



SPRING 2024

# Counseling Psychology Newsletter

Go Mean Green!

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# Greetings from the Program Director

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Dear Alums, Colleagues, and Friends,  
  
Greetings from UNT! I hope you enjoy the nice spring weather we have lately.

I would like to share with everyone some exciting news. The pre-doctoral internship match results were revealed last month. All of our 6 students who were applying for their pre-doctoral internship training in the 2024-2025 academic year were matched with their top preferences. Our 100% match rate is substantially above the national average of 87% in phase I which is indicative of the high quality of our clinical training. We are very proud of these 6 advanced students (Will Archuleta, Melissa Briones, Justin Harker, Evan Lawson, Lindsey Slavin, Julian Yoon). Please join me to congratulate them and see page 15 of the program newsletter for information regarding where they are going to complete their pre-doctoral internship training in 2024-2025 AY.

Our program was conducting a search to recruit another new tenure-track counseling psychology faculty member joining our program. The search was successfully concluded in early spring and Dr. NaYeon Yang has accepted our offer in January of 2024 to join UNT and become a core program faculty starting Fall 2024. Dr. Yang completed her doctoral training from University of Maryland. Her research areas include grief, meaning of life, vocational psychology, and multicultural issues. We will provide more information about Dr. Yang in our Fall 2024 issue of program's newsletter.

This year's admission cycle was concluded with a great success. We conducted our admission virtual Interview Day activities with 31 applicants on 02/02. Then, we invited the top eight candidates to visit our campus on 02/23. Many "Thanks" to our program GSAs



# Greetings from the Program Director

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and student representatives (Shiho Toyama, Anna Straughan, Dafina Chisolm-Salau, and Issy Franks) for their excellent work in coordinating with many current students to complete these two important events. The process of implementing these two events once again illustrates our exceptional team work and collaborative community we have developed and maintained in the program. All of the eight candidates have accepted our admission offers. We are excited about the incoming cohort and will provide more information about each of the eight students in our 2024 cohort in the Fall issue of our newsletter.

The university continues to grow in its size and reputation. UNT celebrates a record high enrollment –nearly 47,000 students on campus now. If any program alums have a plan to visit Denton, please let me know. It is always delightful to meet up with our alums and to catch up with you over lunch or afternoon coffee/beer.

Chiachih DC Wang, Ph.D.  
Director, Counseling Psychology  
Ph.D. Program



# Greetings from the Chair

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Counseling Psychology Students,

It's hard to believe there are only 5 weeks left in the semester. I hope your year is going well!

There are many things going on in the department right now including the selection of the fall graduate student cohort for all three programs, faculty recruiting, conference season and department visitors. Speaking of visitors, I'd like to mention the Bonney Lecture Fund. I would encourage you and the undergrad students, in your classes, to attend these lectures held Friday afternoons each month, from 3:00-4:00. It's a great opportunity to hear professionals from around the country present current information on psychological topics.

I enjoyed sharing refreshments, providing department updates, and addressing the concerns of all the grad students who attended the department town hall. One of the topics we covered was faculty recruitment. I appreciate all students who have been able to participate in candidate job talks and candidate/student discussion

sessions. Your input and survey comments have been really valuable in helping us select and hire new faculty for the fall. Please try to attend. This should be considered part of your training and it's a great experience to be involved.

Another topic we discussed was possible increased student travel funding opportunities through the Bonney Lecture Fund. The possible uses of these funds have been expanded and give us more flexibility in supporting valuable activities like research-related student travel. Regarding travel, I want to remind you that we will continue to offer a one-time match of \$200 during the 2023-24 academic year, including summer, for any TGS and/or CLASS travel award you receive.

As always, reach out if you would like to meet with me or contact your student leadership to coordinate student and chair events.

Sincerely,

Don Dougherty





# Faculty Updates

## Dr. Hook

Hi, I hope this newsletter finds you doing well! This year has been a bit of a different year for me, as I have been on sabbatical and modified workload for parental leave. But I am thankful for the time that I have been able to spend with my family and work on some writing projects. In 2023, I had two books come out. The first was a parenting book with a focus on adoption and foster care ([Link here](#)).

