



# THE DIVERSITY FACTOR

THE SOCIETY OF COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY'S  
SECTION ON ETHNIC AND RACIAL DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

**Winter 2013**

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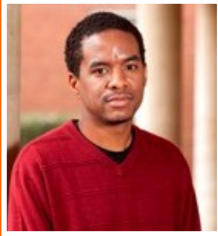
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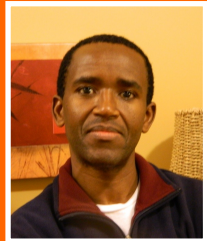
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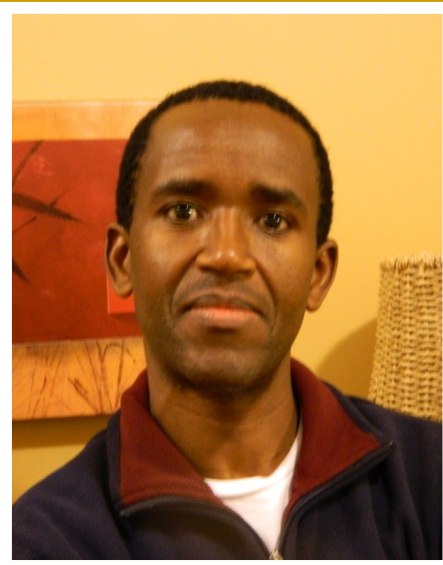
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**LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

Recently, I visited Charleston, SC, with my family for the winter holidays. Part of our itinerary was a visit to the one of the plantations, which included an oral presentation about slavery and the cultural impact it has had on the culture of that area. As I sat listening to the dramatic presentation, my emotions kept on fluctuating between sadness and excitement. It was really disheartening to picture a people far away from their homeland, going through a lot of anguish and cruelty, yet through the torment and affliction, they still managed to hold on to important cultural values that are well reflected today in way of living, language, food, spirituality, festivities, economic activities, and relationships. As the presenter said, it's "your story", "my story", "history".

Yes, history is what we diverge into in this issue of *The Diversity Factor*. It is the history that we are all making as we continue with various diversity activities wherever we are. It is the story of today. This issue therefore picks up a selection of these stories that we hope not only helps to keep you informed of what others are doing, but also to enrich your own stories and inspire you to continued action. First, we hear the story of Dr. Mary A. Fukuyama, our featured psychologist, a story still in the making spanning across a wide dimension of professional and multicultural work including teaching, clinical work, training, supervision, and scholarship. Her story is not just all toil though; she also makes life meaningful through music, and even goes kayaking.

In the Cultural Expressions section, Shalena Heard, M.Ed. from Lehigh University introduces us to "Black Girls Rock! Inc." a non-profit youth empowerment and mentoring organization. The story of this organization is that it is designed to educate, inspire, and honor Black women, not only in America but the world over thus detailing the ingredients needed to create future agents of change. The second part of this section has Alberto Soto at Brigham Young University discussing how rap music influences contemporary culture by exploring social and political issues, and therefore cannot be ignored just because it is sometimes heavily laden with racial slurs and stereotypes.

In the Chronicles section, Dr. Christa Ellen Washington, an Associate Professor of Psychology at Saint Augustine's University, shares her own story of providing leadership to her department. We hear how she is motivated by her cultural beliefs and values to guide faculty and students to higher growth. It is these values that also guide the direction of her research. From there, the story continues to be told through an interview with Dr. Silva Mazzula, an Assistant Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, that was conducted by Melanie Robbins, M.S. from Indiana University, for the Up, Close and Personal section. Dr. Mazzula tells us how she engages in teaching and research on mental health with an aim of reaching out to traditionally marginalized groups.

In the Here and Now section, Ryan McMahan, M.S. from East Central University calls our attention to the perpetuated stereotyping of the poor and those living in low-resource conditions. We hear how the alarming poverty rates in America beg for an enhanced focus just like the increased focus in other areas of diversity. Just like the story we started with of the contributions of those who suffered through slavery, those who are looked upon today as lowly due to their economic status and low resources also have a lot to contribute to society and culture.

We end this issue by providing a mid-year report from the SERD executive that we hope will keep you informed about the Section's story and encourage you to continue being active members in making our history. One way to do so is to serve in the executive by vying for the open positions. We also call upon those in training to volunteer to serve as associate editors of *The Diversity Factor* so that our story can continue being told.

Enjoy your reading, and we hope to hear from you in the next round of call for submissions.  
Pius N. Nyutu, Ph.D.

