graduate school is made less taxing by rejuvenating accomplishments and intoxicating transformations in life plans and career goals. On this note, I am delighted to highlight the recent research accomplishments of one of The University of Montana's School Psychology PhD candidates, Camille Barraclough. Ms. Barraclough, a native of nearby Utah, graduated from Westminster College in 2004 with a Bachelor's degree in Developmental Psychology. She arrived in Missoula in the Fall of 2006 to study School Psychology under the mentorship of Greg Machek, PhD, current director of UM's School Psychology training program. Ms. Barraclough's coursework is nearly complete, and she is knee-deep in internship applications and planning for her future career, which she hopes to spend in a hospital setting with pediatric patients with chronic illness.

Ideally, she will assist school-aged children, and their parents and teachers, adjust as positively as possible to new realities that arise with diagnoses of long-standing or potentially lifelong illnesses.

Ms. Barraclough's Master's Thesis research project was a natural choice given her career objective. Under the supervision of Dr. Machek, she designed and implemented a survey that examined practicing school psychologists' perceptions of their preparedness to understand and address pediatric chronic illness. In a recent conversation with me, Ms. Barraclough noted that chronic illness is quite prevalent among children, with some estimates suggesting that one-in-five kids is impacted. In a manuscript based on Ms. Barraclough's research, she and Dr. Machek cited extant research regarding the potentially debilitating consequences of chronic illness. They also agreed with other authors who have argued that school psychologists are well-positioned to assist children, teachers and family members with the illness adjustment process. Despite pediatric chronic illness prevalence and the attendant need and potential value of school psychologists in facilitating adjustment, Ms. Barraclough and Dr. Machek hypothesized that school psychologists would report a lack of preparedness and targeted education regarding important illness processes.

To test their hypotheses, Barraclough and Machek initiated the first systematic survey of school psychologists' perceived readiness to work in this area. They surveyed 300 practicing school psychologists from a national registry. Results suggested that school psychology graduate training programs covered only one third of commonly-encountered pediatric chronic illnesses. Interestingly, the results also suggested that more recent graduates (i.e., since 1995) reported more education and practical experiences in chronic illnesses relative to 'older' graduates. Barraclough and Machek find this result promising and suggestive of a national trend for graduate programs to support the educational needs of

school psychologists whose roles are expanding beyond outdated models that relegate them to 'special education gatekeepers'. Finally, results suggested that the majority of surveyed school psychologists desire more training in chronic illness, and that they identified an ability to understand and work with medication side effects as one of the primary areas in which they desire greater competence.

In closing, the work of Ms. Barraclough and Dr. Machek is important. It represents what I believe to be a promising trend within applied psychology as a whole. We provide health care even though we do not practice medicine, and our future success depends in part on our ability to expand our knowledge and training regarding issues traditionally considered to be strictly 'medical'. Barraclough and Machek found that school psychologists recognize the importance of expanded roles and desire to be better prepared. As we all look toward the future, we might also consider the potential utility of expanded roles and better education. As an aside, Barraclough and Machek recently received a highly favorable initial peer-review of their work, and we look forward to seeing the article in press very soon!

For more information about what's happening in the Department of Psychology at UM-Missoula, contact me at duncan.campbell@umontana.edu. For more information about the research described here, please contact Ms. Barraclough (camille.barraclough@umconnect.umt.edu) or Dr. Machek (greg.machek@umontana.edu).

President's Perspective *(continued)*

William Patenaude, PhD

If you know of a group that would be interested in this kind of presentation/information (e.g., lawyers, judges, physician groups, etc.), please let leadership know so that we can be a resource in this regard.

MPA is also looking at the limitations within the state regarding the ability of psychologists to perform specific roles or work in specific arenas. This is an ongoing issue and we continue to explore and implement strategies to expand the appropriate role of psychologists in a variety of settings. In yet another area, we continue with our legislative monitoring as we position MPA to provide information and influence anticipated legislation during the next session.

As most of you are likely aware, Dr. Barton Evans was unable to continue in his capacity as the American Psychological Association Council Representative for the State of Montana. This was despite his best efforts and interest in that position. While Barton would have been excellent in that position and an asset to the state of Montana, I am delighted to announce that Phil Bornstein, Ph.D., has agreed to replace Barton in that capacity. As many of you know, Phil has a long history in the state of Montana in a number of settings, including academia and individual practice. Phil brings a level-headed approach to psychology and is a thoughtful and persuasive individual. I look forward to his utilizing his knowledge and interpersonal skills on the national level to the benefit of Montana psychologists.

