Welcome from the Director _________________ 2
Meet the First Year Students _________________ 3
A Warm Welcome __________________________ 7
NAMI 2015 Conference______________________ 9
Experience of Student-Mothers _____________10
Student Updates ___________________________13
As the busy fall 2015 semester draws to a close, we look forward to the coming year.

The fall semester has drawn to a close, and we can ask how the time flew by so quickly. It seems like we just welcomed the members of our first-year class, who have quickly become part of the fabric of the doctoral program. I can attest to the vitality they bring to the program and wish everyone the good fortune of getting to know such a great group of students.

We also welcome to the department this year our new faculty member, Dr. Matt Costello. You can learn more about him in this newsletter, and we are pleased that he will be teaching a section of History and Systems this spring. Joining our invaluable adjunct faculty this fall are four new instructors: Drs. Christine Dauser, Danielle Dufresne, Susan Jaramillo, and Stephanie Leite. Although all are graduates of GIPP, this is the first time we have been fortunate to have them here together in the program at the same time.

As I look back on 2015, I see it as a busy year without many extended periods of quiet or rejuvenation. A year ago, I was elected by the members of the Connecticut Psychological Association to serve as their representative to the APA Council of Representatives. Whatever I envisioned this honor and responsibility might involve at the time I ran for office, the tasks quickly became defined for all members of Council in late 2014. At that time, the APA Board of Directors decided to hire attorney David Hoffman to launch a full-scale investigation into allegations that APA had colluded with the military and the CIA following the 2001 terrorist attacks to facilitate the enhanced interrogation of suspected terrorist detainees in Guantánamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, and CIA “black sites.”

Psychologists and others in the popular press had written much about these allegations over the past decade. Although the claims had been well-articulated for years, the APA Board of Directors had previously denied their validity until the publication of James Risen’s book Pay Any Price in October of 2014. Following a decade of denial, the abrupt turnaround to sponsor an in-depth investigation had a strong impact on psychologists elected to APA governance. Argument between those with opposing viewpoints was, at times, unrelenting.

The Hoffman investigation released its findings in July, supporting most of the claims against APA leadership. Council members had only two days to digest the report before it was leaked to the public through the New York Times. The report’s findings met with much outrage among APA membership at large, just one month before Council was scheduled to take action on the report at the annual convention in Toronto.

So, I will remember 2015 as a year filled with anger and outrage among my professional colleagues. I’ve recently made some presentations on this investigation, and I’ve found this therapeutic for me. I also look forward to 2016 as a year with promise for more honesty, integrity, respect, and civility in our own profession. Best wishes to us all for the New Year!
Welcome First Year Students!

Catarina Andrade

Catarina received her BA from Sacred Heart University and MA from Lisbon, Portugal and Rennes, France. Catarina works as a family clinician for a non-profit agency and private practice conducting therapy in both english, portuguese, and spanish. Catarina's background is in Forensic populations and intends to pursue a specialty in working with inmates.

Malini Basdeo

My name is Malini and I am from Danbury, CT. I went to UConn for undergrad and since graduating have been working full time at Four Winds Psychiatric Hospital on the children's unit. My research interests are in diversity and mental health stigma in different countries.

Naomi Chakofsky-Lewy

Naomi is from a bicoastal family. She received her BA in Forensic Psychology from Marymount Manhattan College and her MA in Human Development from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is interested in criminal justice, and developmental perspectives on risk and resilience. She hopes to work with incarcerated populations.

Natalie Delgado

Natalie is from Miami, FL. She received a BA in Psychology from Florida International University and MS in Clinical Psychology from Barry University. She has experience working with children and adolescents with behavioral issues, anxiety, and depression. Her interests lie in working with children, interventions for children who have experienced trauma, & multicultural factors.

Emily Gray

Emily Gray was born and raised in Canton, MA. She attended undergrad at Goucher College. In addition, she received MA in Clinical Psychology at the University of Hartford. Spent the past two years working as an in home therapist in New Orleans. Emily enjoys spending time with her puppy, going to the beach, and photography.