The second was a book aimed to help graduate students navigate the research process and complete their thesis or dissertation ([Link here](#)). I'm also currently working on updating the Cultural Humility book for a second edition. One other interesting thing professionally is that my colleagues and I in the middle of running a large grant on developing interventions to promote intellectual humility ([link here](#)). We had our kickoff meeting this past Fall, and I'm really excited about the projects that were funded. The Positive Psychology lab is doing great, and my students (Heidi, Sabrina, Caleb, Jacob, and Meg) continue to make good progress on their research projects and grow professionally. On a personal note, Autumn is 3 years old, and Caleb is 7 months old. They keep us on our toes and are so much fun! Jenn and I also ran the Dallas Half Marathon in December and got to spend some time in Canada visiting her family over the holiday break.





# Faculty Updates

## Dr. Jones



Members of the BWell Lab have been very productive over the past few months and are excited about the Spring semester. Members of the lab are working on developing and defending their thesis and dissertation projects, and some members have manuscripts that have been published or received a positive review. Students have also received awards and recognition for their scholarship. This Spring the lab will host workshop focused on social support and friendship for undergraduate students at UNT – we are eagerly planning for this event. For more information about our lab, please see <https://www.bwelllab.org> or @bwell\_lab.

# Faculty Updates

## Dr. Wang

We have had a productive time in the past few months since last issue of the program's newsletter. Melissa and Evan were matched with their top choices of pre-doctoral internship programs. While Evan will be moving up to St. Paul in Minnesota for his internship, Melissa will stay in the DFW area completing her internship at Momentous Institute. Congratulations to both of them and best wishes for a smooth transition to the next stage of their professional development. Hannah and Ashley both completed their thesis projects and successfully defended the thesis



in December 2023. Additionally, Cachet and Tiffany passed their thesis proposals and have been diligently working on completing their thesis projects. Our two UG lab members, Sarah and Cynthia also passed their honors thesis proposals in Fall 2023. Both of them are scheduled to graduate in May 2024 and completion of their honors thesis will be a strong demonstration of their research accomplishments to wrap up their undergraduate career.

Six lab members (Hannah, Anna, Tiffany, Ayurda, Christi, & Sarah) and I attended the 2024 National Multicultural Conference & Summit in Santa Fe this past January. We had a great time presenting our research findings in three symposia, 1 round table, and 1 poster presentation together, attending several good talks, and managing to have a dinner together in downtown Santa Fe on the first night to relax and share our conference experiences. Our lab had a multicultural potluck gathering in late October of 2023 at Dr. Wang's house. Each attending lab member brought a home-made dish and





# Faculty Updates

## Dr. Wang (cont.)

shared how the dish was representative of their cultural backgrounds and/or family upbringing. Several lab members invited their significant others and we had a wonderful evening together. Please see the group photos taken in the 2024 NMCS and lab social gathering. I visited my family in Taiwan during the 2023 Thanksgiving break to celebrate my mom's 90-year-old birthday. During this visit, we (my wife, Tiffany, Samantha, & myself) brought my mom to a trip to Ali Mountain (Alishan) in Taiwan. Alishan is the place with world famous hiking trails going through many giant cypress "sacred"



trees because many of them are more than 40 meters tall and older than 3000+ years. I have attached a photo of me and my mom taken in front of one of the sacred trees in Alishan. We also got a chance to ride on the high-speed train in Taiwan (300 km/h) and eat a lot of wonderful foods during the visit. It was a short visit but we had a lot of fun there.

# Alumni Spotlight

## Dr. Ashley Geerts-Perry

### 2022 Graduate

“Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.”

- Ferris Bueller

I’ve never been very good at ‘stopping and looking around’. For me the rigors of academia, with its constant evaluations, deadlines, and hurdles, resulted in a cloud of judgment and fear of failure that followed me around. I’d reach one milestone and immediately set my sights to the next, always focused dead ahead as life moved around me. While this may not be the overarching experience for all trainees, I’m sure each of us can connect in some way. My hope was that after I graduated, I could finally stop and look around, but that damn cloud persisted into my post-doc year, rained a lot during EPPP prep (yes, I mean crying!), and only started to dissipate when I was finally



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fully licensed. Nearly a year later, and I still notice remnants of that trainee cloud hanging around because it is actually really hard to stop and look around after years of moving quick and looking only ahead.

