

Spring 2017

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## Positive CACREP Site Visit

*By Amy Davis*

The UNA Counselor Education Department hosted a site visit in April by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). At the end of the site visit, it appears that Counselor Education programs in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling meet the standards required to continue being accredited by CACREP. The CACREP board will meet in July to make the final accreditation determination.

The Counselor Education department first received CACREP accreditation in 2009 for the Community Counseling program and the School Counseling Program. The Clinical Mental Health Counseling program was accredited in 2015.

## CSI SPRING WORKSHOP

On Saturday, March 11th, UNA's Upsilon Nu Alpha chapter of Chi Sigma Iota held their annual spring workshop in the Guillot Center Performance Center. The theme of the meeting was trauma. James Loew, MA, LPC, NCC, CCMHC spoke on Invisible Wounds: Veterans and Trauma; Vickey D. Cook, RN, BSN provided a session on How to Deal with the Trauma of an Aging Parent with Dementia; and Ashley Berrios, Ph.D., LPC-S addressed the group about Trauma and Addiction: Current Trends in the Field. The session were followed by round table discussions where participants discussed the ideas presented by the speakers and brainstormed about ways to help clients dealing with trauma. Over 50 students, alumni, and faculty members attended.

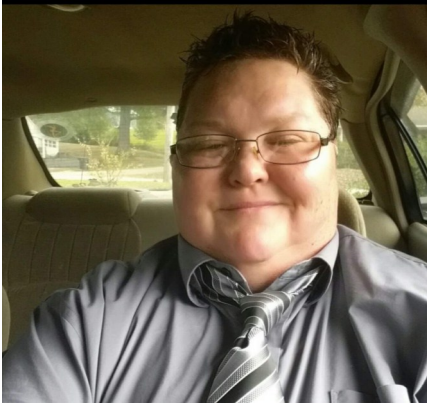


## 2015-2016 UNA Counselor Ed. Statistics

Program	# of Graduates	Completion Rate	Licensure/ Exam Pass Rate	Job Placement Rate
CMHC	10	100%	100%	90%
School Counseling	3	100%	100%	100%



## UNA COUNSELING STUDENT STARTS SUPPORT GROUP



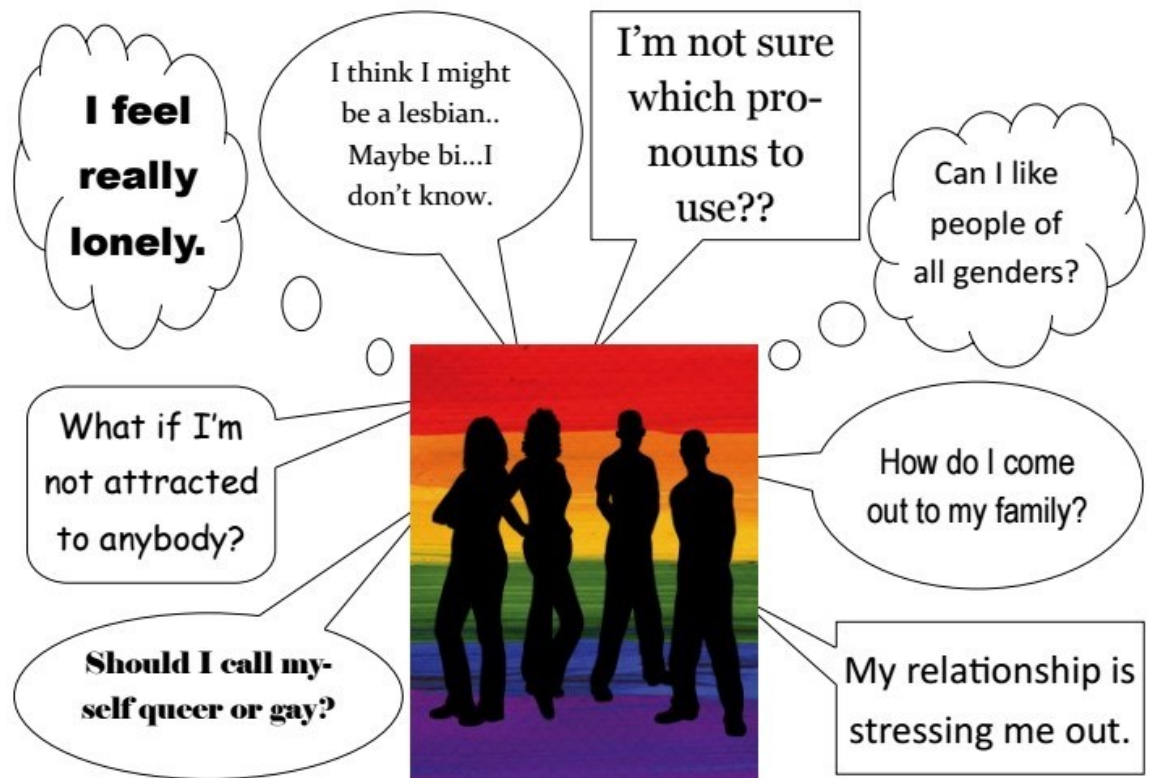
**Mitch Wright**

*By Mitch Wright*

For about a year I wanted to offer something to the LGBTQ community here in the Shoals. I knew I wanted to start a support