Kelsey Hale

Kelsey Hale is from Rocky Hill, CT. She received her BA in psychology and human development & family studies from UConn and and her MA in Clinical Practices at the University of Hartford. She is interested in working with children and adolescents who have experienced trauma. She enjoys being outdoors, watching movies and spending time with family and friends.
First Year Students!

Maggie Hughes
Maggie is from Boston, MA. She received her BS in Psychology at Loyola University Chicago. She has worked in residential programs with adolescents with a variety of psychiatric illnesses. Her areas of interest include child and adolescent mood disorders, substance abuse, and assessment. She enjoys practicing yoga and dance.

Kyla Kachinsky
Kyla Kachinsky is from Middletown, CT. She received her BA in psychology from Central Connecticut State University. Kyla currently works in a preschool and is interested in working with children and adolescents suffering from trauma and/or abuse. She has three dogs- Lola, Lexie, and Tiffany.

Zeynep Sen
Zeynep is originally from Turkey and moved to New York at the age of 12. I graduated from Binghamton University with a B.A. in psychology. I interned at the New York Institute of Psychiatry and worked at the Center for Urban Community Services. My interests include assessments and working with young adults who suffer from anxiety.

Chandler Koury
Chandler Koury grew up in Burlington, NC and earned her BS in Psychology at Liberty University. After graduating, she worked at Virginia Baptist Hospital where she served as a resource employee for the child, adult, and geriatric psychiatric units. Her interests include psychosis, schizophrenia, and neuroplasticity.

Melanie Lora
Melanie is from Long Island, New York. She graduated from the University of Connecticut with her BA in Psychology and Spanish Language. Her interests include social anxiety disorders, early childhood trauma, and issues of diversity. Melanie is looking to primarily work with children from disadvantaged backgrounds in the future.

Mehrzan Massoumi
Mihiri Pathirana

Mihiri is from Plainsboro, NJ. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from Rutgers University and her M.A. in Clinical Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is interested in working with children/adolescents who have suffered trauma. Her hobbies include cooking, reading, jogging, and spending time with her friends and family.

Elizabeth Randazzo

Liz Randazzo is from Litchfield, CT. She received a BA in psychology from Southern CT State University and a MA in clinical practices from the University of Hartford. She is interested in working with children and families struggling with substance abuse. She loves to travel, play soccer, and watch the NY Giants (most of the time!).

Kameron Sheikh

Kameron is from the Washington, D.C. and attended the University of Maryland. After completing his B.S. and M.A. in psychology, Kameron worked as a psychology associate and substance abuse counselor. Additionally, he served part-time as statistical analyst. Kameron’s primary interests are in substance abuse and addiction.

Andrew Shimkus

Andrew Shimkus grew up in Southampton, NY. He earned his BA in Psychology from the University of Tampa with a minor in philosophy. He earned his MA in Psychology from SUNY New Paltz. Andrew’s interests include anxiety treatment, as well as various themes in health and social psychology.

Kathleen Smart

Kathleen is from Hopkinton, MA and received her B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Psychology from Catholic University of America. She has experience working at an inpatient psychiatric hospital that specializes in substance use disorders and conducting research on trauma with veterans. She hopes to work with a military population. She enjoys cooking, hiking, and visiting family & friends.

Chelsea Torres
First Year Students!

Lindsay Underwood

Lindsay is from Cheshire, CT. She received her B.S. in psychology from York College of Pennsylvania and her M.A. in clinical practices in psychology from the University of Hartford. Lindsay currently works at a private practice in Connecticut and her clinical interests include personality assessment and working with the justice system.

Keara Valentine

Keara Valentine is from Hopewell Junction, NY. She just graduated from the University of Hartford with her BA in psychology. She is interested in working with adolescents and young adults with anxiety. She has two kittens, Luna and Grif, who keep life interesting and messy!

Lindsay Watts

Lindsay Watts is from Lagrange, Ohio and earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology from Kenyon College. For the last three years she has been living in Boston, gaining experience as a Counselor at McLean Psychiatric Hospital on the Klarman Eating Disorder Unit. She is interested in working with adolescents, adults, and families in therapy and plans to focus on the clinical issues of eating disorders, anxiety, and couple’s therapy. She enjoys playing soccer, hiking, and trying new restaurants!

