

Spring 10-1-2009

Spring 2009

Graduate School of Humanities & Social Sciences

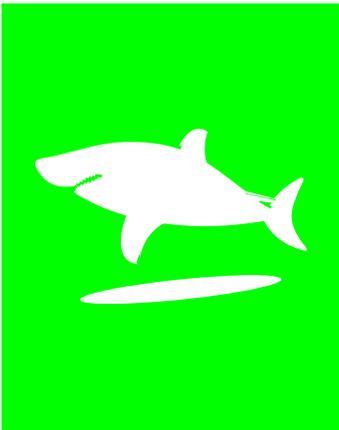
Follow this and additional works at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss_dialogs

NSUWorks Citation

Graduate School of Humanities & Social Sciences, "Spring 2009" (2009). *CAHSS Graduate SGA Dialogues*. 10.

https://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss_dialogs/10

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the College Publications at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in CAHSS Graduate SGA Dialogues by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.



SHSS Dialogues

Volume VIII, Issue II

Spring 2009

Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (DCAR)

Marcia Sweedler, Ph.D.

Interim Chair, DCAR

Inside this issue:

Mediation Can Be the Career You Have Been Dreaming Of... 2

Interview of Debra Nixon, Ph.D.: Do Something Different Initiative 4

Three Tales of One Transformative Learning Experience 5

From the Dean's Desk 6

Student Highlights 7

Editor's Note 9

The DCAR Forum, held at each residential institute, provides an opportunity for students and faculty to contribute ideas for improving the department. The Forum begins with a process based on appreciative inquiry, and led by Terry Morrow. The process culminates with a set of topics selected by participants, who then move to the topic of their interest and begin planning for how to

move the vision into action. After RI the planning charts are typed up and posted to the DCAR Forum Webct site. Everyone who attends DCAR Forum is automatically entered into the Webct site, and anyone else in DCAR who wishes to be on the site can email Andrea Cevallos. Each topic has its own discussion board so interested participants can share ideas, set up chats, or exchange

emails. What makes DCAR Forum unique is that change is student driven. If students want to make something happen, they need to join a topic group, and get the planning done, and submit it to the chair to bring forward to the faculty and the Dean. Topics from the Fall 08 RI have been up for a while. The Winter 09 topics will go up in the next few weeks.

SHSS Faculty Member "Does Something Different" Exhibits Photographic Art at International Art Fair in Miami Beach

Christopher F. Burnett, Psy.D.,

Associate Professor of Human Relationship Systems, Department of Family Therapy

My friend and colleague, Dr. Debra Nixon, likes to say "Do Something Different". So I have.

OK, maybe it's not really that different once you scratch beneath the surface, but on its face most of you will agree this seems like a radical departure. I have given presentations and lectures on systems thinking, systems theory, and systems practice to large audiences in the past, and I have even done so in international



settings. But never before have I had an audience like the one between March 27 – 30, 2009 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. I was literally able to communicate with thousands of people over the course of four days, by having my photographic works of art on display at the ArteAmerica (www.arteamericas.com) art fair, the premier venue for contemporary Latin

American art.

Those of you who know me know that I am not from a South American country, and that my Spanish is not particularly sophisticated either. However, a gallery I have been working with, Via Margutta de Cordoba, Argentina (www.viamargutta.com.ar), did qualify and was anxious to have my work shown to the public. I remember visiting this very show just last year and thinking how cool it

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

would be to have so many people see your art this way. It was the realization of yet another long held dream of mine, made possible by the pursuit of systems thinking.

Yes, that's right, systems thinking. My passion for photography really was born during my Social Psychology course as an undergraduate, when I chose to complete a photo essay in lieu of a term paper for the major portion of my final grade. It didn't matter that I didn't own a camera, or even know the difference between my exposure and my aperture. In the course of 15 short weeks, I bought a brand new Minolta and telephoto lens, had my buddy (who worked



for the school newspaper) teach me to develop black and white film in the school's darkroom, surreptitiously shot people in a variety of social situations, and then labeled the photos according to the constructs being taught in class. With a ruler, scissors, and Elmer's glue (where the term cut and paste originally came from) I put them all together on an oversized construction paper tablet, and my first show was born. The professor went wild with praise, and asked me if he could take the portfolio to show his other classes. I still look upon my experiences in that class as the starting point of my career as a "serious student" in no small part because of his enthusiasm for my final product.