group. It was the one thing that I wished had been offered when I was coming out back in the day. I knew there was a great need here with all of the inquiries I would get from mental health professionals and also individuals within the community. I hated that I always had to say that the closest support group was in Huntsville. I would always hear about how a person could not travel that far or even have the means at all to be able to get the help they desired. I decided, after I heard pleas of help from a individual in desperate need of a safe place to go, to start the LGBTQ support group here in the Shoals. The first meeting was in last November and we had 2 individuals show up to the meeting. The group has grown month after month to where we now

have on average a total of 11 people at the meeting. We have individuals drive an hour and that come from Tennessee to participate in the support group. We have had a speaker from Safe Place come and speak to us and I would like to incorporate having a speaker ever so often come and speak. It was my vision to not only offer support but also educational and informative aspects to the group. It has given me such strength and pride to see these individuals coming and offering and receiving help from one another. It has been such a good mix of youth and older LGBTQ individuals and we have all been learning from the experiences of all in the group. It also makes me proud to see our community here in the Shoals stepping up to keep this valuable resource possible to continue month after month. We meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Shoals at 1332 N. Pine Street here in Florence from 6:00 to 7:00.



## REFLECTIONS BEFORE GRADUATION



**Laura Peeden (2nd from the left) with her “tribe,” as she calls her fellow students, at ALCA 2016.**

*By Laura Peeden*

I am a firm believer that life is split into chapters. Some are beyond fabulous expectation, while others are better left forgotten. I entered the counseling program in between one of each of these chapters.

After my first class meeting, I felt slightly like I had lost my mind and would need counseling myself before I finished the program. However, I slowly found my stride, and I actually discovered how much more I loved and enjoyed counseling than I thought was possible.

Whenever anyone hears that I am a full time teacher and a full time graduate student, they look at me as if I have three heads attached to my body. What these people do not know is how much I have grown during my time in the program. I entered my first semester, settling a quite tumultuous time in my life. From that point forward, I have hit just about every major life milestone that one can hit. I have experienced the illness and death of the grandfather who helped raise me. I have experienced my mother being diagnosed with and fighting cancer, resulting in her being in remission. I met the love of my life and got married, actually missing my first class meetings last summer

due to the fact that I was on my honeymoon. But, the constant through all of these milestones has been the support and “family” I gained from the counseling department. Not only my classmates, but my professors also, have grieved with me, supported me, and celebrated with me, every step of this journey.

Most people do not view graduate school as a place to find support, but I would argue that those individuals must not be a part of the counseling family at UNA. I am graduating May 13th with my degree and a myriad of possibilities for how I can move forward. I would have to say that the knowledge and support system I will also graduate with are just as vital as the diploma I will receive.

If I could give some advice to others thinking of pursuing a degree in counseling, I would first and foremost urge them to jump in with both feet, ready to hit the ground running. Do your absolute best, not letting any opportunity pass you by. The urge will creep over you and consume you at times to slack off, but I would say work through it! There is no better feeling than working with all of your effort, and seeing the fruits of your labor first hand. You will graduate with resources and connections you would



**Laura Peeden (far right) and her fellow presenters at ALCA 2016.**



## REFLECTIONS BEFORE GRADUATION *continued*

have never had available to you. So, absolutely do your best, but you have to start, first and foremost.

You will hear it said more times than you will be able to keep track of, but counseling is a face to face art. I must also add that it involves face to face relationships with your professors and classmates. Take to heart all of the experiences and opportunities that are afforded to you. Talk to your professors. Talk to your classmates. Take advantage of all of your time in the field, gain-

**So, challenge yourself. What do you want your legacy to be?**

ing experience. All of these things combined will mold you into the type of counselor you will become upon graduation. So, challenge yourself. What do you want your legacy to be? What kind of community do you want to have, supporting you through the counseling journey? But above all else, the thought of what you want to become in your professional counseling role should be at the forefront of your whole experience. Do not lose sight of why you started, but always remember that you started for a reason bigger than yourself.

## CHI SIGMA IOTA SPRING INITIATION 2017



Congratulations to the ten new members of Chi Sigma Iota who were inducted into the Upsilon Nu Alpha Chapter on April 13, 2017 at the Guilford University Center.

