Welcome to the 2020-2021 UWRF School Counseling Accomplishments Magazine! Check out the highlights from the past year, catch up with alumni, and celebrate outstanding students. Learn more about the scholarship winners, annual conferences, and memorable moments from this year. Journey through the 2020-2021 school year and explore what our program has achieved!
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Program Faculty

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PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT CHAIR, COUNSELING 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?

- **60% Acceptance Rate this Year**

- **Increasing Representation in the Field**
  - 20% male students
  - 18% students of color

- **Student-to-Faculty Ratio**
  - **12 : 1**

- **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 in the broadest sense, and commit to lifelong personal and professional growth. In addition, 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.
Welcome, New Students!

This year looked a little different! Our faculty met virtually with new students during the 2020-2021 school year. Welcome to UWRF!

I chose to attend UWRF’s School Counseling program because it came highly recommended from school counselors I worked with as a teacher. Additionally, I like that River Falls sits in a blended area between urban, suburban, and rural schools. Because of this variety I felt I would be able to better challenge myself and work with students from all backgrounds. My first year in the program has been wonderful, especially given the uncharted territory of online grad school! All my professors have been professional, dynamic, and flexible.

-Geri Muller, Fall 2020

Since I started the program in the fall, all of my classes have been virtual! Even though I have only been able to see my classmates and professors over Zoom/Webex, I feel like I have been able to really get to know my peers and am looking forward to when we can be in person. I have been a part of the student group since my first semester and I think it has been able to make me feel even that more connected to the program and I would definitely recommend current and new students to join student group as well!

-Kate Brogan, Fall 2020
Scholarship Winners

THERESE LACHECKI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

WILL ERICKSON

This scholarship is donated by UWRF graduate, adjunct instructor, and SPPS counselor Ben Herman and family to honor his late aunt.

COUNSELING PROGRAM ALUMNI & FRIENDS SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

EMILY SIES-MANDEL

This scholarship is funded through the generosity of Evergreen and single donors to the UWRF Counseling Program.

JERRY LIDDELL-PAULINE MCCONNELL SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

HSAKUSHEE ZAN

The Jerry Liddell-Pauline McConnell scholarship was created in honor of the recently retired UWRF Counseling & School Psychology department associate Jerry Liddell. The scholarship serves to support first generation and underrepresented students in the program and is funded by individual and Evergreen donors!
Scholarship Winners

ANN LAUFENBERG
KRUPKAT SCHOLARSHIP
WINNERS

ALI OSMAN (LEFT)
TORI WALSH (RIGHT)

The Ann Laufenberg Krupkat Scholarship is sponsored by Connie Smith & Rachel Blume as a memorial tribute to their mother (Class of 1948 - River Falls State Teachers College)

VERA AND CLIFFORD
BRAINERD SCHOLARSHIP
WINNERS

EMILY SPOFFORD (LEFT)
FOSI HASSAN (RIGHT)

The Vera & Clifford Brainerd Memorial Scholarship is funded by Dr. Mark Gillen and his wife, Kate Smith, in honor of Mark’s maternal grandparents.
Professional Organizations

Fall 2020 MSCA Conference

Although virtual, this year’s MSCA conference remained nothing less than beneficial. Spanning from November 16-17, presentations discussed topics such as equity, classroom management, ethical dilemmas, online learning, and so on.

"I hold a core belief that the solutions are in the community. Whether we are cultivating anti-racism or attending to COVID-19 truths, we must look for opportunities and call one another into generative spaces." - Tanis Henderson, 2020 MSCA President

UWRF's own Dr. Mark Gillen, Dr. Caroline Baker and Professor Ben Herman, along with students Kary Kuenzli, Sara Lindsay, Nicole Tetzlaff, and Kia Yang, presented Integrating experiential activities into your school counseling practice (see them in action in the lower right photo). Dr. Mark Gillen also co-presented How to Land that Dream Job!
What made you apply to be a MSCA mentee?
ES-M: I viewed it as an excellent opportunity to network with those directly in the field through attending the professional conference.

ES: This was my first year attending the MSCA conference and I wanted to get the most out of my experience! The mentorship program seemed to be the best way to connect/network!