A final area I want to bring-up is the work the Education Committee is putting in to develop the CE agenda for the next year. We have already created the agenda for the spring conference, which promises to be very informative and germane. It is important to recognize that the CE committee repeatedly has an uphill battle trying to attract various experts to present at these conferences. This is related to the relatively limited number of psychologists who work in Montana. We consequently have to use alternatives other than money to entice individuals to come to Montana and present, such as our recreation and geography. We also rely on the personal relationships members have with various experts across the nation. If you fall in the latter category, please do not hesitate to let Audrey or any MPA leadership know of that relationship and your interest in helping get that person to come to Montana to present on various topics. In regard to the educational committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Colleen Hoebe-Wall, who is resigning her position as co-chair for the education committee effective at the end of this year. Her work has been invaluable and we as an organization are indebted to her effort and help. Thank you Colleen, and I look forward to your continued participation in other areas and capacities as your time allows.

Take care and I hope you all have an enjoyable holiday.

MPA Treasurer's Report

Michele McKinnie, PsyD

As we near the end of 2009 I would like to share with you some important details about MPA's financial health. This year was a difficult financial journey for our association. I recognize that this was true for many groups and individuals, including the APA. I take reassurance in realizing that our struggles have been universal struggles and are not an indication of a lack of attention by MPA leadership or members. In short, we have had to use some of our reserve funds in order to balance our budget this year. The actual numbers are still being calculated after our latest CE offering but there is no likelihood that this will change our budget situation. In addition, our CAPP Grant from APA was less than requested, and due to the financial constraints of that organization we may receive less again in 2010. Please be assured that MPA board members are tak-

ing this issue seriously and that we are already working toward developing a more robust financial picture for 2010 (including the intent to replenish the savings we needed to draw upon this year). If you have an interest in discussing our budget please do not hesitate to contact me.

Speaking from a purely financial perspective the numbers do not tell a story of wealth. Our CE offerings have been attended by only a small number of people, despite the reality that the majority of the attendees have very positive feedback about the quality of the workshops. Our membership numbers have dropped again in 2009 – this is perhaps one of the most concerning factors for several reasons.

Fall Conference 2009 Limited Attendance, But A Success

Audrey Mattson, PhD

The Fall MPA CE Workshops were held November 6 & 7, 2009 in Great Falls. The attendance was down, likely due in part to a number of other mental health CE conferences the same weekend, but the content was excellent!

The topic for November 6th was the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI). Our presenter on November 6th was John Kurtz, PhD a professor at Villanova University and Associate Editor of the *Journal of Personality Assessment*. Dr. Kurtz came highly recommended by Dr. L. Morey author of the PAI and his workshop was both informative and entertaining. Montana Psychological Association's own Barton Evans, PhD presented a workshop on November 7th titled Assessment of PTSD and Psychological Trauma. Dr. Barton is currently a psychologist with the VA in Bozeman and he also has extensive experience working with trauma survivors in other settings. His workshop was thought provoking, generated much discussion and covered various PTSD assessment instruments and issues related to treatment.

Our MPA President-elect Dr. Michael Bütz has planned what sounds like a fabulous education program for the **MPA Annual Meeting in Billings on April 16 & 17, 2009**. The speaker on April 16th will be **Bob Marvin, PhD**, Director of the Mary D. Ainsworth Child-Parent Attachment Clinic. His workshop is titled, **The Circle of Security: Integrating Attachment Theory with Relationship-Based Interventions**. The Speaker on April 17th will be **Dr. E. Mario Marquez, PhD, ABMP** a prescribing psychologist in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

His workshop is titled, **Integrating Psychopharmacology with Psychological Treatments in Children and Adolescents**. In addition, Dr. Bütz is planning to have a number of student presentations at the meeting. **SAVE THE DATE!**

MPA members have previously expressed the desire to have well known speakers from around the country present at MPA's CE workshops. The fees that speakers request have increased over the past few years and in many cases the fees have been just plain prohibitive for a small association. Sometimes well known speakers do agree to present so they can make a visit to Montana. Even in these cases MPA needs to cover travel and lodging expenses and the relatively modest speaker honorarium approved by the MPA Board. Therefore, we urge you to attend the MPA CE offerings and if the topics have not been of interest, let us know which speakers or topics you would register to hear.

Lastly, the MPA Board and CE committee would like to thank Dr. Colleen Hoeben for serving as a CE Committee Co-Chair during the past two years. Her enthusiasm and input will be missed. However, planning for future CE workshops continues. Details for the Summer and Fall 2010 workshops have not been finalized yet, but several potential topics and speakers are being investigated. Again, if you have topics that you would like to learn more about or if you are interested in getting involved in MPA as the new CE Committee Co-Chair, please contact Marti Wangen at MPA or Audrey Mattson, PhD at amattson@rfwave.net.