Fast forward a number of years (too many at this point), and I find myself again taken to new and unexpected places by entwining academic and artistic interests.

My views of social psychology have certainly evolved. I see human relationships, and human relationship systems, in increasingly complicated, sophisticated, and nuanced ways. Systems thinking has allowed me to comprehend the world of human relationships in ways that were impos-



sible to imagine as a college sophomore. I bring this expanded perspective and knowledge to my photography as well by incorporating the power of context, relative space, non-linear perspective, reflection, multiple viewpoints, and projective imagination. Refining my awareness of the traditional photographic elements of light, contrast, shape, shading and shadow are but some of the strands by which I further weave a fabric of photography and human relationships. When people view my photography portfolio, I hope they see that, as in human relationships, emphasizing and combining different aspects of their essential elements leads to different and rather unique possibilities.

Mediation Can Be the Career You Have Been Dreaming Of...

Alexia Georgakopoulos, Ph.D.,

Assistant Professor, Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

For the third year in a row, the career of mediator has made U.S. News & World Report's list of 30 "Best Careers of 2009." The practice of mediation has become a fascinating career and it certainly has a place for dealing with most types of disputes. Alexia Georgakopoulos, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor in the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at NSU, should know, as she certifies mediators throughout the state of Florida. Georgakopoulos works as a primary trainer for a Florida Supreme Court Certification Mediation Program in County Mediation as well as an assistant trainer for the Florida Supreme Court Certification in Family Media-

tion. The mediation program specializing in county mediation has been approved by the Florida Supreme Court. She has worked very closely with SHSS students in getting state approved mediation certification programs and is currently working on getting a family mediation program approved by the Florida Supreme Court. Georgakopoulos is the Director of the Institute of Conflict Resolution and Communication, which is a provider for mediation certification and continuing mediation education programs.

Mediation is a humanistic alternative dispute resolution practice. It promotes empowerment, self determination, and transformation. The problem facing mediation

today is that the general public does not realize how beneficial the process can be; hence many still tend to rely heavily on attorneys, litigation, the court system, and judges to determine outcomes. Georgakopoulos, however, believes that the best decisions come from people who understand their own relationships, conflicts, and interests and mediation offers people a wonderful opportunity to resolve their "own" problems.

It is all in the communication and interaction. The mediator has to be the guardian of the mediation process and ensure that people communicate their interests and needs effectively.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Students who are interested in learning about mediation wonder what the process entails. Georgakopoulos often responds by saying that it requires a nuance understanding of both the mediation process and the context. Mediators, like experts, need to specialize and understand what they offer. That is why she recommends that people who are interested in becoming mediators obtain credentials, certification, and specialized training in the type of mediation that they would like to perform. In business disputes, mediators need to be educated in a variety of mediation theories, principles, and techniques from a variety of mediation models. Important topics that they should be aware of include the following: mediation processes; settlement composition; court processes; code of conduct for mediators; effective negotiation and communication; ethical principles; diversity issues; community resources; mediation business marketing; and conflict resolution management. Depending on the state, it is imperative that mediators understand statutes and rules. For example, Florida has very specific statutes and rules that guide the code of conduct for mediators who take court connected cases.

In the context of family mediation, Georgakopoulos argues that knowledge about family dynamics is very important along with mediation theories, principles, skills and current research involving family mediation. Mediators need to be trained in various mediation strategies and techniques from a variety of models including transformative, narrative, and problem solving mediation. Topics that are central to family mediation include: psychological issues in divorce and family dynamics; issues concerning children's needs in the context of

divorce; standards of conduct for mediators; family law (dependent on the specific state where the divorce takes place); family economics; diversity issues; court processes; communication skills; community resources; referral processes; and conflict management strategies. A mediator, above all other points, needs to have a keen understanding of how to promote self-determination, commitment, and transformation during family conflict.

