

THE

# NARACES GRADUATE STUDENT BULLETIN



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The NARACES Graduate Student Bulletin

## The Growing Face of Counselor Education: International Perspectives and the National Climate



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## **Diamonds in the Rough: Mentoring Black Students for the Professoriate**

**By: Jordan Shannon, Syracuse University**

In 2009, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) presented research mentoring guidelines to help increase research scholarship and collaborative opportunities across new faculty and graduate students within the field (Wester et al, 2009). Despite the noble efforts of these guidelines, Black students in counselor education programs still report experiencing academic isolation and lack of research opportunities at Predominately White Institutions (Lewis, Ginsburg, Davies & Smith, 2004; Henfield, Owens & Witherspoon, 2011). For Black students who experience this type of isolation, the effect can be detrimental in their academic and social integration on campus (Girves & Wemmerus, 1988) and thus warrant positive faculty mentoring in doctoral programs (Blackwell, 1987; Lewis, Ginsburg, Davies & Smith, 2004).

The field of counselor education has recognized the need for cross-cultural mentoring among students and new faculty (Brinson & Kottler, 1993) however; there is scant information about the specific needs for mentoring Black students. Unfortunately, past research on Black students in counselor education has focused on tokenization, marginalization, and lack of representation in course pedagogy (Henfield, Owens, & Witherspoon, 2011; Haskins, et al, 2013, Henfield, Woo & Washington, 2013) while there seems to be a gap in the literature focused on mentoring (Ross, Powell & Henriksen, 2016).

In order to address the disparities of Black students pursuing the professoriate, the need for counselor education programs to adopt a mentoring program beyond the guidelines proposed by ACES is imperative. Ross, Powell & Henriksen (2013) discussed this need for how positive factors such as faculty-student mentorship, networking and professional development aid in creating a positive self identity in Black counseling students. The author suggests that more faculty members be encouraged to seek Black students in their programs and invite them to participate in research. There exists literature that supports the need for mentoring these students as they persist through graduate study (Henfield, Owens, Witherspoon, 2011; Harper & Patton, 2007; Lewis, et al, 2004). In their study, Henfield et al. (2011) discovered that Black students referenced a strong desire to find emotionally and academically supportive relationships with faculty to achieve success.

*(‘Diamonds,’ Continued on page 3)*

(‘*Diamonds*,’ Continued from page 2)

For graduate students, some helpful tips in pursuit of the professoriate include 1) reaching out to faculty regarding common research interests, 2) applying for graduate assistantship positions with faculty, and 3) volunteering for Chi Sigma Iota and other service-learning projects within program. This is not an exhaustive list of mentoring opportunities, but ways students can take initiative towards advanced study. The author identifies as an African American male student in counselor education. The author considers additional influences on Black student doctoral study such as socioeconomic restraints, campus racial climate (attending a PWI or HBCU), and student motivation towards advanced study. Further research could be conducted to explore the role of the impact of mentoring programs towards advanced study.

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## **The Growing Face of Counselor Education: Standardization of Professional Counseling in Nigeria**

**By: Eghonghon Mary Omiyi, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania**

I had many eventful experiences going through years of medical training in my home country, Nigeria. Although I faced many challenges both professional and personal, I felt very happy and fulfilled at my induction ceremony. I went into general practice with so much enthusiasm and high expectations. I was eager to make patients feel better about themselves as they walked out of my office. However, that was cut short by my experiences with many patients. I felt the need to connect with patients on a much deeper level, especially those whose physical symptoms and illnesses were so clearly linked to emotional and psychological distress. For me, these experiences set off a series of events that eventually led me to become a master level student in Clinical Mental Health Counseling in the United States (US).

The burden of mental illness is currently beyond the treatment capacities of both developed and developing countries (WHO, 2001c as cited in WHO, 2005). Counseling in my home country is mainly offered in school settings and is provided by career masters/mistresses with a bachelor's degree in guidance and counseling (Okocha & Alika, 2012). There is no extension beyond the school system and there is yet to be a clear professional status with an established code of ethics, certification, and licensure standards in Nigeria (Aluede, McEachern, & Kenny, 2005). Predominantly, counselor training/education is a four-year bachelors program focused on career and school counseling without the holistic inclusion of addictions counseling, couples counseling, and other mental health counseling practices. Researching institutions for training in Clinical Mental Health Counseling was a challenging experience for me. Universities that offered counselor education programs with a concentration in mental health were located abroad, miles away from home. Going such a long distance to get in a counselor education program can be a challenge for many who are interested.

The need for standardized counselor education training programs in Nigerian universities cannot be overemphasized. Apart from making standard counselor education more accessible and affordable, it will lead to a rise in competent professionals with greater capacity to serve in every division of counseling. As a future professional counselor in Nigeria with western education, I am aware of the challenges that lies ahead. Nigeria is a culturally diverse nation with about 250 ethnic groups and over 500 spoken languages (CIA, 2017). We are a multicultural nation. The form taken by counseling is dependent on the historical and cultural contexts as well as the needs of the community (Aluede et al., 2005). Homegrown counselors will better understand the influences of nurture and different cultures on the development of individuals in our society and such knowledge can be tailored to the needs of people in Nigeria. Our collective culture is quite different from that practiced in western countries, which is one of the downsides of getting a US-based counselor education. But again, multicultural counseling is missing from many counselor education curricula in Nigerian universities (Aluede & Maliki, 2000).

The current political milieu in Nigeria appears to be a challenge to counselor education as well. Currently there is no legislation recognizing the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) as a professional body in Nigeria (Aluede, 2008), which is a major limitation for the development of the Nigerian counseling profession in general. Newly elected officials rarely follow through with projects started by past officials. Instead, they begin new projects that most likely will not be completed at the end of their tenure, and the circle continues. There can be a strong push on the government in Nigeria to play their part in the standardization of the counseling profession, by pressing for the enactment of legislation in favor of the counseling profession.