Describe the partnership between you and your mentor.
ES-M: My mentor is Pam Potter Langley, counselor at Zumbrota Mazeppa Elementary School. Throughout this experience, we’ve been able to connect through video chats, text messages, and e-mails. We attended a number of MSCA sessions together and were able to process the information. We really connected, and we even share an appreciation of art. In fact, we’ve discussed ways to remain connected after MSCA through my work in the UWRF program. Pam’s supportive and she is open to being a resource for me, and I look forward to remaining connected to her.

ES: I was fortunate to get connected with last year’s MSCA President- Marguerite Ohrtman as my mentor. Marguerite reached out to introduce herself right away and I met with her! She was extremely affable and open to answering all of my questions. It has been a pleasant experience so far and I’m grateful that I’ll have this connection in the future as well!

What have you learned so far in your experience?
ES-M: Folks are very inter-connected, even virtually at MSCA. In some professions and programs folks tend to be territorial with their information and resources, but this was not the case. MSCA presented meaningful and real-time topics that addressed social injustices that we as professionals can help our communities navigate.

ES: From the sessions I have attended so far, I’ve taken away some valuable and practical tools that will be helpful resources as a future school counselor. I’ve learned about different strategies to use for mental health support, restorative practices, ethical tips, and icebreaker games.
The School Counseling Student Association, also referred to as the Student Group includes all students of the program. Upon admission, students are automatic members. The group is led by voluntary student leaders that plan and organize activities and projects such as student socials, National School Counseling Week, comprehensive exam study groups, conferences, mentorship experiences, orientations, and open houses,

"Not only did I gain experiences that will help me as a school counselor, but I got to know my peers on a different level professionally and socially. Being a part of the student group gave me a sense of belonging on campus and in the program and helped me become confident in my abilities as a counselor."

Krysta Hoyer, Co-President

For me, the Student Group provides me an opportunity to meet my peers who are in different stages of the program. Creating a space for me to hear about their experience and build friendships with them.

Will Erickson, Co-President
This Year's Highlights

The UWRF Counseling Program looked a little different this year with courses adapting to virtual settings.

This year, Minnesota Public Television ran a half hour documentary on the development of positive school climate. Among the featured schools was Paladin Academy, headed by UWRF alum Brandon Wait.

Program alum, Ger Vue, was a guest on National Public Radio. Ger discussed the response of his school to challenges related to distance learning, growing mental health needs, and strategies for addressing the unique needs of students.
Our Outreach

Facebook Celebration Week

Celebration Week was hosted virtually through our Facebook page. This week recognized students, alumni, and friends of the program and their accomplishments this past year!

This week, we also:

- Posted 93 times
- Had 371 page views
- Got 8 NEW page likes, for a total of 594
  - 499 of these are in the USA
  - 47 are in Somalia
  - 11 are in Kenya
  - Others across more countries!

WE REACHED OVER 4,000 PEOPLE!

Connect with us on our Facebook page!

(Aim your phone camera at the QR code to go straight to our page)
Outstanding Student Nominees and Finalist

Top Row: (Left to Right)
Krysta Hoyer
Jessica Hundt
Bridget Kopp

Middle Row: (Left to Right)
Kary Kuenzli
Kim Layman
Sara Lindsay

Bottom Row: (Left to Right)
Jack Miner
Brittany Schmidt
Emily Spofford

Congratulations to Kia Yang, this year’s Outstanding Student for the UW-River Falls Counseling Program.

Kia has served as the Student Group Vice President, she volunteered countless times, and she goes above and beyond in her academic work.

Thank you for your dedication to the program, Kia!
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.

EMILY ROSE  
SAID GARAAD  
RAQIYA MOHAMED

OUTSTANDING ALUMNI IN THE FIELD FOR 9 YEARS OR LESS

ANGELA GOEBEL  
MARK ENSRUD

OUTSTANDING ALUMNI IN THE FIELD FOR 10 YEARS OR MORE
Congratulations to the Jackson Middle School counseling program, this year's Outstanding Cooperating Professionals. Pictured here (L-R) Jason Ferkinhoff, Erin Kelly, Karen Ibarra, and Kyra Pasche.

The JMS team have been strong supporters of the program, taking on practicum and internship students and maintaining strong connections with the university.

Thank you for your continued support!

Congratulations to Jerry Liddell, this year's Outstanding Friend of the UWRF Counseling Program.