Now, in my role as supervisor and Training Director overseeing the APA doctoral internship program at Momentous Institute, I am able to foster a healing and reparative training experience for my students. I am so unbelievably proud to oversee a program that values trainees as people first. We engage collaboratively with our interns to support slowing down, define what healthy boundaries mean for them, and recognize the power of their unique person-of-the-therapist. While there’s always a next step associated with becoming a psychologist, that doesn’t mean trainees have to sacrifice living life to their fullest. For any students interested in learning more about training at the Momentous Institute, I encourage you to look at our website or reach out to me

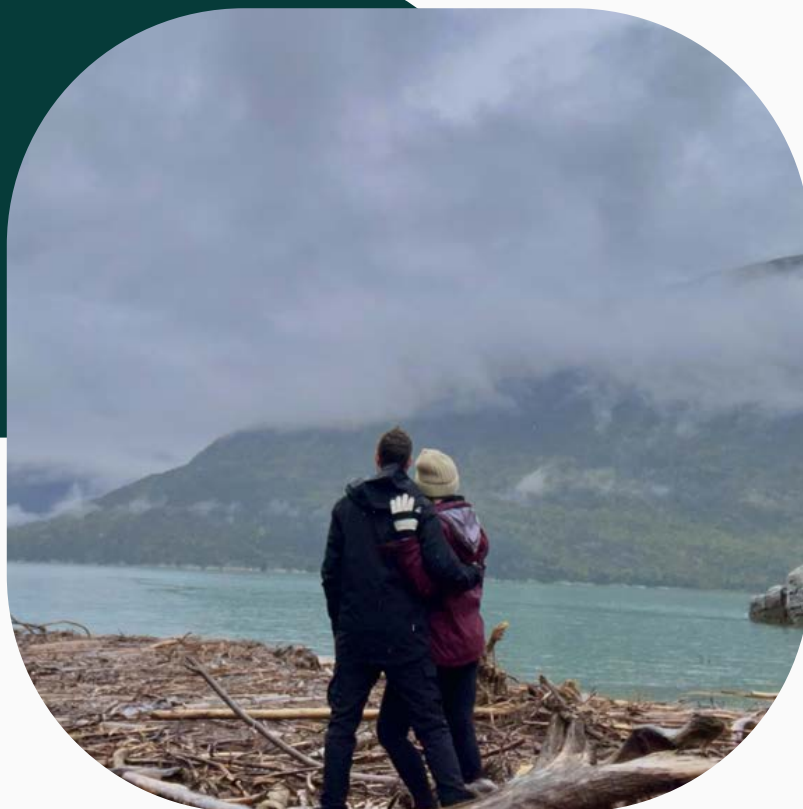


# Alumni Spotlight

## Dr. Geerts-Perry (cont.)

directly (aperry@momentousinstitute.org). We are a nonprofit community mental health agency in Dallas that provides accessible and affordable mental health services to children and families from primarily under-resourced communities. We've enjoyed working with many UNT practicum students in the past and this coming year will have 2 UNT interns.

So how have I personally been learning to slow down? Well I go back to Ferris Bueller and have started allowing myself to take a random day off for absolutely no reason. I also recently returned from a 2-week cruise to Alaska, where I saw breaching whales, hiked



through rainforests, froze near glaciers, and gazed at the Northern Lights. While I still struggle with the full stop to look around, I've found my balance for slowing down while continuing to pursue my career goals. In addition to working at Momentous, I recently started a private practice in Frisco, where I provide therapy and assessments part-time (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/dr-ashley-geerts-perry-assessment-and-therapy-frisco-tx/1132998>).

This substantial increase in my income also meant me and my husband could finally buy our first home. As it warms up, I'm excited to slow down, garden, and lounge by my pool with friends on my Ferris Bueller days off.