### New Members

*Megan Barber*      *Meghan Muse*

*Kristy Black*      *Robert Logan*

*Jaina Glaze*      *Laura Lopez*

*Kayla Gronemeyer*      *Lauren Shell*

*Emmy Hovater*      *Jessica Young*



Clockwise from top left: (1) Woodfin Gregg, MA, LPC was the keynote speaker for the initiation ceremony. (2) Pamela Boren received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award. (3) New Chi Sigma Iota members.

## A FIRST TIMER'S THOUGHTS: ATTENDING THE ACA CONFERENCE



*By Cassie Parker*

The American Counseling Association hosted their annual conference in San Francisco this year. I admit, the thought of flying across the country to attend a national conference in a city I had never been in, both excited and scared me. I worried about exploring such a big and far away city on my own. So I invited friends to go with me. It added to the fun and made the trip more affordable!

As we left San Francisco's airport toward our AirBnB apartment, our Uber driver informed us of San Francisco's high homeless population. We would later come to the conclusion that she had understated it a bit. Regardless, we found the city to house endless possibilities for sight-seeing. When not at the conference we visited Alcatraz Island, the Full/Fuller house, the home that Mrs. Doubtfire was filmed at, Lombard Street, and The Golden Gate Bridge.

Then there was the actual conference. There were so many sessions to choose from! I was like a kid in a candy store. Trying to choose one for each time slot was not easy. Luckily A.C.A. had an app to help with that very problem. The A.C.A. app organized the options by the time and day. Then all I had to do was tap on the ones I wanted to attend and it showed me what each of my days would look like.

I still can't believe how lucky I am to have been able to take part in so many educational ses-

sions! Some were funny, some were somber, some were even whimsical, but all of them were invaluable. Looking back, one session in particular stands out. It was labeled "Beyond the 5 Stages: The Relationship Between Individualized Grief and Personality". The session was presented by Lisa R. Prosser-Dodds and Heather Kramer Almquist. Almquist and Prosser-Dodds created an interactive educational session in which audience members were selected, based on their Myers-Briggs personality type, to participate in a grieving shrine creation activity. Each participant was asked to choose items from a table up front to create a bereavement area one might display in his or her home. The presenters went on to relate to the audience how each participant's personality type played a role in his or her shrine creation. It was incredible and so well done! If you missed it, keep a look out for Dr. Dodd's book "Understanding Grief Types." If it's anything like the presentation, it'll make for a fantastic read.



Cassie (middle) and her favorite presenters, Lisa R. Prosser-Dodds (left) and Heather Kramer Almquist (right).

## ACA CONFERENCE continued

I can remember sitting in my seat and thinking, "I want to be doing this one day. I want to learn enough to share with others in a way that leaves them as excited and enthralled as we all are right now!" Being privy to such an experience as that was the highlight of my year thus far. I wish everyone I know could have been a part of it. Because of that wish, I actively implore the reader to attend the next A.C.A. Conference. It will be much closer to home in 2018 in Atlanta Ga. during the month of April. I can not stress enough the significance of the experience and knowledge that awaits you. If you have missed this year's conference don't do yourself the disservice of missing the next one. Time is the most precious thing we have and I've come to believe that when we invest that time in learning new and better ways of helping others; it's returned to us over and over again later in life. So stop using that precious time reading this and start planning your trip to Atlanta next year. Go! Get out of here! You're still reading? Stahp!



**The Golden Gate Bridge.** When she was not at the ACA conference, Cassie took advantage of site seeing opportunities.

### 2016-2017 UNA Department of Counselor Education

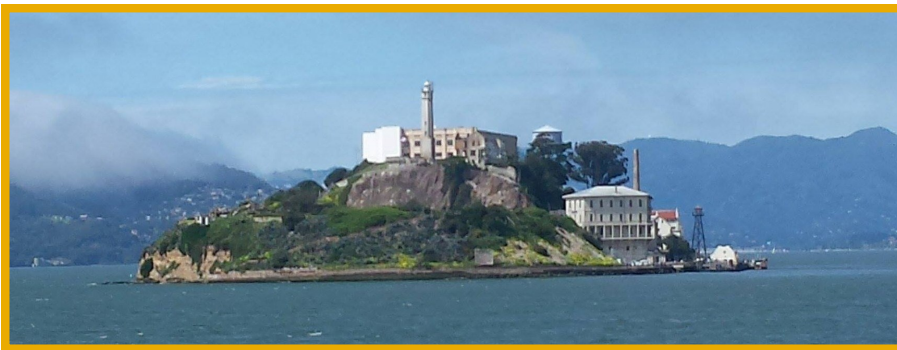
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**One of Cassie's site seeing adventures outside of the ACA allowed her to visit Alcatraz.**



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