**//// FEATURED PSYCHOLOGIST : MARY FUKUYAMA ////**



Mary A. Fukuyama received her PhD in counseling psychology from Washington State University and has worked at the University of Florida Counseling and Wellness Center for the past 30 years as a counseling psychologist, supervisor and trainer. She is a member of the University of Florida's Center for Spirituality and Health and teaches a graduate seminar on spiritual issues in multicultural counseling for them. She co-authored with Todd Sevig a book titled *Integrating Spirituality into Multicultural Counseling* and with Max Parker a textbook titled *Consciousness-raising: A primer for multicultural counseling* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). She has numerous publications and conference presentations on multicultural counseling and spiritual themes in counseling. She is a Fellow in Division 17 (Counseling Psychology) of the American Psychological Association.

**Dr. Fukuyama, you have been so extensively and intensely involved in Counseling Psychology through your work as a clinician, researcher, trainer, and supervisor. How did you develop a passion for your work? What do you enjoy most about your work as a psychologist?**

When I was an undergraduate at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, I was introduced to the work of Carl Rogers through his book "On Becoming a Person." It had a profound impact on me as a young adult, and I believe I

have followed his example in wanting to support people to become "who they really are." It has been ideal to work in higher education towards this aim. Also, I participated in a study abroad program in Japan when I was 20 years old, and that too, had a life-changing impact. I have always been interested in the social sciences and cross-cultural perspectives and international travel. Counseling psychology as a specialty spoke to me in terms of career development, lifelong learning, and normal human growth and development. In addition, the inclusion of multiculturalism in counseling has been a passion for me.

**Much of your work has helped to provide best practices and information on multicultural issues especially intercultural communication, campus climate for diverse students, and multicultural expressions of spirituality. How has your interest in these areas continued to develop?**

My "consciousness" related to multicultural issues has grown in parallel fashion to the social justice movements in the United States, beginning with the Civil Rights movement and leadership of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr in the 1960s. I was then influenced by the feminist movement in the late 70s, and my graduate school experiences at Washington State University were significantly affected by the Asian American movement in higher education. My first professional job was as a part-time counselor with the Asian American Studies Program at WSU. Over the years I have been influenced by increased awareness of many dimensions of social diversity (sexual orientation, physical ability, social class, national origin, religion), and am interested to hear how people negotiate multiple social identities. Lately I have enjoyed accompanying UF students in study abroad trips and am interested in learning more about globalization and counseling psychology. It was natural for me to introduce spirituality into the multicultural discussion given my background as a P.K. (preacher's kid).

**Your writings on spirituality have shed light into ways of addressing spiritual issues in counseling, and also incorporating aspects of spirituality not only in working with clients but also towards life in general. Can you speak about how to get helping professionals engaged in discussion on spirituality?**

I always begin a discussion with counseling professionals on the topic of spirituality and religion by introducing the question, "Why should we NOT talk about it?" There are many strong feelings associated with spirituality and



FEATURED PSYCHOLOGIST continued from page 4

religion (particularly religion) and there is a potential for values conflict and feeling personally vulnerable. Usually I find the most important work with counseling professionals is to get beyond fear and resistances based on negative childhood experiences with religion. However, once we get these inherent anxieties out in the open, people often enjoy sharing on spirituality and religion because they tap into the "depth dimension" of life—i.e., search for purpose and meaning, matters of life and death, the transcendental, social justice, and cultivation of love and compassion.

**While based at University of Florida for many years, you have played a role in the training and development of many people who are now providing services all over the world. How do you maintain momentum, endeavor, and accomplishment in your work?**

It has been such a privilege to supervise and participate in teaching and training of psychologists and counselors. Now, I am working part-time at the Counseling and Wellness Center, and that has allowed me more time to travel, present at conferences and workshops, and to reflect on how to integrate the complexities of culture into counseling. I recently was invited with my colleague Dr. Max Parker to visit Taiwan and to address counselors there on counseling International students. It was a wonderful cultural exchange opportunity for us. I think it is the learning process and relationships that motivate and reward my endeavors.

**When you have time to relax, what or where is your go-to? What is relaxing about that?**

Much of my leisure time is devoted to playing music. I play flute (my childhood instrument) in a Klezmer Band and in a Jazz Band locally. We play for fun and music has been a



In Taiwan



Mary ringing the bell

lifelong love, too. If I really want to relax, I take a trip to the beach or go kayaking. Being in nature brings me into the "present moment."

