RE:LAUNCH

The Research Magazine of the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education

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On the cover: Teacher Education Program students meet before commencement near the Santa Barbara Mission.

Note from Dr. Michael Furlong, Associate Dean of Research, Gevirtz School

Serving for the past year as the GGSE Associate Dean for Research has provided me with an enhanced appreciation for the creative and talented faculty and staff that strive every day to advance educational and psychological science and practice. The GGSE Contracts & Grants Office (CGO) is managed by Kelly Hayton with grant analysts Lupe Gonzalez and Jenna Henry. Working with principal investigators, this team currently manages a grant portfolio of over $11 million.

Among the GGSE’s cutting edge investigations, RE:Launch highlights three projects. The first describes Dr. Miya Barnett’s four-year K award from the National Institute of Mental Health, which focuses on the refinement and enhancement of Parent Child Interaction Therapy with parents particularly within Latinx communities. The second project represents a major California-wide initiative that seeks nothing less than to reconsider and redesign teacher education. Dr. Tine Sloan is directing the California Teacher Education Research and Improvement Network. The third project reflects GGSE researchers’ links to the international research community. With support from the UC MEXUS, a team of researchers from the GGSE, Universidad De La Salle, and Universidad Guanajuato are validating a measure of college students’ social emotional well-being.

With support from the UCSB campus Office of Research, Brandon Fastman was assigned to work directly with GGSE. This has provided valuable increased guidance and support for grant previews and preparation.

With UCSB being a Research Level 1 designated university, the GGSE CGO’s primary mission is to support faculty and student efforts to secure funding in support of their research to advance basic science and applied educational and psychological practice. The CGO looks forward with enthusiasm to support and expand this effort in the coming year.

Mike Furlong
Associate Dean for Research
# Major Grant Awards Funded in Fiscal Year 2016-17

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For more information about external funding at the Gevirtz School, see the Contracts & Grants Office's 2017 annual report at: [http://education.ucsb.edu/sites/default/files/contracts_grants/docs/2017report.pdf](http://education.ucsb.edu/sites/default/files/contracts_grants/docs/2017report.pdf)
A $600,067 four-year K award from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is one of the most coveted and competitive early career awards that a new faculty member can obtain. Assistant Professor Miya Barnett of the Department of Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology puts it this way: “The K series of awards are intended for people early in their careers who have to show the NIH that they need four more years of mentoring after a long time in a doctoral program and in a post doc position.” Barnett’s Mentored Research Scientist Development Award isn’t just about executing the research plan, but also includes training and mentorship activities, for she explains, “The NIH is more interested in investing in who you are becoming as a researcher.” The K award is the first step to a career as a federally-funded independent researcher.

Barnett is building from her work in graduate school (she earned her Ph.D. from Central Michigan University)—where she focused on the efficacy and effectiveness of Parent-Child Intervention Therapy (PCIT)—to implementation science. “I want to work on how to narrow the 20 year gap that happens between research being done in the university and that research informing programs in the community,” she explains. “Plus, how do those interventions then stay potent?”

Her NIH funded research seeks to help more families benefit from PCIT. “[PCIT] is unique as it uses a coaching model to help parents gain skills,” she says. “When parents meet with therapists alone, some learning sticks, but the work has to happen when the parent and child are together. With PCIT that happens as the therapist is behind a one-way mirror and via earpiece can help the parent in real time.” The over 30 years of research about PCIT shows that it improves parent-child relationships while decreasing disruptive behaviors in children.

What her study hopes to accomplish is to build a bridge to PCIT for low-income Latino families, who, Barnett claims, “have similar outcomes with PCIT as other families, but the process takes longer, fewer take part in it, and more drop out.” Barnett has turned to Lay Health Workers (LHW), members of the community who serve without formal mental health training, as a possible solution to promote access and engagement, for she says, “someone from your own community is more trustworthy and is able to help you avoid stigma issues about seeking help and support with parenting.”

That means there are three phases for her four-year study. “Phase one is what’s happening on the ground?” she says. Just quantifying who is employed as LHWs and what roles they fulfill isn’t easy, as the term encompasses a range of employees, including LHWs, promotoras, and parent support.
partners. Phase two is about partnering with community stakeholders to determine the best ways to train LHWs to lead to engagement and access to PCIT.

Phase three is the evaluation component: Does that training work? But, Barnett asserts that’s a complicated question, for she also hopes to measure “not just client outcomes, but how do the LHWs feel about the training? Are more people in treatment? How long do they stay in treatment?”

Fortunately, the project is supported both by the NIH-required team of mentors and a group of UCSB students who will help her do the training and research. The mentors not only include Dr. Jeanne Miranda, from UCLA’s Fielding School of Public Health and Department of Psychiatry, and Dr. Anna Lau, from UCLA’s Clinical Psychology Department, but also Dr. Maryam Kia-Keating, Barnett’s colleague in UCSB’s Department of Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology, because of Kia-Keating’s expertise in community-based participatory research. “Dr. Barnett is engaging in such an important area of research, one that brings attention to the potential for LHWs to bridge the gap to treatment access and cultural engagement for children and families,” Kia-Keating says. “I’m thrilled to be her mentor and to help support a project that works in partnership with the community.”

