Welcome to the 2019-2020 UWRF School Counseling Accomplishments Magazine! Check out highlights from the past year, catch up with alumni, and celebrate outstanding students. Learn more about scholarship winners, annual conferences, and memorable moments from this year. Journey through the 2019-2020 school year and explore what our program has achieved!
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Dr. Caroline Baker  
Associate Professor, Department Chair, Program Director  
B.S. University of Tennessee  
M.A. University of Tennessee  
Ph.D. The Ohio State University

Dr. Mark Gillen  
Professor  
B.S. University of Wisconsin-Madison  
M.S. University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Ph.D. University of Arkansas

Dr. Michaela Sacra  
Assistant Professor  
B.S. University of Rochester  
M.A. University of Montana  
Ph.D. University of Montana
WHAT DOES OUR PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

Mission and Learning Outcomes

Our mission is to prepare school counselors who exhibit excellence in counseling practice and leadership, respect human dignity and cultural diversity, and commit to lifelong personal and professional growth. Our program learning outcomes require that upon graduation from the UW-River Falls Counseling program, students will be able to:

- Identify as professional school counselors through language and behaviors
- Implement and advocate for comprehensive school counseling programs
- Support student success by incorporating best practices through research, scholarly literature, and technology
- Consult, collaborate and establish partnerships with stakeholders
- Apply ethical, developmental, and cultural practices in school counseling.
PROGRAM STATISTICS

94% Employment rate after graduation – 2018-2019

91% Employment rate for graduates of past 5 years

Male Students - Fall 2019-2020
- Male Students: 24.6%
- Female Students: 75.4%

Students of Color - Fall 2019-2020
- Male Students: 19.3%
- Female Students: 80.7%

Male Students - Spring 2019-2020
- Male Students: 22.8%
- Female Students: 77.2%

Students of Color - Spring 2019-2020
- Male Students: 21.1%
- Female Students: 78.9%

100% Passed the Praxis exam

57% Acceptance rate into the program over 2 application cycles
WELCOME, NEW STUDENTS!

“WHY DID YOU CHOOSE UWRF?”

“I was looking for a school counseling program that was not only going to set me up to be an excellent school counselor but help equip me to be a leader in the profession. After speaking and hearing from alum at UWRF, I knew this was the place for me.” – Will Erickson Fall 2019

“I chose UWRF because of the excellent faculty and convenient location. I also loved the close-knit cohorts and faculty involvement. Everyone here truly cares.” – Vanessa Mercer Fall 2019

“After attending the department open house and seeing how invested the faculty were in their students, I could tell it was going to be a good fit. I also chose UWRF because it is so well known for its school counseling program, and the evening classes are perfect for students who work full time.” – Mercedes Jones Spring 2020
SCHOLARSHIPS WINNERS

Mary J Crownhart Scholarship Winner
Will Erickson

Counseling Program Alumni & Friends Scholarship Winner
Vanessa Mercer

Therese Lachecki Memorial Scholarship Winner
Fosi Hassan

Ann Laufenberg Krupkat Scholarship Winner
Audrey Williams

Vera and Clifford Brainerd Scholarship Winners
Cassie Nelson (left) Elizabeth Olson (right)
Dr. Gillen presented at the Solution Focused Brief Therapy Association International Conference in November 2019 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Dr. Gillen’s presentation was titled *Effective school counseling: School Counselors and SFBT.*

Dr. Sacra and UWRF students Brittany Schmidt and Jordanna Schluttner presented at WSCA and prepared to present at MSCA about *Suicide prevention: Creating collaborative safety plans.*

Dr. Sacra presented *Doctoral advising as a transgenerational* process at the fall 2019 Association for Counselor Education and Supervision in Seattle.

Dr. Gillen prepared a presentation on *Integrating experiential activities into your school counseling practice* for the MSCA conference.
“I love being part of the student group because it’s a way to connect with people, both in and outside of the program. Coming in as a new student and already being part of the group made me feel welcomed instantly and made the transition into graduate school much easier. As a group, we continue to find ways to support the UWRF students and community through various activities such as coordinating get-togethers, sock drives, and promoting MSCA and WSCA opportunities. – Kia Yang, Co-president

“Being a part of the student group is a wonderful way to create community within the program and to have fun with our fellow counseling students. Our students travel to campus, so being involved in the student group allows us to connect and create opportunities to get to know each other outside of class. Additionally, as future school counselors, being a student group leader has allowed us to collaborate with each other, be leaders within the program, and advocate for students here at UWRF!” – Elizabeth Olson, Co-president

Co- Presidents
Elizabeth Olson & Kia Yang

Vice President
Cassie Nelson

Secretary
Vanessa Mercer

Treasurer
Jack Miner

Co-Media Specialists
Audrey Williams & Donyal Eret

Co-Chief Strategists
Bridget Kopp & Will Erickson

Professional Organization Representatives
Krysta Hoyer, Kim Layman & Alec Shern
Dr. Gillen was awarded the College of Education and Professional Studies Lifetime Research Award for his scholarly accomplishments. Dr. Gillen has over 200 publications and presentations in the field of counseling.