Then of course there is every other form of mediation under the sky such as international diplomacy mediation, entertainment mediation, healthcare mediation, environmental mediation, etc., just to name a few. The point is that a mediator cannot come into the mediation session with a blank slate because the process requires knowledge of the site and context in which the conflict is couched.

With the complexity of conflict comes the task for mediators to learn and implement the best practices possible during mediation. No single mediation model is sufficient or superior for conflict resolution; therefore, it is good to learn a variety of established models in order to enhance one's mediator toolbox. An important task for mediation specialists is to discover what types of approaches help to further enhance the mediator's ability to successfully work with unique and diverse clients.

An important lesson in mediation education and development is to learn the most appropriate match between the conflict resolution approach, conflict, and people involved. Given that people in conflict have different needs, various mediation techniques may be valuable for different people in conflict. It is therefore important for the

mediator to stay in touch with state of the art and time tested conflict resolution techniques that are grounded in theory, research and practice. Nevertheless, the beauty of mediation is that a mediator can and should draw from his/her own talents while crafting interventions that are distinctive to his/her style.

Mediation is an art or craft, and Dr. Georgakopoulos recognizes the truth in Aristotle's argument that it requires 5,000 acts of practice to develop a skill into habit. Her job consists of not only educating mediation students about "what" is important to know, but also "how" they ought to implement those mediation techniques. Mediators can promote fundamental shifts from destructive to constructive conflict. A mediator can promote movements toward cooperation, interconnectedness, respect, effective communication, authenticity, validation, compassion between disputing parties and still appreciate that the outcome is ultimately in the hands of the parties.

Georgakopoulos advises that practicum sites are a great place for students to work in sites that may interest them in the future. These networking opportunities can be invaluable when it comes time to finding full time careers. She is always receptive to working with practicum students in a number of her sites, and encourages anyone interested in getting involved in this field to contact her. Mediation certification is another important step in enhancing one's mediator toolbox. In Florida one can visit www.flcourts.gov, go to Alternative Dispute Resolution, then read the mediator qualifications, and finally review a list of providers available throughout the state. See your state's provider list for programs that are approved.

Alexia Georgakopoulos, Ph.D. Georgakopoulos is currently an Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution and Analysis in the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (DCAR) in the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) at Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. For programs and degree information at SHSS please visit <http://shss.nova.edu/>

Georgakopoulos is also the director and primary trainer for the Institute of Conflict Resolution and Communication (ICRC). ICRC is an educational program for mediation certification. Alexia Georgakopoulos has extensive experience as an educator, trainer, researcher, and practitioner.

She is a Florida Supreme Court Certified County and Family Mediator, a primary trainer in County Mediation and an assistant trainer in Family Mediation.



Interview of Debra Nixon, Ph.D. *Do Something Different Initiative*

Jameson M. Mercier, Ph.D. Marriage and Family Therapy

My name is Jameson M. Mercier. I am a graduate assistant and doctoral student at Nova Southeastern University (NSU) where I am studying Marriage and Family Therapy. As part of my job, I assist Debra Nixon, Ph.D., on an initiative she calls “Do Something Different.” Dr. Nixon is a professor in the Department of Marriage and Family Therapy at NSU. Below is a conversation we had about the work she has done regarding this initiative.

Mercier: For those who may not know, what is “Do Something Different”?

Dr. Nixon: DSD is a grass-roots campus inclusion initiative to create a more engaged campus community related to multiculturalism and diversity. More information can be found on our webpage at <http://www.novDr.Nixonedu/dosomethingdifferent/>

Mercier: As it relates to the Do Something Different initiative, how do you define inclusion?

Dr. Nixon: Inclusion is the “how” of diversity—it tells us what to do to create positive relationships with those who are different from us; diversity is simply difference.

Mercier: Tell me about the progress of Do Something Different since its beginning.

Dr. Nixon: Since the beginning of the initiative, we have begun Phase I, our pilot within the SHSS community. Within the program, we have constructed and administered the DSD CIS--Do Something Different Campus Inclusion Survey; presented the preliminary data to week Friday Forum sponsored by VP Dr. Larry Calderone; received an invitation from one of our Trustees, Samuel Morrison, to present to the Board of

Trustees, and met with Gary Margules, Ph.D. [Vice President for Research and Technology] and Katherin Rose, J.D., to discuss publication and grant opportunities.