**What advice can you share with our readers, especially the early career professionals and those still in training?**

As much as it is possible I encourage you to develop your personal life (interests, hobbies, relationships) and to strive for balance between work and home life. In terms of developing your professional interests or specialties, I encourage you to explore and deepen your interests in particular areas that you enjoy and you might think in terms of developing a "niche" and/or learning specific skills that are marketable (EMDR, for example). However, for those completing your training (internships), I suggest participating in a wide range of experiences before deciding upon a specialty. I think of specialties as developing during the first five years post-degree. Finally, I encourage everyone to seek mentorship and remember to talk with your peers and faculty as you move ahead in life; it's important to remember that you are not alone. Over the years, I particularly like to hear from folks that I have supervised. .

***Thank you for sharing your time with us. We wish you well in all aspects of your life.***

Thank you for the invitation and I wish you all the best!

## **//// CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS ////**

**Associate Editor: Karen Kegel, MA**

### **Black Girls Rock! Inc.**

By: Shalena Heard, M.Ed., Lehigh University

In 2010, the “Black Girls Rock!” movement entered millions of hearts and homes when the organization’s first annual awards ceremony was televised on Black Entertainment Television (BET). Prior to the show’s airing, many people were unaware of this non-profit youth empowerment and mentoring organization that is specifically designed to educate, inspire, and honor Black women.

The annual awards show is just one small part of an organization that serves Black girls and young women in various capacities year-round. “Black Girls Rock!” was created in 2006 with a mission to change the lives and future outlook of Black girls across the world ages 12-17. Based out of Brooklyn, New York, the non-profit organization takes a multifaceted approach to enriching the lives of young women through international leadership camps, artistic expression workshops, mentoring, and a televised awards ceremony honoring the accomplishments of Black women worldwide.

Celebrities, philanthropists, and grassroots organizers from across the globe have been honored by “Black Girls Rock!” Though the awards show is popular for its musical performances and star-studded hosts and honorees, the real highlight is the Making a Difference (M.A.D.) Girls segment. M.A.D. Girls showcases the accomplishments of Black girls and women who are leaders in their local communities, cities, and college campuses. From Africa to Harlem, these young women have initiated medical services for uninsured residents, created campaigns to end gun violence, and developed scholarship programs for students with incarcerated parents. Shining a light on how Black women impact the world, “Black Girls Rock!” not only supports their efforts but also serves to inspire future generations.

For critics who may question the necessity of a televised award show solely honoring Black women, it is essential to understand the history of this group in America. Society traditionally undervalued Black women’s contributions as housekeepers, nannies, and cooks, and “Black Girls Rock!” illustrates the transformation of Black women from servants to leaders. Not only does the organization depict a story of resilient survivors, but it also details the ingredients needed to create future agents of change within this community.

This year’s “Black Girls Rock!” award show aired on November 4. To watch clips from the show and learn more about this international phenomenon, visit: <http://www.blackgirlsrockinc.com>

## **Lupe Fiasco's Food & Liquor II: The Great American Rap Album, Pt. 1**

By: Alberto Soto, Brigham Young University

"You forced us in [to] the ghetto and then you took our dads. The belly of the beast, these streets are demons' abs...I pray the ugly truth comes down and shatters your décor" ("Strange Fruition," track 2). Rap has often been decried as being too laden with profanities, too focused on materialism, and too perpetuating of racial stereotypes (e.g., using racial slurs, glamorizing the "thug life," etc.). Yet in our profession, which has recently drawn much focus to the importance of aligning our therapeutic efforts with understanding culturally diverse viewpoints, we cannot stand by and teach multicultural competency while ignoring the importance of rap music. Lupe Fiasco's recently released fourth studio album is an essential listen for any professional interested in understanding how rap music portrays the life experiences of culturally diverse persons in America. The intersection of frustration, sublimity, and sadness is woven together in a rap album that explores racial discrimination, poverty, and the desire to overcome these and other social ills.

The album begins with the song "Strange Fruition," which harkens to the historic anti-lynching song by Billie Holiday. Fiasco explores the nature of growing up in poverty, asking how people can be expected to trust the government and survive amidst such conditions. Fiasco laments the living conditions in inner cities and the pressures people may feel to simply make ends meet. Yet in a following track, Fiasco encourages individuals to resiliently overcome the obstacles of growing up in an impoverished community, including eschewing gangs, drugs, and alcohol.