The UWRF School Counseling Program Facebook page hosted the Recognition Extravaganza 2.0. The Facebook event replaced the much anticipated in-person Recognition Extravaganza, which was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Recognition Extravaganza 2.0 was an online, three-day all-day event. It reached 11,000 viewers and engaged 6,700! Scan the QR code to stay up to date.

The Counseling Program sponsored the Global Café which celebrated “counseling globally and influencing locally” by honoring the role international students have played in our school counseling program at UWRF.
Congratulations to Sarah Lozano, this year’s Outstanding Student for the UW-River Falls Counseling Program.

Sarah was hired before graduation in December 2019. She is an all-around exceptional student and has enriched the program as well as her peers’ experiences.

Thank you for your contributions to the program, Sarah!
OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

“For our own success to be real, it must contribute to the success of others”
Thank you, alumni near and far, for your contributions to the field and to society.

Akudo Omeoga  Meng Chu Huang  Laurie Moyer  Antonio Tyson

Outstanding Alumni in the Field for 9 Years or Less
Outstanding Alumni in the Field for 10 Years or More

OUTSTANDING COOPERATING PROFESSIONAL

Congratulations to Angela Goebel, this year’s Outstanding Cooperating Professional.

Angela is a graduate of the program, an exceptional middle school counselor, strong supporter of the program, supervisor for program students, and an adjunct faculty member.

Thank you for consistently giving to our program in so many ways!
Q: Why did you choose to work at Global Prodigy Academy (GPA) in South Korea?
A: After graduation, I knew I wanted to go abroad, and I chose South Korea because it was a country I wanted to stay long term. I chose GPA because it’s a small school in the countryside, but also because I was given the opportunity to design my own comprehensive school counseling program.

Q: What is the best part about working in South Korea at GPA?
A: The best part about GPA is that it’s a small school. This really allows me to get to know each student and gives me the ability to build good relationships with them.

Q: What did you gain from UW-River Falls?
A: Adaptability, flexibility, and… it depends. There’s a new thing that comes up every day and the solution is never in the books. The best thing to do is be flexible and open-minded and work with my colleagues to find possible solutions that will promote a healthy and safe environment for everyone at school.
Q: What is it like working in Hawaii?
A: Working on the island of Hawaii is awesome. It’s really laid back with a small-town vibe, which makes it easy to get to know everyone and connect with the community. I love being able to go to the beach right after school and go bodyboarding or catch the sunset.

Q: What did you love at UWRF, and how did it prepare you?
A: UWRF was great because it prepared me for the job from just about every angle. Although it was quite the culture change, I was ready and prepared to do the work. From group counseling techniques to post-secondary planning, I feel like there’s a lot in my counseling toolbox.

Q: What advice do you have for current students?
A: Make as many connections while you can in the program – having a network to reach out to is very helpful and can come in handy down the road!
**ALUMNI VIGNETTES**

**Remembering Kat Brossmer (1957-2019)**

As a program, school, and community, we honor Kat Brossmer. Kat was a middle school counselor at St. Croix Central, a friend, UWRF graduate, and past winner of the Outstanding Alumni award. We are grateful for the impact she left on the field of school counseling and all those who crossed her path.

**Brandon Wait, executive director at Paladin Career & Technical High School**

“I am currently the executive director at Paladin Career & Technical High School, a small high school serving grades 9-12+ that uses innovation and student-centered approaches to meet the individual needs of students. I chose to be a school counselor because I wanted to work with students in spaces where I could play a role in students, seeing their innate strengths.”

“Not only did the UWRF program provide me with confidence and ability in my counseling skills, but with a network of school counseling professionals that have proven to be invaluable. I have also found unexpected lifelong friends and mentors because of my connection with the program”.

**Laura Larson, author of Wild Mindfulness and counselor for ISD#279**

“My book, in short, is a children’s book about a girl that goes camping and mindfully explores the wild and nature around her. While it’s a story about her and her adventures outdoors, it’s also an opportunity for readers and listeners to mindfully experience nature for themselves through the practice of guided imagery.”

“I still work full time as a school counselor ... I’ve created something of value not only for myself, but for those around me, which is exactly what I had hoped for – a tool to teach others about the power of mindfulness, paying attention and the magic of the outdoors”.
CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

Fall 2019 graduates:  
(in order from left to right)

  Taylor Pitt  
  Alyssa Mitchell  
  Blake Mayes  
  Kyle Johnson  
  Sarah Lozano  

(group picture – Taylor not pictured)

Spring 2020 graduates:  
(in order from left to right)

  Cassie Nelson  
  Abby Schultz  
  Mark Prokopowicz  
  Kayla Ruthenbeck Powell  
  Kaley Stiles  
  Corrine Spaeth  
  Brian Buechner  
  Kaltun Abdikarani  
  Maggie Carlson  
  Elizabeth Olson  
  Stephanie Drow  
  Arnise Roberson