Mercier:How has the initiative been received by students? Faculty?

Dr. Nixon: The initiative has been very well received by both students and faculty based on the response to the survey by student. The comment section offered by the students is also encouraging. Faculty continues to be involved in ongoing efforts in our program. For example, Dr. Alexia Georgakopoulos presented a simulation on cultural differences in our March faculty luncheon, and at least 5 other faculty members are either on a committee to keep diversity and inclusion matters a part of our luncheons or work directly with the initiative.

Mercier: Has there been any surveys or questionnaires administered to gauge responses and ideas to Do Something Different? If so, what is the overall vibe?

Dr. Nixon: As I mentioned before, student and faculty participation is overwhelmingly favorable, as members of both group were excited to complete the survey. For example, we had a few glitches with faculty and students not having access to the surveys, and members of both groups were very proactive in letting me know so that they could participate in the process.

Mercier: How has Do Something Different been promoted on campus and in the community?

Dr. Nixon: Whenever, I get an opportunity to talk about the initiative, I do. For example, during interviews or talk forums. How-

ever, we have not made formal efforts to promote the initiative in the community until we have finished launching it campus-wide.

Mercier: Have there been any changes to the initial idea behind Do Something Different?

Dr. Nixon: No changes to the idea, only additions to enhance the movement across campus in that we've organized a campus wide group we're calling the Inclusion Council. By the way this council is open to any one who wants to help us spread the gospel of inclusion on our campus--students, faculty, administrators and staff.

Mercier: Is there anything you would change about the way Do Something Different has been advertised, implemented?

Dr. Nixon: Right now we are doing everything our strategic plans calls for. We are primarily promoting inclusion within SHSS with the signage and faculty engagement. My hope is that inclusion is being infused within the program at every level. I have also proposed, on the university level that "inclusion" be added to some part of the campus wide Student Affairs STUEY Award--Student Life Achievement Awards.

Mercier: What are some future plans for Do Something Different?

Dr. Nixon: Our most immediate plans are to analyze the data from the DSD CIS, refine, standardize and publish it. We want to make the survey available for sale and use the profits to generate income to support the initiative as it progresses.

Three Tales of One Transformative Learning Experience

Ron Chenail, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Family Therapy

Joy Benjamin, Ph.D., Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Cynthia Somers, Ph.D., Marriage and Family Therapy

In 2008-2009, we embarked on a wonderful collaborative learning experience that helped us all learn more about clinical qualitative research and ourselves as scholarly investigators. We would like to share highlights and insights from our transformative collaboration which resulted in an international presentation, a juried publication, and many life lessons!

Ron's Experience

My name is Ron Chenail, and I am a professor in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences' (SHSS) Department of Family Therapy. In the winter 2008 semester, I decided to organize the Qualitative Research II course in the Ph.D. in Family Therapy program as a research program in which the students and I would pursue multiple research projects within one clinical area. In this way, the students would experience what it is like to be part of an on-going research endeavor in which separate research teams would each contribute findings in support of a larger scholarly pursuit. This organization also meant we would be conceptualizing, conducting, and composing qualitative research studies all in one semester!

For our semester-long research program, we focused on case documentation (e.g., intakes, client information forms, and progress notes). The class divided itself into two teams. One group, Gary Forrest, Lauryn Gilliam, Tyon Hall, and Randy Heller, studied 20 cases to learn how the reasons clients come to therapy were presented in the initial phone intake, which was composed by a clinic staff member, in the client information form written by the client or clients, and in the first session progress note by the therapist. Another group, Joy Benjamin, Katherine Mitchell, Michael Rhodes, and Cynthia Somers, focused on the first and

last session progress notes in 20 cases to discern differences and similarities in problem and solution patterns within and across cases. Both of these groups performed well. They completed their projects and are in the process of finalizing their drafts to submit for editorial review with a family therapy journal.

I also offered the class the opportunity to be part of a third project within this case documentation program of research in which we would conduct a type of discourse analysis known as Recursive Frame Analy-



sis (RFA) to study patterns in the progress notes from the sessions of 30 cases. Joy Benjamin and Cynthia Somers were able to manage their busy schedules to work with me on this third project which we started once the course was over.