Many songs echo the research surrounding the negative effects of perceived racism and microaggressions; sadness and weariness are audible when Fiasco discusses racial issues. Unlike some other rap artists, Fiasco is upfront about these struggles and explores them with an openness that is refreshing. At times, he provides a deeply insightful view into the effects of racism and other forms of prejudice. Of particular interest is the song "B\*\*\*h Bad," where Fiasco explores a commonly used derogatory term directed towards women. Fiasco argues that this term can skew the perceptions of young men and women, who may try to live up to gender stereotypes that are commonly presented in rap and in popular culture.

"Cash rules everything around...hither you can be Mr. Burns or Mr. Smithers. The tyrant or the slave. But nowhere in the middle" ("Around My Way (Freedom Ain't Free)," track 4). Throughout the album, Fiasco explores the struggle between living in poverty and desiring wealth. In many songs, Fiasco denounces this desire for material wealth. In the song "Lamborghini Angels," he further explores this relationship as he draws connections between growing up poor and wanting to have expensive possessions. While this may seem like a typical rap song, the sentiment that Fiasco expresses is a powerful one: how can people who have little expect not to feel bad in a society that stresses the importance of wealth?

While at times Fiasco's album is hard-hitting, and for lack of a better term, dope, it is not without its flaws. Though at times the album seems to transcend materialism as well as racism and other forms of prejudice, there are also times when it undoubtedly perpetuates the usage of some racial slurs and stereotypes. Some individuals unaccustomed to vernacular used in inner city environments or in the rap/hip-hop scene may believe that it is fine to use some of the slang used throughout the album. Although Fiasco does a fine job of exploring racial relations, particularly in his song "Audobon Ballroom," it is still a hotly contested argument whether the usage of racially derogatory terms (even when "taking it back") can truly hold any value. Another weakness is that while this album provides a great deal of artistic value, it is still a commercial product. As such, it is clear that some songs are simply produced for radio airplay. Yet, even with these flaws, the album touches upon many racial, social, and political issues that one cannot deny are important for all of us and especially for culturally diverse clients.

If we are to truly empathize and put ourselves in the shoes of the client, as Carl Rogers once stressed, then we cannot negate the importance of various cultural influences. Certainly musical preferences are an important cultural influence in the daily lives of our clients. Lupe Fiasco's album is an important reminder that music often attempts to explore social and political issues. It attempts to alleviate these burdens, and at times succeeds in overcoming these ills, if even only for the duration of one song. Fiasco's album is a powerful album that, although not without its weaknesses, manages to cement itself as an album of great social importance—at times rivaling the efforts of other albums by artists such as Tupac, Ice Cube, and N.W.A.



# CHRONICLES

Associate Editor: Ryan Higgins

As an Associate Professor of Psychology for six years, I have matured as an educator and scholar. I have learned the importance of and have a full understanding of cultural dynamics. As a Department Chair, I supervise a very diverse Department from students to faculty members. In my role as leader, I have come to understand the ethos of good leadership. My disposition and character have been vital to the success of the Department. Over the past six years, the Department has witnessed tremendous growth in student majors, faculty scholarship and community visibility. As an African American, I am motivated by many of my cultural beliefs and values such as community and harmony. These things have guided me in challenging not only my faculty to higher levels of excellence, and have enhanced student growth and development.

As our world continues to shift, I am ever cognizant of my need to keep current with cultural influences as a result of these changes. In doing so, I engage in research that focuses on cultural diversity and minority challenges in higher education and in the workplace. My intentions are not only to communicate this information to a broad audience, but to equip students to be prepared and competitive for graduate study and the job market. I would encourage all students to keep connected to their professional associations and broaden their interests to consider cultural factors that contribute to the global world evolving daily. Research interests must expand beyond our current surroundings and become more global to have a greater impact.

**Christa Ellen Washington, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
Saint Augustine's University



### Brief Biography of Associate Editor—Chronicles

Ryan Higgins currently provides psychotherapy in a private setting. He completed his undergraduate education at Eastern Illinois University majoring in Psychology, and his Masters in Clinical Psychology at Benedictine University. His research interests include the mind/body relationship in regards to healthcare as well as understanding the cultural barriers to mental

Submissions to *The Diversity Factor* are welcome for any of the following sections:

**Announcements/Achievements:** (1) any relevant announcements, (e.g., new appointments, awards, available positions, promotions, etc.) and/or (2) information about upcoming events that will likely be of interest to SERD members.

**Chronicles:** Share a short story from your professional life as an educator, counselor, and/or researcher. Submissions should provide recommendations for students managing the journey of graduate school while acknowledging and managing their own cultural, racial, and ethnic biases – insight into how this could influence their work.