Jerry served as the UWRF Counseling and School Psychology department associate for over ten years, providing tremendous aid to students and staff. Thank you for all of your support over the years!
Alumni Around the World

Highlights

Antonio Tyson
DUBAI

"I have decided to stay in Dubai. I feel that I have a few more items I want to accomplish before I move out of UAE. I will enter into my 4th year next year and will continue to work in Elementary. Some highlights throughout this year is that I have had the opportunity to work with out Student Ambassadors and Student Council members. With the Student Ambassadors, we aim to provide these students with leadership opportunities by helping with the transition of students and parents."

Kanong Lee (Right)
JEANJU, SOUTH KOREA

"There was a surge of Covid-19 cases in our area, so we are busy trying to switch back to hybrid learning. As of now, I'm currently working on planning for the next school year, as well as the upcoming graduation and AP exams. We're still working on if next school year will continue to be hybrid, but we are trying to be hopeful that we can open school to all students."

Danyelle Fisher
TOKYO, JAPAN

After three wonderful and life changing years in Japan, I have decided to return back to Minnesota this summer and am currently interviewing and applying for jobs! I am trying to be as present as possible with my current students and enjoy what time I have left with them. I have such a special close relationship to my junior class and am so sad to be leaving them before they graduate. It has been an eye opening period of growth and learning for me, both personally and professionally. I cannot recommend moving and working abroad enough, so make the choice to push yourself out of your comfort zone and past all those excuses and make it happen!
Corryne Spaeth
School counselor at Nansha College Preparatory Academy (NCPA) in China

What is it like working in China? What made you decide to work there?
My reasons for deciding to work in China were based on the quality of the school (and counseling program in particular) and the location. Nansha is a growing district of Guangzhou but is still fairly quiet compared to the city center. It’s really easy to go into downtown Guangzhou for a day or travel a bit further to Shenzhen. Travel to Hong Kong is still restricted, but eventually that will be another easy travel option.

What did you like most about UWRF’s program? How has it prepared you for working as a counselor, especially abroad?
The UWRF program prepared me to be an international school counselor by providing a space for students to consider different perspectives and learning how to navigate relationships with students, colleagues, and families. When there is resistance or differing opinions, I’m grateful for all of the opportunities I had as a student to practice my counseling skills in lab, practicum and internship.

What are some daily challenges and/or highlights?
Some challenges are of course the language barrier but I’ve been diligently studying Mandarin since I’ve arrived here, and I have a lot of resources and support from school if I need help translating or navigating something. Some recent highlights have been enjoying the warm and sunny weather, trying new foods and experiencing Lunar New Year in China.
Alumni Vignettes

Heather Sweeney
School counselor at Webster Middle School

"Starting a new job during a pandemic may be a bit mad. After two years in Antigo where I led the development of their first K12 program and ran their first small groups (thanks UWRF), I got recruited down to Cedarburg School District. We are rolling on here with our third week of masks required, assigned seating, socially distant socializing, in person learning at Webster Middle School in Cedarburg Wisconsin. But I did bring a little UWRF down south and put it on display behind my desk. #counseling through the plexiglass."

Niki Johnson
School counselor at Hudson Middle School

"I started at Hudson Middle School in August after working as a school counselor in a high school setting for 2 years. I joined HMS as an additional counselor position, so we now have one counselor per grade level and one counselor working on a systemic, building-wide level. It has been great so far helping the team grow from 3 to 4 counselors and getting to know my students! Fun fact - I did my practicum at Hudson Middle School back in Fall 2016!"

Megan Relson
School counselor at Valley Middle School

"I started a new school counseling job during a global pandemic working with 378 6th graders in a hybrid and digital learning format. I am quite frankly utterly amazed at their talent and resiliency. This school year I have two phenomenal teammates at Valley Middle School, Tracy Walberg (UWRF internship supervisor) and John Bronson (UWRF alum). I’m really loving how much I’m learning from my counseling peers."
Congratulations, Graduates!

Fall 2020 Graduates (Left to Right)

- Molly Romano
- Korbyn Angstman
- Paige LaQua
- Mohamoud Mohamed
- Jessica Hundt
- Kia Yang
- Bridget Kopp

Spring 2021 Graduates (Left to Right)

- Nicole Tetzlaff
- Emily Spofford
- Brittany Schmidt
- Shirley Yang
- Kim Layman
- Kary Kuenzli
- Krysta Hoyer
- Fosi Hassan
- Sara Lindsay
- Michelle Ritten
- Jack Miner