(‘Standardization,’ Continued on page 5)

(‘Standardization’, Continued from page 4)

The National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) and the American Counseling Association (ACA) can work in collaboration to assist other countries in modification and standardization of already existing counselor education programs, as is the case in Nigeria. Providing opportunities for accreditation, credentialing, and licensure will increase the standard of the profession not only globally, but also in the eyes of locals. This effort began in Nigeria where NBCC worked in collaboration with CASSON, sending representatives to the 2010 conference to provide a skills training session on certification and licensure (Kolo, 2010 as cited in Okocha & Alika, 2012). Efforts like this need to continue until the identity of the counseling profession in Nigeria is fully established, with standardized counselor education programs that are comparable to the programs in higher institutions of developed countries.

Therefore, it is the duty of CASSON, every Nigerian counselor and counselor educators to tirelessly put pressure on our legislatures, to get the necessary laws passed. I also believe that government officials will respond even faster, if organizations from the US like NBCC and ACA were to lend their voices in advocating for the counseling profession in Nigeria. Overall, I plan on using my education and experiences as an international trainee and soon-to-be professional counselor, to ensure the provision of standard, multiculturally competent mental health care to many who are in need in Nigeria. In addition, I plan to bring more recognition to the counseling profession in Nigeria, with the hope of strengthening its identity.

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## Who Are We? What Are We For?: An Introduction to the NARACES Graduate Student Committee (GSC)

### Who We Are, and What We Do:

The North Atlantic Region of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (NARACES) is a regional branch of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), which is an association within the American Counselor Association (ACA). The North Atlantic Region is composed of members from Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The NARACES Graduate Student Committee (GSC) was developed to serve as the voice for Doctoral and Master's level graduate students enrolled in counseling programs within the North Atlantic region, and is currently comprised of students enrolled in counselor education programs in New York and Pennsylvania. Committee members are committed to assessing the needs of the graduate student body while also fostering rich opportunities for on-going professional development, such as networking events, webinars, trainings and the dissemination of relevant resource materials. Such topics may include, but are not limited to: social support, diversity, counselor development, school to work transitions, mentoring, internships, legal issues, legislative positions, interviewing, changes in the field and the importance of counselor/student self-care.

### NARACES Member States & Territories:

- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- Vermont
- Washington D.C.
- Puerto Rico
- Virgin Islands

### GSC's Goals (2017-2018):

- To increase graduate student involvement from master's and doctoral level students
- To expand graduate student membership in underrepresented states, social locations, and specializations.
- To create online and/or virtual writing communities for those looking to network, foster community, or collaborate with other graduate students.
- To reach out and include other regions on conference calls, writing communities, and for desired collaborations.
- To create a mentorship program for incoming Counseling and Counselor Education graduate students

To get involved please email your Graduate Student Representative:

Kevin Duquette (kxd5295@psu.edu).

The Graduate Student Committee (GSC) is nothing without its members!

## **NARACES NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE!**

The NARACES Executive Council is accepting nominations and self-nominations for a new **Graduate Student Representative!**

If you are interested in running or nominating someone for one of these positions, please contact **Derek Seward** at [dxseward@syr.edu](mailto:dxseward@syr.edu).

For self-nominations, please include:

- A one paragraph Statement of interest in serving the NARACES membership
- A copy of your CV

If nominating someone please include:

- Contact information so that we can determine their interest in the nomination.

**Nominations for these positions are due on  
September 25, 2017.**

### **NARACES Graduate Student Representative**

- a) The Graduate Student Representative to the Council will serve a two-year term - a one year term as Graduate Student Representative-Elect and a one year term as Graduate Student Representative.
- b) Graduate student representatives support fellow graduate students, advocate for graduate students, promote graduate student membership in NARACES, ACES, and ACA, serve as a liaison between graduate students and the NARACES leadership and enrich the experiences of graduate students as they progress through their counselor education programs.

Questions? Email Kevin Duquette ([kxd5295@psu.edu](mailto:kxd5295@psu.edu)) (Current NARACES Graduate Student Representative) or Harvey Peters ([hcpeters@syr.edu](mailto:hcpeters@syr.edu)) (ACES Graduate Student Representative, Past NARACES Graduate Student Representative) with any questions/concerns!

## UPCOMING NARACES GSC EVENTS

**JOIN US**

**ACES 2017 Conference**

**Hyatt Regency Chicago**

**151 East Upper Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60601**

**Saturday, 10:30am-12:30pm in the Graduate Student Lounge**

**We will be discussing *Professional Mentorship & Collaboration***



**Not Going to ACES? There are still many ways to get involved!**

**Join our Message Board: <http://naracesgsc.freeforums.net/> (sign up is free!)**

**Join our Monthly Conference Calls:**

Dial-in Number: [\(515\) 739-1537](tel:5157391537)

Access Code: 764220

**Our Next Conference Call is Wednesday, September 20, 2017 at 7:00pm**



**(email Kevin ([kxd5295@psu.edu](mailto:kxd5295@psu.edu)) to sign up for our email updates and dates/times of future Conference Calls!)**

**NARACES Emerging Leaders:**

**Graduate Students:**

**Antoinette Cambria**

**Erin Friedman**

**Shana Gelin**

**Latoya Haynes-Thoby**

**Katherine Shirley**

**Faculty Members**

**Dr. Courtney Alvarez**

**Dr. Nicole Arcuri**

**Dr. Diandra Prescod**

**Dr. Diana Wildermuth**

**A HUGE Congratulations to all of our region's Emerging Leaders! We're excited to learn about your experiences, and see what you have in store for our region and profession!**