Membership dues are an important part of our budget, and income from this source has dropped for the past 3 years. While this is a relevant issue for general operating costs of the association I have greater concern for what this means about MPA's influence and power to advocate for ourselves and our clientele both within Montana and at the national level. Specifically, only 39% of Psychologists licensed by and practicing in Montana are currently members of MPA. This statistic makes it difficult for MPA leadership to state that we are representing Montana psychologists on any front. Whether or not we are in agreement as a group, having a viable professional association seems critical in order to advocate effectively in any arena.

Finally I would like to speak about what I believe to be our wealth as an organization and a state. I have recently had the pleasure of meeting some of my local colleagues

for the first time. I have been impressed by these individuals' commitment to the community and the profession. I enjoyed the opportunity for social connection and was heartened to hear that most of these individuals would like more opportunities to connect with colleagues in this way. Across the state I am aware of numerous colleagues whose commitment to and pursuit of professional ethics and excellence is nothing short of inspiring. Joining and participating with MPA has been one of the best ways I have found to connect with those colleagues. I believe myself to be a better person and professional for knowing them. In this sense Montana is truly a "Treasure State". I feel privileged to be a part of this professional community and I invite you to join me as an MPA member in 2010.

I wish you a safe, peaceful, and joyous holiday season.

Actions Speak Louder Than Words...

Michael R. Bütz, PhD, Legislative Chair, President-Elect

Keeping with our focus legislatively, in the 2009 Session we were very clear about how we planned to approach each issue as it emerged. Plainly stated, our focus was: *To meet the public need for desperately needed services with qualified providers.* This statement, however, should not be viewed as just a guiding principle for legislative action. It is my hope that all of us live this every day in representing our discipline, through the assessments, consultations, presentations, therapy, and, conversations we have.

What we have taken issue with and/or attempted to advance through our legislative work is the need for safe and effective treatment, which is best assured by well qualified providers who have the necessary training, supervision, experience and demonstrated competence to provide that treatment. To demonstrate these qualifications, however, requires vigilance on a daily basis not only in the work that we do, but in the relationships we have and those

whom we have contact with - if even for a brief moment.

Now this may sound as though I'm atop of a soapbox or the like, but in reality our legislative work as an association is best conducted by each one of you in the work that you do and the interactions that each of you have on a daily basis. Each of you, are our larger Legislative Committee... The credibility each brings to the table as providers is critical for our success in legislative matters.

A number of you have indicated that it is a challenge at times to muster up the gumption to talk with a legislator, and yet many ask what else you can do for the association. And, in reality, this is our answer - do your job, and do it well every day. When you are asked to speak to an issue, speak to it from the basis of your training, supervision, and experience over the years. Bring what's best in the field to the fore in an objective well-reasoned fashion, and do not shy away from the tough is-

sues. Your credibility, and the credibility of our discipline is built moment-by-moment, interaction-by-interaction.

Of late, I've had the pleasure of working with several of our colleagues on a few key issues, and if you saw what I have seen you too would be duly impressed by the composure, poise and professional conduct several have shown in trying situations. Their conduct not only benefits our association in those situations, but benefits us all by their membership in our association and the credibility that brings.

While we work with the interim legislature and other governmental bodies and stakeholders on a variety of issues, our legislative work each and every day goes on through all of you. Know that when we go to speak on an issue with these entities that your credibility follows us into those conversations. Keep up the good work and thank you for your efforts each and every day.

DON'T MISS IT

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

MPA Spring 2010 Education

April 16-17, 2010 ♦ Billings, MT

Featuring Bob Marvin, PhD & E. Mario Marquez, PhD, ABMP

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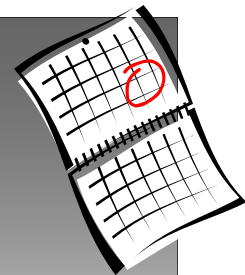
December 2009

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Calendar of Events



MPA Spring 2010 Education

April 16-17, 2010

Billings, Montana

April 16 The Circle of Security: Integrating Attachment Theory with Relationship-Based Interventions

Bob Marvin, PhD

Poster Session

April 17 Integrating Psychopharmacology with Psychological Treatments in Children and Adolescents

E. Mario Marquez, PhD, ABMP

Professional Relationships and Win-Win Scenarios
Amid A Challenges Landscape

Student Presentations

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