A HOLIDAY BLESSING

As you engage this holiday season, we want to encourage you to...

"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

We give thanks for all of you and want to encourage you all to be joyful always! The hope behind this first newsletter is that we can connect not only the body of Christ, but also unite and encourage AGSC alumni, current students, prospective students, and friends of AGSC.

If you have ideas for future newsletters, please e-mail us at Nichole.Knott-Craig@nyack.edu.

PUBLICATION SPOTLIGHT: DR. CRAIG ELLISON’S LAST PUBLISHED ARTICLE


The Expanded Psychospiritual Model: Foundations and Implications
By James Chin and Craig W. Ellison
Nyack College, Alliance Graduate School of Counseling

Four foundational sets of presuppositions are stated in re-introducing and elaborating the Expanded Psycho-Spiritual Model (EPSM) as a Christian psychology. Implications of this model for the practice of Christian counseling are discussed. The Transtheoretical Model of Change is employed as a framework to illustrate when and how the EPSM can be applied. Pragmatic application of multiple models describing the relationship between psychology and Christianity may contribute toward positive clinical outcomes and the ultimate goal of the restoration of shalom.

*The complete article can be found at http://christianpsych.org/wp_scp/edification_5_2.pdf
AGSC MISSION 2013: CUBA

Students and faculty traveled to Havanna, Cuba this summer for a service-learning course, "Counseling for the Global Context," taught by Dr. Elaine Eng. Additional faculty and staff who joined the journey were Dr. Carol Robles, Dr. Michael Gillern, and Elizabeth Dahlberg-Lee.

AGSC MENTAL HEALTH DAY

AGSC-NYC & Rockland students take a "Mental Health Day" @ Mianus River Gorge with Dr. Michael Gillern.
5 WAYS TO SURVIVE & THRIVE AT AGSC!

1. Thoroughly review each course syllabus BEFORE the first class. During the first class, ask the professor to clarify any points in the syllabus that were unclear. Some students think they can just "show up" to the first class unprepared. That may have been the status quo in a bachelor's program, but that is not the expectation of master's-level students.

2. Do the required reading each week! And, order the required texts BEFORE the first class to keep ahead of the reading. Many students want to skip the reading, and instead hope the professor will spoonfeed the course material each week during class time. Instead, I tell students an analogy based on 1 Corinthians 3:6 (regarding planting, watering, and God giving the increase). I believe that when students read, they are planting the course material into their minds, and when the professor lectures, s/he is watering the planted seeds. Then, God will give the students the necessary increase to succeed!

3. Allocate enough time for your school work each week. I once heard that for every 3-credit class, students should allot 3 times as many hours each week for that class (3 hours in class and 6 hours outside the class). That is why a student taking 12-credit hours per semester is considered full-time (12 credits x 3 hours/credit = 36 hours). Some classes will require less than 6 outside-the-class hours and some will require more.

4. Spend daily time alone with the Lord, even if it is only 5 minutes a day. I encourage students to seek God as soon as they wake up, and have a post-it close at hand to jot down any golden nuggets of truth or direction that God might give them regarding that day. Let God direct your daily steps (Proverbs 16:9).

5. Actively seek classmate friendships. The development and journey of a counselor in training can be unique, lonely, and difficult without some like-minded comrades to empathize and encourage one another along the way.

Dr. Lisa Steiner, Ph.D., LMHC, LPC
RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

The Center for Spirituality, Theology, and Health at Duke University under the Directorship of Dr. Harold Koenig, MD conducted a 5-day post-doctoral workshop program in August 2013. The mission of this distinguished faculty is to conduct, disseminate, and promote research on the relationship between religion, spirituality, and physical and mental health. Check out the video on their website at http://www.spiritualityandhealth.duke.edu.

Dr. James Chin of the AGSC faculty had the privilege to attend these workshops this year, joining over 30 scholars from all over the globe, to receive an update on recent advances in the research on spirituality and physical and mental health and to be equipped to contribute to the ongoing efforts to explore the bio-psycho-social-spiritual complexities of humanity.

The good news from the research front is that what we as Christians have always believed to be true, now has substantive empirical support. Specifically, we now have large scale replicated studies and meta-analyses across cultures consistently finding that intrinsic spirituality is positively associated with higher subjective well-being, life/marital/family satisfaction, longevity and physical health, and lower prevalence of depression, anxiety, chronic illnesses, suicidality, and substance abuse; just to mention a few of the findings. Randomized clinical trials are currently underway to further explore these relationships.

Research oriented faculty at Nyack College are excited about these reports and it is our intent to contribute to this very important work. Certainly, the exploration of the relationships between Christianity and physical and mental health will be a part of the ongoing work of the faculty and students in the proposed Psy.D. program at Nyack College.

Are you an AGSC alum intrigued by these findings? Do you want to get involved in this kind of research? What are your interests to empirically study? Alumni are invited to email Professor Chin at james.chin@nyack.edu to start a dialogue about like-minded research interests.

FACULTY PRESENTATIONS HIGHLIGHT:

DR. ELAINE ENG

Dr. Elaine Eng, Associate Professor of Mental Health Counseling
Alliance Graduate School of Counseling

Professional Presentations:
"The Mental Status Examination." Christian Medical and Dental Association.

"The Role of Narrative in Medicine." Christian Medical and Dental Association.
Chiangmai, Thailand. February 20, 2013.

"Optimizing End of Life Care." Mental Health and Missions Conference.
CELEBRATIONS

Dr. Mercurio cutting his birthday cake at a surprise party thrown by staff and students.

Dr. Mercurio being blessed with affirmations as he sits in the midst of students and staff.

Dr. Mercurio and former MFT Administrative Assistant, Anne Lawther.

Photos submitted by Dr. Ching-Ching Ruan & Deborah Connery Smith.

KNOW SOMEONE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING AGSC?

Contact Nichole.Knott-Craig@nyack.edu at the Manhattan Campus or Luanne.McGann@nyack.edu at the Rockland Campus.

For a limited time, if you refer someone to AGSC in NYC (and they apply), you will receive a free AGSC t-shirt (while supplies last)!
Contact Admissions.ATS.NYC@nyack.edu for more information!
DID YOU KNOW?

Development of a Psychology Doctoral (Psy.D.) program is in the works at Nyack College, and we are all excited to submit our program details to the NY State Department of Education. To be placed on the Psy.D. information list (when the information becomes available), please email admissions.grad@nyack.edu.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 12, 2013 at 12pm: AGSC Open House, NYC
January 7, 2014 at 12pm: AGSC Open House, NYC
January 14, 2014 at 6pm: AGSC Open House, Rockland
January 22, 2014: Spring Semester Begins!
January 31, 2014 at 11am: AGSC Open House, Rockland
March 24, 2014: COMP exam administered at both campuses
April 12, 2014: National Counselor Examination
May 2014: AGSC students travel to Paris & Vienna for "Counseling for the Global Context" with Dr. Elaine Eng & Dr. Marcia Lucas.
May 6, 2014: AGSC Hooding
May 10, 2014: Spring 2014 Graduation

STAY CONNECTED WITH AGSC!

No matter where you are or what you’re doing, we want to keep in touch with you. You can send us your updated contact information or submit engagement, wedding, birth, adoption, career, and ministry announcements on our website at www.nyack.edu/alumni or by emailing Erica.Videc@nyack.edu in the Alumni Office.