# Alumni Spotlight

## Dr. Laura Captari 2020 Graduate

I'm so grateful for how formative my time was at UNT, and it's a privilege to be able to share a bit about what has unfolded since! Living through the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic in NYC—while on internship at Mt. Sinai Beth Israel—has shaped my professional trajectory and interests in trauma, burnout, and resilience. I remember telling a colleague early-on, “By the end of this, we're all going to lose someone close to us.” I personally lost several group members to COVID-19, and journeyed with kids and their families as they were experiencing massive disruption and disconnection from supports.

Surrounded by reminders of mortality and life's uncertainties, I got curious about how those in helping roles, in particular, would be impacted. What might they draw from to process and make meaning of the suffering and tragedy they were witnessing? How would they navigate ambiguous high-stakes decisions that could set the stage for moral injury? How might the toll of their work impact their partners and families? What could they draw from within their cultural or spiritual context to not



just survive, but hopefully find moments of flourishing? As the world has moved on from the pandemic, I now spend a good majority of my time convening spaces for helping professionals around these questions.

In my role at Boston University's Danielsen Institute (where I came for postdoc and haven't left!), we recently conducted a systematic review of the literature in these areas, and found that, while there are hundreds of studies documenting risks for burnout and vicarious traumatization, there are only a couple of intervention studies. Drawing from my training at UNT in systems thinking, group work, and culturally responsive approaches, we've developed and are testing an 8-week online community-based intervention called CHRYSALIS to support mental health professionals, chaplains, clergy, and others in helping roles.

While professional recommendations emphasize self-care, empirical evidence suggests this is inadequate. A primary focus on self-care can implicitly communicate that if we're struggling, it's our fault, while ignoring systemic and organizational pressures that ceaselessly pull for more. Self-care is also rooted in Eurocentric, individualistic understandings of health, in contrast with more communal and relational frameworks.



# Alumni Spotlight

## Dr. Captari (cont.)

In CHRYSALIS, we argue for a paradigm shift from self-care to formation, focused more holistically on who each of us is and is becoming. Through grant funding from the Peale Foundation, we're currently conducting an RCT of two CHRYSALIS program formats—an online process-oriented group and individual self-reflection/experiential writing (Captari et al., in press). This space offers the opportunity to:

- Process the psychological, emotional, relational, and spiritual/existential impacts of companioning others amidst trauma and suffering.
- Identify and develop personal capacities and culturally embedded strengths to metabolize these impacts in order to build resilience and thrive as a whole person.
- Reflect on intersectional identities, life experiences, and core values, and how these inform work.
- Interrogate and resist personal, relational, and systemic pressures that are counter to well-being, while working toward systemic change.

For any alums who might be interested, this program is free, online, and we enroll new cohorts each quarter! [More information on that here.](#)

On the personal front, my husband Carl and I stay on our toes with our one-year-old, Charlie, who is a bundle of joy and energy! We enjoy exploring New England and get outside to be in nature whenever we can. As a researcher, therapist, partner, and mom, it's an ongoing journey developing and integrating each of these identities, but I aim to embrace my humanness and welcome that from others.

If you're ever in the Boston area, don't hesitate to reach out ([lcaptari@bu.edu](mailto:lcaptari@bu.edu))! We'll also be at APA as a family in August and would love to meet up.

# Student Spotlights

## Dominique Doty



Dear UNT Counseling Psychology community,

My name is Dominique Doty and I am a sixth year in the Child and Family cluster. Although it's hard for me to believe sometimes, I am halfway through my internship year at the South Texas VA. When I stepped onto campus as a first-year not knowing what the next five plus one years of my life would look like, the prospect of being an intern on the verge of beginning a postdoctoral fellowship was not even a thought in my head. As I reflect on my journey thus far, I am grateful for every experience that has in one way or another paved the way to where I am today. If someone would have told me six years ago that by the time I embark on the challenge of being an independent practitioner, I would feel ready to take the plunge, I would not have believed them. Even now, sometimes I feel like I need to pinch myself to grasp how far I have come.