Before the end of the course, we submitted abstracts for our three research projects to be part of a research panel for the 2008 Qualitative Health Research Conference. We were fortunate to have all three proposals accepted, and in October, Tyon Hall, Cynthia Somers, and I represented our three research teams at the conference in Banff,

Alberta, Canada.

After the October presentations, Cynthia, Joy, and I continued working on the RFA project. In December, we submitted our paper to *Contemporary Family Therapy* for editorial review, and in January, we received word that our manuscript was accepted! The article, entitled, "A Recursive Frame Qualitative Analysis of MFT Progress Note Tipping Points," will be published in the June 2009 issue.

The process working with all of the students in the class as co-researchers was a tremendous learning opportunity for me. I liked the occasion it provided for me to mentor a new generation of marriage and family therapy scholars and to help them gain confidence by managing a qualitative research project from inception to completion. With Cynthia and Joy, I also had the chance to go beyond the classroom experience to work on a regular basis with two beginning investigators and to see them grow as researchers.

Joy's Experience

I'm Joy Benjamin, a Ph.D. student in the SHSS Conflict Analysis and Resolution Program. I describe my personal experience as transformative. I began the Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA) project without really knowing what the method was all about. I thought to myself, "What in the world have I gotten myself into now?" My first transformative step was to "accept" that I did not know the method and that not knowing was okay. I was quite anxious during our first meeting, but I quickly calmed down when Dr. Chenail began to explain the methodological procedures. I took copious notes during our weekly meetings, and I read the articles that Dr. Chenail gave us as references. Conse-

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

quently, the RFA method became less foreign to me.

My second transformative step came when I was given my own progress notes to analyze. I would describe this step as "intimacy." I immersed myself so deeply into the reading and re-reading of the notes that I began thinking about them all of the time. I even began having conversations with them. As crazy as this may sound, the data began speaking back to me. Dr. Chenail's famous statement that "the data is the star" finally made sense to me. The data was my primary focus, and if I had questions, I had to ask the data. Strangely enough, the data answered back.

My third transformative step came after each cycle of data analysis. I would describe this step as "confidence." Once I began getting to know the data, my fear subsided. After one of our usual Friday afternoon meetings, I went home to analyze one case, but I ended up staying up the rest of the

night analyzing all 10 cases because I finally "got it." As my confidence grew, my excitement grew because it had finally dawned upon me that "I could really carry out my own research project."

I thank and appreciate Dr. Chenail and Cynthia for taking this journey with me.

Cynthia's Experience

My name is Cynthia Somers and I am a Ph.D. student in the SHSS Family Therapy Program. The research classes in the doctoral program inspired not only my interests, but contributed significantly to my intellectual growth and development. However, the projects we undertook as a class in Qualitative Research II put the "icing on the cake" for me. It gave me the opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and practice in a live case scenario. Additionally, it provided the context of group work and all the dynamics that go with it. The process was challenging, the outcome rewarding, and the personal development astronomical. This experience motivated me to join the RFA

project. The outcome of this venture has often times moves me to tears and a deep sense of gratitude.

The RFA group was a pleasure to work with; the personalities were a fit. Hence, my energy was channeled into learning and producing processes that were excellently facilitated by Dr. Chenail. I learned all that I know about this qualitative approach in the doing of this project. I was free to seek clarity for the things not understood, make suggestions for changes, and basically to be an active contributor to this process. The experience allowed for growth in the level of my confidence, enhanced my people skills, provided me with the opportunity for an international presentation in Canada, a country I had never visited, and ultimately changed my life for the better. In this program, we are big on relationships, especially those with "a difference that makes a difference." I am truly grateful to Dr. Chenail, Joy, and all the other persons who impacted my life in such profound ways on this journey.

From the Dean's Desk

Spring's greetings to you all!

