



A Warm Welcome to the Counseling Psychology Program

From Training Director, Mary J. Heppner

Dear students,

I want to warmly welcome you to our Website and more broadly to the Counseling Psychology Program at MU. We hope the Website will give you a multifaceted picture about our students, faculty, core values, and the culture of our program as well as much needed technical information.

You might be interested to know that our program has been continuously accredited by American Psychological Association (APA) since 1953 making it the 5th oldest program in the country. Over 750 doctoral students and hundreds of masters students have graduated from our program over these many years and we are so proud of them and all they have accomplished in many diverse occupational settings. I like to think of it as our program's influence rippling out across the globe in very positive and productive ways.

Students and faculty alike have helped us build a program that we are very proud of and one that we feel has many strengths. Our program won has two awards from the APA that I would like to tell you about because they were particularly meaningful to us and speak to our core values as a program. First our department won the **APA Graduate Student Award for Department of the Year for Outstanding Mentoring of Graduate Students**, given to only one program annually within all of psychology. This award was particularly meaningful to us because we value our mentoring of graduate students very much and have a long tradition of working closely with our students in an apprenticeship model. Our faculty members are very invested in the training of our students and thus this external recognition was a significant tribute to our department.

Also in 2000, the Counseling Psychology program won the prestigious **APA Suinn Award for Outstanding Recruitment and Retention of Racial and Ethnic Minority Students**, which is awarded to a highly select number of programs within all of psychology nationally. We also have a strong emphasis on multiculturalism and work very hard on recruiting and retaining outstanding racial and ethnic minority students. We believe that having a diverse student and faculty group enriches our training program in a multitude of ways.

Even though our faculty and students have won numerous other awards as well which we would encourage you to review in this summary (provide link to executive summary), we wanted to highlight these two as they are particularly important to our identity as a program.

External accolades are meaningful and provide a tribute to the hard work of our faculty, staff, and students in making this a good place to work and learn. But that doesn't tell the whole story. To know about Missouri is to know more about the culture we try to create in our program.

In many ways we feel we offer you a *world class education*, and a big part of that is having diverse students from around the world as your peers. We can learn so much about culture and context as we build relationships across the globe. Our program is a leader in cross-cultural counseling psychology and because of that you will have the benefit of a lifeline network of peers who are amazing individuals from around the world.

I think it is important that you know that we try hard to create a culture of mutual respect. Our faculty and students have a great deal of respect for one another and the varied, diverse work we are all doing. Our values statement ([link to values statement](#)) also depicts this respect for others. It is important to note that our value statement is a national model and served as the basis for the Counseling Psychology Model Training Values Statement Addressing Diversity and also as the basis for a Major Contribution to *The Counseling Psychologist*. It is a statement we worked hard to craft to communicate the kind of atmosphere we think can help to create a truly life changing experience for students like you!

In addition, we try very hard to create a supportive and non-competitive atmosphere where we believe everyone can and will contribute in their own way and do well. Some students are stronger researchers others are stronger practitioners—but everyone has strengths and also areas of growth. We encourage students to build on their strengths and to push themselves to grow and change. This is an exciting time of your life and we hope you fully engage in the possibilities for growth that are here!

We care about each other as whole people—not just in the roles we play as students and faculty. While creating an opportunity-rich program that has many powerful training opportunities, we also care about balance and self-care for both our faculty and our students. Beginning of year picnics, socials at faculty homes, canoe trips down the rivers of Missouri, all bring us together to have fun and enjoy each other's company.

Our program is one that not only philosophically values social justice, but one that actively trains students to be social justice advocates and change agents in the world. From our many students who work with at-risk children and literacy in the public schools, to working on developing practica in agencies serving marginalized groups, the skills of changing the world are very much a part of the curricula. It may seem like a lofty training goal but in the words of one of my favorite poems, *Whatever you can do, Or dream you can, begin it! Boldness has genius, magic and power in it*. I believe that each of us can in fact do a lot to make the world a better place by our presence in it. Our program actively supports skill acquisition to do so.

Most of our students believe that getting a doctorate here is a life changing experience. We sincerely hope that everyone who comes to our program finds it tremendously engaging, meaningful, stretching, challenging, supportive and yes, life changing!