However, from the moment I stepped onto campus, I was told over and over again, "when the time has come, you'll be ready." That mysterious, mystical piece of wisdom has proven true throughout my training. As a first year, I could not even fathom the level of confidence it would take to sit in a therapy room with someone for fifty minutes and guide them through their pain, but somehow when the time came, I was ready for the challenge. As a second year, when I taught

a course for the first time in my life and the scariest thing to me in the world was giving presentations, I was able to meet that challenge. This pattern continued throughout graduate school and peaked on internship match day. Despite the confidence that everyone had about UNT Counseling Psychology students maintaining a 100% match rate, I doubted myself and was proven wrong when I successfully matched. Finally learning from these experiences, I decided to have a different attitude for my postdoctoral interviews and lean into believing in my clinical competence. Admittedly, this changed my entire experience, as I finally felt like a budding professional rather than a student, and for the first time, I can honestly say that I feel ready for this next step in my career. So, my advice for those just beginning their journey is, trust the process. You may not feel ready for every challenge that you'll face, but that's ok. You are ready; you are stronger and more resilient than you think you are, and that will carry you through as you grow both as a professional and as a person. One piece of knowledge from my time at UNT that I will carry with me throughout my career is that, you don't always know why something is happening or why you're going through something, but once you make it to the other side, you wouldn't have it any other way, and you will be ok.



# Student Spotlights

## Carmyn Hayes

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I am a fourth year. That statement still feels strange on my tongue as I sit here with my napping cats trying to find the words that accurately reflect my time in this program. Time is a funny construct that I am slowly wrapping my head around. Because what do you mean I am a fourth year with IRC and dissertation proposal and internship essays approaching all in this calendar year?! Your time in this program moves fast; I did not fully understand what people meant by that until I experienced it during my time here. My cohort and I (Math Club) started the program in the Fall of the year of disruption which was 2020. It was a tough time filled with tougher conversations, tears, growth areas, and lots of laughs and trying to enjoy grad school.

At this point in the program, I think it is safe to say I have learned how to work hard and play harder. I owe a huge thanks to my community for that. This program has presented me with so many great opportunities from working with UNT Women's Basketball to working with TWU Athletics with Lindsey to working with the man, the myth, the legend himself, Dr. Trent Petrie, and the Dallas Wings. Through these great opportunities, I have learned the importance of balance and boundaries, so that I can show up at my best every time. That balance and practice of boundaries have looked different for me every year. First year, there was spending time with people at the Pineapple house and playing games. Second year, well, I used my cat (Mango) as an excuse to not stay out late. Third year tested my self-care practices. Friends love to joke that my memory is terrible...sad part is it's not much of a joke. There were several times in 3rd year when my life felt like that SpongeBob meme. You know the file cabinet on fire one...yea! Those 12/13-hour days did that to me. Through the boundaries I set, I was able to find

# Student Spotlights

## Carmyn Hayes (cont.)

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time for myself every weekend, whether painting, going on a walk, or spending time with friends. I made sure to do something that I knew would fill my cup for the long week ahead. And now, fourth year, I leisurely read, binge TV shows (highly recommend Mr. & Mrs. Smith), and do whatever else my heart may desire that weekday or weekend.

The truth is that every year is hard in this program. The “hard” looks different each year from a heavy course load to balancing various responsibilities to being at a minimum of 2 practicum sites to preparing for internship. It is a lot, and we get better at handling hard. So my advice to you is to say ‘no’, respond to that non-urgent email tomorrow, take that trip, use that excused/unexcused absence, and do whatever it is you need to do to show up at your best the next day. This program and the work you need to get done will all be there tomorrow. Right now, focus on you. Pick up some hobbies. Find your community. These are the years you will not forget, so try to thrive during the process.

If you had told 13-year-old Carmyn that she would attend grad school in Texas to become a counseling and sport psychologist and not a medical doctor (Callie Torres was that girl!), adopt a cat (I strongly disliked cats), develop lifelong friendships, meet her fiancé, and adopt another cat (Miles)...she would have laughed you out the room. But, I guess that’s the beauty of life. No matter how much we want to be in control not everything goes according to plan. Here’s to God/life/karma/luck working it out in the end and, in my case, a lot better than I ever could have imagined.