I met Professor Weiming Tu at a conference a number years ago, and again just last month. He is a Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy and of Confucian Studies as well as the former Director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute. Since 1981, he has been on the Harvard faculty and was a member of the "Group of Eminent Persons," invited by Mr. Kofi Anna to facilitate the dialogue among civilizations. Tu has published numerous books in both English and Chinese. His teaching and research interests include Confucian humanism, Chinese intellectual history, and comparative religious thoughts. Enclosed is a web-link where you can find his lecture in South Korea on "[Confucian Humanism as a Spiritual Resource for Global Ethics](#)"

I hope that you find it interesting as well for your graduate studies. Best wishes.

Honggang Yang, Ph.D., Dean,
SHSS



Student Highlights

Cross Disciplinary Affairs



Jaime Magarity, *Master of Arts in Cross Disciplinary Studies*

Jaime is a native Floridian, who completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Florida Atlantic University, in Boca Raton, FL. Jaime is currently completing her final semester of the MACS program, where she is specializing in the area of organizational development and conflict management in the workplace. Jaime plans to continue expanding her knowledge of conflict management and utilizing the skills that she has

learnt through the program to work towards a career in corporate training and development.

“My experience with the Cross-Disciplinary Studies program at NSU has been like no other. I had the unique opportunity to tailor a curriculum to best suit my own professional aspirations and career goals. I am grateful for both the classroom-based education, as well as the practical experience that I have obtained while enrolled in the program, and I look forward to applying this knowledge and understanding of conflict management to ‘real life’ situations.”

College Student Affairs

Kenrick Roberts, *Master of Science in College Student Affairs*

Kenrick grew up in St. Croix, in the US Virgin Islands, and came to Florida to pursue his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Saint Leo University in Saint Leo, FL. Kenrick has just completed his second and final year in the CSA program. Upon graduation he plans to work as an Area Coordinator in the Office of Residence Life at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

“The M.S. in College Student Affairs program here at NSU has prepared me for a

successful career in Student Affairs; the emphasis in Conflict Analysis and Resolution helped me to stand out amongst other candidates as I embarked upon my job search earlier this year. In addition, the support I received from both DCAR and Student Affairs faculty helped me to connect my experiences inside the classroom to practical situations within my graduate assistant position and at my practicum sites. I have definitely had a wonderful experience here at NSU, and I am confident that this program has prepared me to be an effective practitioner.”



Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution



Tammy Logan Garcia, *Doctorate in Conflict Analysis and Resolution*

Tammy was born and raised in Tampa, Florida where she attended the University of South Florida and graduated with her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. Tammy earned her Master of Science degree in the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution here at NSU and then decided to move forward with her education to pursue a doctoral degree in the same field. Tammy is in her first year of the doctoral program, although it is her third year with the DCAR program. Upon graduation, she plans to continue doing research and presenting at conferences. Tammy would love to eventually become a professor in the

conflict resolution field in order to help others grow and expand in their passion and knowledge just as she has.

“This program has opened so many doors for me. It has allowed me to explore a great variety of specialties such as organizational conflict and crisis intervention that I had never even imagined before. With the help and push of some amazing professors, I’ve been able to present at international conferences, put my research out there, and receive great feedback for future research ideas. It’s great to be able to be at the forefront of a growing and expanding field because the possibilities are endless from here.”

Student Highlights

Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Latoya Greenwood-Martells, *Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution*

Latoya is originally from Spanish Town, St. Catherine, Jamaica, but spent her high school years in South Florida. Latoya graduated from St. Thomas University in Miami, FL with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and a double minor in Communication Arts and Psychology. Latoya just completed her final year in the DCAR program and will be attending St. Thomas Law School next fall, with the hopes of eventually becoming a business entertainment lawyer.

“Coming into the program I wasn’t sure of what to expect because I’d never heard of Conflict Analysis. When I started, I was confused as to what the program objectives were and whether or not I was even meeting them. However, as I progressed in the curriculum everything started coming together and when I took Violence and Prevention that was the culmination of it all. I learned about the three types of violence and started classifying all of the various conflicts I’d learned about into the different strata. As a future lawyer that was quite important, as it taught me not only how to differentiate between conflicts but also how to effectively deal with them.”