**Cultural Expressions:** Cultural Expressions is seeking your brief reviews of movies, books, television shows, YouTube clips, plays, music, and other art or media forms that creatively or educationally speak to racial/ethnic diversity.

**Here & Now:** This column focuses on current events around any of these topics and how they relate, interact, and intersect with issues of ethnicity, race, and racism: the media's coverage of the benefits of psychotherapy; the media's coverage of the impact of universal healthcare on mental health clinicians' use of evidence-based practice; or social justice efforts that can be used to educate the media about multiculturally diverse individuals.

**Mosaic:** This column focuses on teaching and supervision in counseling psychology. We encourage submissions that discuss how issues of diversity are addressed by clinical supervisors and faculty.

**Psychologists-in-Training:** This column includes articles that highlight professional psychological activities conducted by psychologist-in-training. Other writing related to psychologists-in-training are always welcomed.

**Up Close & Personal:** This column is an opportunity for a student to interview a professional or researcher who may be of interest to the other SERD members. We're interested in submissions that involve interviews with people who might be creating change in our field either at the micro or macro level.



## UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

### Diversity Factor Interview Questions: Dr. Silvia Mazzula

By Melanie Robbins M.S. , Indiana University .

**Please give me a brief summary regarding where you went to school and your training.**

I am a Counseling Psychologist and Professional Counselor by training. I went to The College of New Jersey for my undergraduate degree in biology and masters in Counseling and Human Services. I received my PhD in Counseling Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University.

**Please share a little about your professional work and research.**

I wear a lot of different professional hats. I am a tenure-track assistant professor of psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, where I teach graduate courses in forensic mental health counseling. I am also a mental health researcher. Most of my research examines the role of acculturation experiences and discrimination in mental health outcomes. I have an active research team of graduate students at John Jay College and collaborate with interdisciplinary research teams at Columbia University.

My most recent professional hat is related to a grant award I received to address the underrepresentation of historically disadvantaged populations with advanced research degrees. As a result of this award, I had the privilege of organizing the "Latina Researchers Conference: Increasing the Pipeline for Future Scholars", which took place this year in the spring. We brought together about 200 attendees from diverse disciplines and from every academic background, from graduate students to post-doctoral fellows to tenure faculty. It was an inspirational and intellectually stimulating gathering. After the meeting, it was evident that more work was needed to meet the needs of aspiring investigators and



Mazzula and her children

therefore founded the "Latina Researchers Network". We hope to continue to provide the next generation of investigators with examples of excellence in scholarship and with opportunities for research collaboration and networking to succeed in academia.

**What inspired your interests in these areas of practice and research?**

My lived experiences as a first generation immigrant from Uruguay and as a first generation college student have inspired my work (clinical and research). These experiences have helped me to be empathetic to the needs of marginalized groups and to also be able to think critically about providing culturally relevant treatment and conducting research that includes voices traditionally silenced. As a counseling psychologist and professional counselor, I am also an advocate for social justice issues—which I always try to address in my teaching, clinical, research and professional work.

**Have your research interests changed over the years? If so, how?**

Yes. Although I am sure some students know exactly what they want to study when they first begin their training, I entered the field with a little less direction. Initially, my interest focused broadly on multicultural issues in psychology, and mostly from a clinician's perspective. As a counselor, I noticed some of my clients' issues were not easily explained by existing theories and research. As a result, I pursued a career in research where I could contribute to this knowledge base. As I engaged in my research training, while simultaneously practicing as a clinician, I began to focus more specifically on research studies that examined the relationship between acculturation experiences and mental health. I had amazing clients whose strength and resilience shaped my current research focus on looking at acculturation experiences that serve a protective role for immigrant families, particularly Latino/a families. I've also had great mentors who have helped me to focus my research program. Now, I primarily focus on research and teaching.

**What are some of your current projects?**

At John Jay College, my students and I are working on studies that examine biculturalism and the role of culture in preventing mood disorders. We are also conducting a large

NINA GHISELLI continued from page 9

content analysis of empirical publications examining the extent to which issues of race and culture are included and incorporated into research studies. These are extensions of projects that I started at Columbia University during my training. We are also starting new projects that examine the role of acculturation experiences in reducing high-risk behaviors among racial/ethnic minority populations in general, and youth in particular. One of these projects is supported by the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities' Loan Repayment Program. I am also a National Institute of Health (NIDA) fellow at Columbia University's Child Psychiatric Epidemiology Group and work with an interdisciplinary team on studies that seek to understand the needs of Latina mothers who are involved in the criminal justice system. At Columbia University, I also collaborate with investigators at the Center of Excellence for Cultural Competence where we are starting a project examining the needs of Latina adolescent girls who engage in high-risk behaviors.