Aleesha Young

Aleesha Young is a Licensed Professional Counselor who was born and raised in Bloomfield, CT. Aleesha earned her B.S from Trinity College in Hartford, CT where she pursued a dual major in Psychology and Educational Studies. She received her master’s degree in Clinical Psychology from American International College in Springfield, MA. Aleesha values intensive community mental health with an emphasis on in-home visits and other interventions outside of the office. She enjoys educating others and using clinical skills to establish a sense of normalcy to individuals and families.

Thank you first-years for being a part of this newsletter! We are excited to formally welcome you to the GIPP family. Your future is bright, and we are glad to be a part of it!
The faculty, staff, and students welcome Dr. Matthew C. Costello. From assessing the effects aging on perception and cognition to reading poetry and playing chess, Dr. Costello keeps busy.

**What is your educational background in psychology?**

Much of my educational background was not in psychology. I studied English Literature and Philosophy as an undergraduate, and I earned my MA in Liberal Arts at St. Johns College in Indianapolis, Maryland. St. John’s College provides a non-traditional education where classes are student led. I did my thesis on the poetry of William Wordsworth and studied Philosophy, Greek, and Latin. After that, I got into a PhD program in psychology after being received into Duquesne University in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. The psychology program there was closely aligned with the philosophy program.

**How did you get into your field of psychology?**

While I was there (Duquesne University) I started working in labs, and the primary one was a neuroimaging lab where I was looking at brain activation with children and young adults. After receiving my PhD, I was offered a post-doctoral fellowship with Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. There I studied Neuroimaging and behavioral research with older adults.

**What are your research interests?**

Aging in terms of how it effects perception and cognition, or rather how the aging body effects the aging mind. I’m also interested in embodiment and dynamic systems, and they are topics that have long philosophical backgrounds to them. My neuropsychology interest has been primarily about how the brain functions. A lot of my interests dovetail into brain function or cognitive neuroscience.

**What is some advice for students that you have?**

Have fun with it, and don’t be afraid to make mistakes. Make education your own.
What got you into teaching?
It’s rewarding to talk about things that interest me and get students interested in research. It’s rewarding being in the company of students.

What motivates you?
I guess I have an intrinsic desire to do things to the best of my ability. Research is an exciting challenge. I’m trying to carve out my own niche in the research world and learn new stuff.

Tell us a little bit about yourself outside of the Psychology Department?
I’m married with two kids, a one-and-a-half-year-old and a three-and-a-half-year-old. I enjoy being with my kids, playing chess, and reading poetry. I also enjoy being outdoors and doing activities outdoors.

What do you do to relax after class is out?
I like to go jogging and play soccer. I also enjoy watching soccer, and being with the kids. Humor is also a way I relax.

What is an interesting fact about you or something that few people know?
For three years I attended the Barnes Foundation Art Program.

How do you motivate students?
I try to be enthusiastic, steer away from power points, give students a chance to talk, and change their setting.
On Saturday, October 24th, 2015 members of the Connecticut community gathered at the University of Hartford to advocate for and educate themselves about the various mental health support programs the state offers for individuals and families working towards recovery. This year's annual NAMI Connecticut State Conference hosted a diverse and vibrant turnout. Attendees from many different facets of the mental health community, including students, providers, caregivers, advocates, and those directly affected by mental illness, all joined together in an effort to intellectually support one another.

The day commenced with a presentation from the event's keynote speaker, Dr. Vinod Srihari, about the Specialized Treatment Early in Psychosis (STEP) clinic in New Haven. Dr. Srihari and his colleagues at the Connecticut Mental Health Center run this program, free of charge, for young adults experiencing symptoms of psychosis. Using a trifocal intervention model (medication, therapy, and caregiver involvement), the STEP clinic has been offering comprehensive care since 2006 for patients in their late teens and early 20s, when schizophrenia and related disorders usually manifest. Of note, the STEP clinic has been shown to keep their clients out of the hospital and on track with their professional and academic aspirations. Dr. Vinod argues that early interventions for his clients, when their brains may still be more flexible, may be what helps young individuals succeed in their personal lives as they work toward recovery.