Marriage and Family Therapy



Edrica D. Richardson, *Doctorate of Marriage and Family Therapy*

Edrica was born in Tampa, FL but grew up all her life in Nassau, Bahamas. Edrica received her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, with a minor in Sociology and a Certificate in Womens Studies, from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, FL. She then went on to earn her Master of Science degree in Clinical Psychology from Roosevelt University in Chicago, IL and is currently completing her

first year of the DMFT program. Edrica plans on opening her own consulting practice one day to offer therapy, as well as other services, to eventually teach and hopefully open a girls’ empowerment center.

“My experiences in the program have been ones of change and developing new epistemologies. I see things, people, and life differently now; in a more positive way. I have learned to look at life with a systemic lens.”

Maria Shields, *Doctorate of Marriage and Family Therapy*

Maria is from Rockville Centre, NY, which is a town on Long Island, about a half hour away from New York City. Maria received her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook, NY. Maria then pursued her Masters degree in Mental Health Counseling from Boston College in Boston, MA and is currently enrolled in her first year of the doctoral program in Mar-

riage and Family Therapy. Maria would like to do clinical work with individuals who have major mental illnesses and would eventually like to teach in her field.

“I am very impressed with the program. I have found the professors and staff to be extremely knowledgeable and helpful. After finishing the program, I am hoping to continue clinical work, conduct research and teach.”



Tanya Parnes, M.S. Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Editor-In-Chief

Alexandra Paroulek, B.S. in Biology, Visual Design Chief

**Marcia Sweedler, Ph.D., Interim Chair, Department of Conflict
Analysis and Resolution**

**Christopher F. Burnett, Psy.D.,
Associate Professor of Human Relationship Systems, Department of
Family Therapy**

**Alexia Georgakopoulos, Ph.D.,
Assistant Professor, Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution**

Jameson M. Mercier, Ph.D., Marriage and Family Therapy

Ron Chenail, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Family Therapy

Joy Benjamin, Ph.D., Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Cynthia Somers, Ph.D., Marriage and Family Therapy

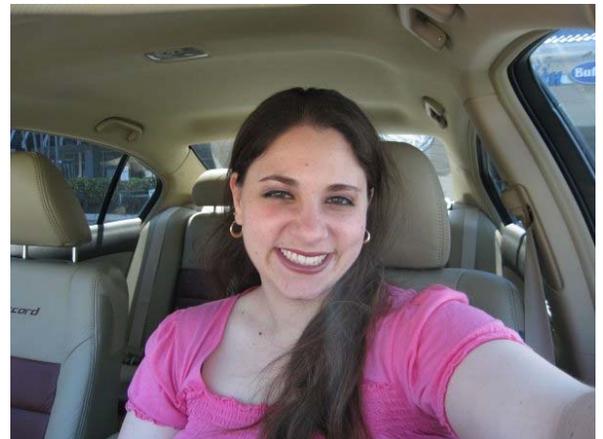
Editor's Note

Tanya Parnes

M.S. Conflict Analysis and Resolution

The DCAR program has had such a tremendous impact upon my life over these last few years. I have gained extensive knowledge about the field of conflict analysis, the causes of conflict, the phases of escalation and how to effectively communicate so as to stop or prevent the emergence of conflict. I've learned numerous theories surrounding conflict, violence, organizational conflict, and culture and conflict as well as techniques to handle these types of disputes when they arise including: mediation, facilitation, and negotiation. However, DCAR has become so much more to me than just a series of explanations about conflict and the importance of utilizing good communication skills. The program has truly changed the way that I think about and address conflict. When conflict arises, as it so frequently does, I use the tools and techniques that I have learned to handle it appropriately. I often find myself trying to

separate the positions from the interests and searching for the underlying needs in these disputes. Techniques like assertion and reflective listening have become almost second nature to me. I have even found myself playing the role of mediator on more than one occasion when conflicts have emerged between friends or family members. The field of conflict analysis and resolution has become a crucial part of my life and has really changed the way that I look at the world. As I graduate this summer with my Master of Science degree, I will embark upon my future, fully equipped with the tools necessary for success. This program has prepared me to handle that which lies ahead, and therefore, as I move forward with my studies to pursue my



Ph.D. and eventually a career in mediation, I am confident that I will be able to handle all hurdles, barriers or bumps along the way.