#### **What kind of things would you like to do in the future?**

In the future, I would like to continue to work, and expand, on my current projects, particularly those related to addressing high-risk behaviors among youth. I would also like to continue to develop the Latina Researchers Network. I am now at a place where I can use what I learned throughout my training to ensure there are more faculty of color to meet the needs of our growing community. I believe it can be a thriving community of researchers and scholars that ensures the next generation of investigators reflects the diverse population of this country.

#### **What do you like to do for fun?**

I have two beautiful sons, Mateo who is six and Lucas who is four. I love to be silly with them, read books, catch and take care of small creatures – my little ones love insects – and watch them eat the vegetables we plant together in our small garden.

#### **How do you balance everything you do, such as research, service, seeing clients (if you see them), teaching, and life outside of work?**

I try to take it easy on myself. I recognize that I have a lot to

juggle and that I can't do everything at once. For work, I try to keep a weekly schedule of everything I do, from my writing time, to service activities, to prepping for my courses. As a mom, my boys are my priority. However, as with work, I also recognize I can't do it all and be everywhere at the same time. I do my best to be emotionally present with them when we are together and I involve them in everything I do – even if it is as simple as talking through with them how I am making dinner. Letting them be actively involved in mundane activities gives us precious and quality moments together. I also work very hard at not feeling guilty when I can't be involved in everything at once. I'm learning to tell myself it's OK.

#### **What is your favorite thing about your job?**

The flexibility of academia is what I value the most about my job. Although it can be challenging to work with a little less structure than the traditional 9-5 hours, it helps me be there for my children. I would not change this flexibility, particularly since my boys are still so young and watching them grow is what gives me joy.

#### **What advice do you have for grad students?**

Throughout my training, I recognized the importance of mentors and support groups. A lot of times, as students, we may find it intimidating to approach others when we need help. It took me a long time to step outside of my comfort zone and ask for mentorship. I encourage all of you to seek out role models who can guide you and provide the resources you need to succeed. Just remember, no one mentor has all the answers. So don't be afraid to have many in your corner.

#### **Any additional information you would like to share?!**

Yes. I would like to leave you with a quote I have always kept with me: "Only those who reach too far will ever know how far one can possible go" ~ T.S. Eliot. Never let fear of rejection or fear of doing something no one in your family or social support network has done stop you from reaching for your dreams.



#### **Brief Biography of Interviewer**

Melanie Robbins is a second year doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at Indiana University. She received her B.A. from California State University, Channel Islands in Psychology, and her M.S. in Counseling and Counselor Education from Indiana University. Her research interests are heavily focused on geriatric mental health care, particularly in long term care. She has also been looking at substance use in older adults, and has an interest in mental health needs of LGBT older adults.

**//// HERE AND NOW ///**

**Poverty, Media, & Stereotypes** by Ryan McMahan, M.S., East Central University

**S**tereotypes of the poor and those living in poverty penetrate countless race and ethnic groups of the melting-pot smorgasbord known as America. Accompanied with mass media and economic conditions of the global economy, stereotypes on the poor are exasperated through the perpetuation of self-made individualism broadly ignoring systemic factors of society. Despite American culture making huge strides in social progress away from overt racism and discrimination, there is considerable progress to be made regarding stereotypes and interactions of those lacking financial resources.

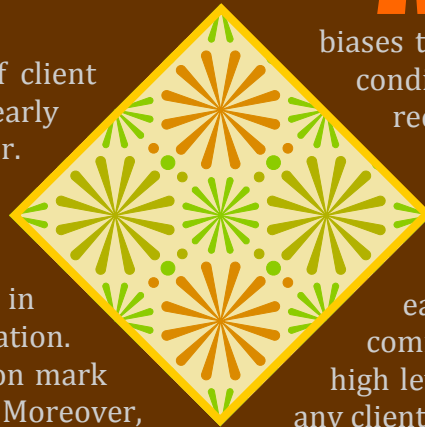
**P**overty is an element of client phenomenology nearly every counselor will encounter. According to an alternative measure the U.S. Census Bureau recently released, nearly 50-million Americans in 2011 were living in poverty, or 16.1% of the population. Other sources indicate the 50-million mark has already been reached. Moreover, according to the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), 15-million children are living in poverty, roughly 21%, with 44% of children living in low-income families. In fact, America has the second highest child poverty rate out of all developed nations. The NCCP also claims poverty is the biggest threat to a child's well-being based on current research.