Following the STEP program presentation, conference-goers were offered a number of workshops to attend, focusing on issues ranging from domestic violence in diverse populations, to interventions based on spirituality and mindfulness, to DBT. Also offered were presentations from organizations trying to improve the lives of those in recovery via mental health parity and workplace anti-discrimination laws and advocacy projects. Sessions held by the VA and Connecticut's Criminal Justice systems also discussed the many ways these organizations are trying to connect those under their care to the appropriate resources. These workshops, although different in context, all did well to motivate attendees to support the campaign for all community efforts and programs. The conference concluded with a presentation from Dr. Chyrell D. Bellamy of Yale's Program for Recovery and Community Health (PRCH) and how they are currently using research to guide community services for those in recovery.

The 2015 NAMI Connecticut State Conference concluded having successfully completed their mission of bringing the CT mental health community together for a day of collaborative support and advocacy. Those of us from the GIPP community that were fortunate enough to attend were very impressed by the passion the various presenters brought to their workshops, presentations, and talks. It was a pleasure to represent GIPP amongst such a diverse group of like-minded individuals.
I think I can speak for all GIPP students by saying that we are tired and busy all of the time. From balancing the demands of academic coursework, practicum, dissertation, and whatever else we are doing to boost our CVs, one can’t help but feel overwhelmed at times. While I could go on and on about the pains of being a graduate student, my experience is nothing compared to my colleagues, Christine Capizzi (3rd Year), Rachel Carlson (4th Year), and Madhavi Padukkavidana (2nd Year). In addition to being GIPP students, they are also mothers. I wanted to write an article that could speak to their experience and because I feel that the narrative of being both a mother and a student needed to be acknowledged. I asked Christine (CC), Rachel (RC), and Madhavi (MP) the following set of questions.

What are some of the biggest challenges in being a graduate student and a mother?

MP: “Balancing the demands of a newborn, school, and work...basically not having time for anything other than nursing, soothing the baby, and assignments.”

CC: “Making sure not to sacrifice time with my family in order to get all of my schoolwork done to my satisfaction.”

RC: “You have to relax your expectations of yourself and your performance in order to be able to show up in all the various roles we are expected to play...You’re not able to study as much or in as focused a manner, you don’t have as much flexibility as far as scheduling meetings with advisors/peers/work groups goes, and physically you need to be easier on yourself because your body is going through a lot of changes and challenges – particularly if you’re breastfeeding or healing from a difficult birth.”
If you were not a mother, how would your life be different?

**MP**: “I would have more time to spend on school work, look into professional development, and actually start writing my dissertation proposal. I would also be doing practicum and QUALS this year with my cohort which I am missing out on and therefore will probably delay my graduation.”

**CC**: “…my life would be less whole…having a child has made my life more surprising, fun, and full of love in ways I could not have imagined before…”

**RC**: “Once it happens, it’s impossible to imagine not being a mother…Things I used to prioritize now don’t matter at all, and I prioritize all new things like quiet after 7pm…I would be applying for internship this year instead of waiting or further along on my dissertation…”

What resources/support have you had while in the program?

**MP**: “My husband, my mother and friends have been great strength. Also, it is always helpful to sit with faculty and have a plan. Different members of the faculty had different perspectives and considering all those suggestions I was able to make an educated decision about how I am going to get through this period. It was also helpful to talk to other students who have gone through the same experience…Faculty has been good about connecting me to senior students.”

**CC**: “The biggest supports I’ve had while in the program come from my husband, mother, babysitters, and friends. My husband and mother have arranged their schedules to best help me care for Christian during the times I need it most…My friends have been amazing and I can almost always find someone to pick Christian up, take him where he needs to go, or play with him when I need to.”

**RC**: “My cohort has been so sweet and supportive during this process offering to send me notes or Skype me into class after I had my son, offering childcare so I could finish QUALS, even bringing me lasagna right after I had given birth…My family’s support has been invaluable…of course my husband…”

Were/Are professors, advisors, and/or supervisors understanding and supportive?