# Congratulations!

## Faculty Senate Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award 2023-2024 Winner

### McKenzie Watson



Receiving the Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award this year has been an incredibly humbling experience. When I was told about the award, I was immediately filled with gratitude and a deep sense of honor, knowing that I have

had the privilege to make a meaningful impact during my time at UNT. Looking back over the past two years, I can appreciate the tremendous amount of growth and learning that has taken place within myself and my students. When I began teaching my first course two years ago, I had no idea who I was as a teacher and so I did my best to show up authentically with students and meet them where they were at. Now, I have a better sense of my teaching philosophy, but my favorite part about my teaching experience continues to be getting to know students. When I see past undergraduate students in the halls of Terrill and they stop to tell me what they are up to now, it brightens my week. Few things have brought me as much joy or hope this year as watching our first years learn and truly understand assessment.

I also want to recognize and celebrate our program. I simply would not be where I am today without all of the work that my professors, supervisors, and mentors have poured into me throughout my graduate career. I am immensely grateful to everyone who has been on this journey with me for the mentorship, collaboration, and support that I have received. I want to thank everyone I have had the opportunity to teach for allowing me to be a part of your journey. Finally, I want to express my sincerest thanks to Dr. Hogge and Dr. Kaminski for nominating me and working hard to help me win this award.

## Congratulations to our 2024-2025 Internship Cohort!

**William**

**Archuleta**

University of Texas  
Health at San  
Antonio  
San Antonio, TX

**Melissa Briones**

Momentous  
Institute  
Dallas, TX

**Justin Harker**

Johns Hopkins  
University  
Baltimore, MD

**Evan Lawson**

Natalis Psychology  
Training Program  
St. Paul, MN

**Lindsey Slavin**

Stanford University  
Stanford, CA

**Julian Yoon**

Duke University -  
Counseling  
Durham, NC



# Student Reps Column

Hello & greetings from your 2023-2024 student reps, Issy & Dafina!

Only a few weeks left in this academic year. We're almost there and can't believe how time is flying!

Thank you to every single person who helped before, during, and after interview day this year! It was another long, yet successful day that even some of the applicants were impressed by. We truly have such a great group of people in this program that make students want to come to school here. We want to thank the current GSAs for their efforts in organizing Interview Day, as well as previous GSAs and Student Representatives who helped lay the foundation to make planning go smoother. We are so excited to welcome the new cohort!

As the semester rolls on, we are getting closer to the end of the road for some of our Counseling Psychology Program students. We are sad to see you all go, but we are also so happy and excited for you as you take these next steps for your career! Although we are all super



busy, be sure to make time for those who will be going on internship in the Fall. We will miss them once they are gone! Thank you all so much for being a resource to all new students in the program each year and sharing what you've learned so they can have a less stressful transition into our challenging program.

Our Spring 2024 Town Hall meeting was a great success! Thank you to all students and faculty who arrived early in the morning to participate in this event. We really appreciate all the input from everyone, and we are grateful for the changes that will be put into place. We must continue to create a safe environment where students can share their concerns, discuss solutions, and see changes

# Student Reps and GSA Column

made. We plan to continue working with reps from other programs and the Dean to continue making improvements to our program.

To our fellow students, please continue to share with us your concerns and ideas. We love hearing from you and want to support everyone in having a positive experience at UNT and in the Counseling Psychology program. Make sure you are practicing self-care, setting boundaries, and asking for help when you need it. We are all in this together and want everybody to win and take care of themselves!

## A Big “Thank You” From Your GSAs

Many thanks to everyone who helped with this year’s interview day and the prospective student visit. We can’t wait to welcome our incoming cohort in the fall, which will be here before we know it!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue of the newsletter! If you’re interested in contributing to future issues, please email either of the GSAs at:

Shiho Toyama:  
[ShihoToyama@my.unt.edu](mailto:ShihoToyama@my.unt.edu)

Anna Straughan:  
[AnnaStraughan@my.unt.edu](mailto:AnnaStraughan@my.unt.edu)