**R**epresentation of the diversity among those lacking resources in television programming is limited, repetitious, and one sided. Most exposure comes in the form of socially deviant news in the media and television shows such as Cops, Intervention, and Hoarders. Considering the negative portrayal of the

underprivileged in media, juxtaposed with the average American spending nine years of life watching television by the age of sixty-five, stereotypes about the poor can easily be formed and maintained. Once away from the television and other forms of media, stereotypes can be further sustained through the confirmation bias within the context of social interactions and social observations. Such stereotypes and beliefs about the poor inadvertently affect the way those of limited resources are perceived and treated by other individuals.

**A**s practitioners, being aware of our own possible stereotypes and biases towards those living in low-resource conditions is just as important as recognizing any other multicultural biases. Holding negative attitudes towards clients in poverty, whether due to financial decisions or living conditions, can easily exude through nonverbal communication. I believe maintaining high levels of positive regard working with any client is important, but especially with low-income individuals, families, and children who are easily marginalized by society and fellow classmates.

**I**n conclusion, I find the days we live in extremely fascinating. Few generations throughout human history have had the privilege to interact with such a wide variety of human beings that span centuries in social and economic development. I hope someday soon we began to look past our differences and start noticing our commonalities. Until then, it is vital that those in privileged positions continue advocating and educating the public when situations arise, and also by creating such opportunities. Sometimes it may seem difficult to speak up and rock the boat.



**//// SERD MID YEAR REPORT ////****ACTIVITIES SO FAR**

Dr. Ezemenari M. Obasi is completing his service as SERD Chairperson and Dr. Thomandra Sam is beginning her service as the Chairperson-Elect of SERD. Dr. Munyi Shea completed her service as the SERD Secretary. This position was recently filled by Dr. David Goode-Cross. Candice Crowell has completed her service as the SERD Membership Coordinator and this position is currently open. Dr. Sheila Henderson is continuing in her last year as the SERD Treasurer. Dr. Thomandra Sam completed her service as the Editor of the SERD newsletter: The Diversity Factor. Dr. Pius Nyutu is the current Editor of The Diversity Factor. Dr. Obasi is continuing in his role as the SERD Webmaster. Drs. Justin Gibson and Riddhi Sandil are serving their final term as the SERD Awards Committee Co-Chairs. Drs. Alex Pieterse and Dionne Smith have completed their term as the Co-Chairs of the SERD Programming Committee. This position is currently open. Jasmin Llamas is serving her second term as SERD Student Representative. Delishia Pittman recently received her PhD and is therefore no longer serving as the SERD Student Representative. We are currently in the process of soliciting nominations for the Editor-Elect of the Diversity Factor, SERD Membership Chairperson, and Co-Chairs of the SERD Programming Committee. The SERD Executive Board held its Fall meeting in October to address SERD action items.

SERD has increased its membership numbers. SERD currently has 127 section members, 22 professional affiliates, 272 student members, and 14 members with no available status information. In sum, SERD has a total of 435 members. The SERD listserv and membership roster continues to be updated. The SERD membership application is electronic and accessible from the SERD website.

At the APA Annual convention in Orlando, FL (2012), SERD hosted a business meeting and a town hall meeting. Furthermore, SERD sponsored a symposium that addressed cross-racial effects and coping strategies associated with the experiences of racism. The presenters included: Drs. Debbiesiu Lee, Matthew Miller, Robert Carter, and Alex Pieterse (Chair). SERD co-hosted a NIH Grant Writing Workshop with the Health Psychology section of Division 17. Presenters for this workshop included Dr. Angela Byars-Winston (UWisc) and Dr. LeShawndra Price (NIH/NIMH). Finally, the SERD Programming Committee, led by Dr. Smith, reviewed proposals for the Division 17 and CCPTP sponsored Student Poster Session that was held at the APA 2012 convention. SERD recognized three members during the business meeting: Amber Hewitt (Student Award), Dr. Priscilla Dass-Brailsford (Outstanding Contribution to Research Scholarship Award), and Dr. Ruperto Perez (Outstanding Service to Diversity/Underserved Communities Award). SERD will be sponsoring a symposium at APA 2013 entitled, Latino Students in Higher Education: Support for their Success.