**MP**: “Yes my advisor was very supportive and has been absolutely wonderful to me in terms of cutting me some slack with research, as well as being there to talk to me when going gets tough. As faculty who are trained psychologists it is crucial to offer support to students expecting. Even simple gestures mean so much on tough days…I was taking a full course load, commuting, dealing with insomnia, morning sickness, and some complications toward the end of my pregnancy. It is unfair to expect someone going through that to be able to keep up as usual with attendance and coursework so it was nice that some faculty were understanding when I had to miss class, leave early for doctors appointments or needed an additional day to finish assignments without being penalized…it’s important to let [faculty] know early, keep them in the loop so they know you are struggling and not being negligent.”
CC: “I have found professors, advisors, and practicum supervisors to be very understanding and supportive. There have been times I have had to miss class because I needed to be with Christian or take him to an important appointment and professors have always been understanding...I wanted to take Christian to his first day of preschool and warned my practicum supervisors I may be a bit late that morning. They were very understanding and when I arrived that day, asked me all about how it went. I have never felt I wanted anyone to cut me some slack in certain situations...it is important to me to know that I can get through the program without any special treatment."

RC: “Unfortunately, I did not feel as supported as I expected by the faculty during this process. Their reactions to my pregnancy were more of concern over my ability to stay in the program than celebration, and they wanted to know what my plan was for dealing with this ‘difficult time’ rather than offering help or alternative ways to navigate the beginning of the semester. I didn’t necessarily expect ‘slack,’ just sensitivity and appreciation for the difficulty of dealing with a newborn. While some faculty was helpful, reception of my willingness to Skype in or do extra assignments in exchange for more time to heal at home with my newborn was not well received. I took from the experience that school understandably prioritizes school issues, but we need to do what’s necessary to advocate for our own priorities and be confident enough to work towards appropriate compromises with the program."

**What is one piece of advice or words of wisdom for students thinking about having children while in graduate school or for student parents already in GIPP?**

MP: “There is no ideal time to have children and it is certainly not necessary to delay having children because of grad school. Know your capacity, get lots of advice and have a plan. Sometimes it’s hard to let go of certain things but once you have a baby there is nothing more important than the wellbeing of your child and some sacrifices that are worth it..."

CC: “Don’t. Just kidding. It is certainly not easy and requires a great deal of diligence and lack of sleep. I never knew I could function on so little sleep...I am a firm believer of the motto, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” If it is important for you to have a child at the same time you are in school, you can figure out how to make it happen!”

RC: “Follow your own path! If it is the right time for you to have kids – DO IT! Don’t let the program make you feel bad for making this monumental, incredible decision. The program knows nothing about your relationship with your partner, your family, how long you have been trying to get pregnant, if you have miscarried in the past, your family goals, or anything else. You have to know and trust your own and your partner’s process when it comes to the decision to try and get pregnant or have more children. No matter what, you’ll be able to make it work with the supports you build around your life. Sure it’s easier to wait, but that isn’t always a viable option for people. So, do you, mama!

I want to express my gratitude to Madhavi, Christine, and Rachel for agreeing to be interviewed and for allowing me to write about their experiences. I hope you learned something from reading this article.
Student Updates!

- Do you want to spread the word about an event, meeting, social activity, or community service project?
- Are you trying to find a GIPP deadline, the next Colloquium date, or when your next Practicum or Quals meeting will be?

Then make sure to check out the **STUDENT CALENDAR**!
Located in the student mailroom.

*Contact psandhu@hartford.edu to have something posted on the calendar.

Thank you to those who participated in the discussion of mid-semester evaluations.
Student feedback is always much appreciated!

If you have a flyer to post on the bulletin board, please place in the bin located above the microwave. A class representative will check the bin daily to initial and post in the appropriate section!

---

**2015-2016 Student Representatives**

- Preeti Sandhu, Overall Representative
- Andrea Spink, 4th Year Representative
- Daveon McMullen, 3rd Year Representative
- Sonia Altavilla, 2nd Year Representative
- Chandler Koury, 1st Year Representative

Make sure to keep an eye out for our next GIPP Event in January... 😊