SERD recently awarded two students with travel awards to attend the 2013 National Multicultural Conference Summit: (1) Valene Whittaker and (2) Harpreet Bahia / Jennifer Chain.



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This biennial award was established in 2011.

The summer 2012 edition of *The Diversity Factor* was produced and distributed in August. This is the winter 2013 edition which was produced and distributed in February.

Dr. Obasi has updated the SERD website to reflect the current state of SERD. To view the SERD website please visit <http://www.div17.org/SERD/>. *The Diversity Factor* and the SERD membership application are available on the SERD website.

## PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Continue to coordinate SERD activities at APA (e.g., Business Meetings, Symposium, and Special Topic Roundtables). Sponsor a symposium at the 2013 APA Annual Convention that will highlight the experience of Latino/a students in higher education. Add additional SERD programming aimed at continuing the intergenerational dialogue amongst the SERD membership.

2. Coordinate with section chairs and programming committees to announce, review, and select student research proposals in the spring for presentation at the 2013 APA Annual Convention – Division 17 Social Hour.

Publish two editions of *The Diversity Factor* (Winter 2013 and Summer 2013).

Make calls and secure nominations for standing awards within SERD, Division 17, and APA. Additionally, SERD will continue its new Travel Award to support research being presented at the National Multicultural Conference and Summit by SERD Student Members.

5. Maintain and update the SERD website.

6. Continue to develop standing committee activities to increase mentorship and involvement of all members and student affiliates in SERD.

## SERD OPEN POSITIONS

I am pleased to inform you that we are looking for nominations to fill the Editor of the Diversity Factor (SERD Newsletter), SERD Membership Chairperson, and Co-Chairs of the SERD Programming Committee.

Once we receive nominations, nominees for the Newsletter Co-Editor and Membership Chair will be on the election ballot for these positions. The Co-chairs of the SERD Programming Committee will be appointed by the SERD Chairperson. If elected/appointed, the 2-year terms for these positions begin immediately and end August 31, 2015.

### **Newsletter Co-Editor:**

The newsletter co-editor shall maintain responsibility for the production of a biannual newsletter aimed at highlighting topics germane to SERD's mission. Along with an additional Co-Editor this

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person will need to monitor a small administrative team who are each given unique responsibilities to aide in the production of the newsletter. The Co-Editor will also provide an annual report at the SERD board meeting.

### **Membership Chair:**

The membership chair is responsible for processing member applications and maintaining the membership database. The membership chair may also help recruit and promote SERD at SERD events, develop SERD promotional materials, and provide an update on membership in the SERD newsletter. Lastly the membership chair will also provide an annual report on membership at the SERD board meeting.

### **SERD Programming Committee:**

One Co-Chair serves as the Poster Session Coordinator. This committee is primarily responsible for soliciting and receiving student poster proposal submission, by the established deadline date set by the Chair of Section Chairs; coordinating and identifying the selection review committee; organize and submit ranked order of accepted posters and provide a list of declined posters to Chair of Sections Chair. Poster Session Coordinator sends out acceptance and decline emails to all the students that submitted a poster. Poster Session Coordinator compiles a final list of presenters to the Chair of Section Chairs and confirms their attendance to APA. Poster Session coordinator attends APA to present summary of the committee's activities at the SERD business meeting. In this position, members are also responsible for contacting the webmaster and newsletter to update the SERD website with SERD student presenters. One Co-Chair serves as the SERD Symposium Coordinator. This committee is also responsible for submitting a proposal through the APA portal for one programming hour at the annual APA convention. Furthermore, this Co-Chair will coordinate with the SERD Chairperson to organize SERD events at APA in the Division17 Hospitality Suite.

Please see the Division 17 Website ([www.div17.org](http://www.div17.org)) and the SERD Website ([www.div17.org/SERD](http://www.div17.org/SERD)) for details about the Division 17 and SERD.

Self-nominations are encouraged. Nominees are invited to submit a biographical sketch or position statement on the issues germane to SERD's mission or APA or a combination biography and position statement of no more than 125 words. The statement will be linked to the ballot. I encourage you to submit your statement via email to me at [emobasi@central.uh.edu](mailto:emobasi@central.uh.edu). Please email me your statement as soon as possible.

If you have any questions concerning the election process, feel free to contact me at [emobasi@central.uh.edu](mailto:emobasi@central.uh.edu). We truly hope that you will consider taking a leadership role in SERD. We thank you in advance for your consideration and time.

Respectfully,

Ezemenari M. Obasi, Ph.D.  
SERD, Chairperson  
Associate Professor