The students, on the other hand, will have the opportunity to be mentored by Barnett, who has a long history with PCIT. A room in the Hosford Counseling & Psychological Services Clinic has been converted to operate as a PCIT site, complete with one-way mirror and sound system. Barnett points out, “It really fits with the mission of training our students in evidence-based interventions. It helps build the students’ skill sets and better prepare them for their clinical internships. I’m really excited to launch this clinic and have students help with the research.

“The students I’m training now will provide a service for the school and the community,” she says. Students will also be better prepared to engage in Barnett’s community-based research on PCIT, as they will have direct experience implementing the model.

Barnett also sees how this work resonates in the larger university community. “One of the reasons I love being at UCSB is we’re an HSI [Hispanic Serving Institution],” she states. “I feel proud to be part of an institution with that mission.” As evidence she references how UCSB was recently ranked 2nd on the New York Times’ “Top Colleges Doing the Most for the American Dream” index. Along with training graduate students in PCIT, Barnett is excited to mentor undergraduate students, especially from underserved populations, adding “we have to address the issue that there aren’t enough people of color in higher education. I want students to feel ownership of the [research] process as one more way to get around health disparities.”
We all know the phrase “best practice” too often gets slapped on what has been traditional practice. Indeed, in the area of teacher training and education, the assumption that best practices are developed on the basis of extensive research and reliable data sadly isn’t always the case. Hence the motivation for Tine Sloan, former long-term Director of UC Santa Barbara’s Teacher Education Program, to galvanize a coordinated effort across nine UC campuses to understand effective practice in teacher education – all informed by cutting edge research.

In January, 2017 Sloan and her colleagues were the recipients of the UC President’s Research Catalyst Award, a 1.5 million dollar grant that will enable her to lead a nine-campus consortium with UC researchers from Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, Merced and Santa Cruz; both the teacher education programs and the undergraduate science and mathematics pathways to teaching programs (CalTeach) are part of the project. The effort further involves support and collaborations within the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the California State University System, the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and the California Department of Education.

From her earliest planning, Sloan saw the state of California as a major stakeholder in this project. “We want to generate research that will help inform state policy on teacher education,” says Sloan. “For instance, student teachers are required to do 600 hours of fieldwork as part of their credential. But are a specific number of hours an effective means of measuring teacher competence? Should we be looking at how long student teachers are doing their fieldwork or should we be more focused on having them exposed to certain experiences, mentoring, or completing certain projects within that fieldwork? In the latter case, by focusing on these potential new milestones, will it take less or more time for students to earn their credential? These are just some of the questions we hope our research will answer.”

The complexities involved in determining requirements for teacher education programs can be overwhelming, which can make it tempting to either continue with the status quo or find simple solutions. “Obviously, it’s much easier to measure hours worked than more complex experiences,” Sloan admits. “But the world is changing and we need to make sure that our teacher education programs keep up with those changes. If there are more effective methods for measuring teaching competence, and program effectiveness, then we need to take a closer look at how we can develop those methods.”

Sloan’s research group will also tackle controversial topics such as standardized testing. For years
the state of California has been reluctant to use standardized test scores to evaluate teacher impact on students, as this measure has significant limitations with its methodology and interpretation, hence generating much controversy in other states. Sloan further points out that even if we could develop uses that were sound and informative, the standardized tests previously in use only measured a narrow part of success for students. Sloan plans to use her research platform to explore multiple avenues of teacher impact, and in turn what we can and cannot attribute to teacher preparation. “We can ask students directly, ‘Are you happy in school?’ or ‘What does your teacher do that helps you learn?’” Sloan explains. “By expanding our definition of student success to include concepts such as a love of learning or school engagement, we can look at the social-emotional supports teachers provide.” She also noted that, “we can observe what teachers are doing in their first years of teaching, and tease out how their practice links to how they were prepared versus the impacts of their current work environment.”

The ambitious project, known as the California Teacher Education Research and Improvement Network (CTERIN), will involve creating a comprehensive and centralized data system that can be used by researchers across the network for the project’s work. “Right now, there’s too much research in too many different pockets,” Sloan claims. “By coordinating research in a centralized system from a number of places, we will be able to learn how context affects practice in locations – from urban areas of Los Angeles to migrant worker communities in the Central Valley, say. And we will be able conduct research on a large scale that can answer important questions for California.” This fall, CTERIN will hold a Stakeholder Policy Summit in Sacramento in order to hear from constituents about the important issues that should be part of the center’s research and improvement agenda.

In the end, it was UC President Janet Napolitano who recognized the importance of Sloan and her colleagues’ research. Napolitano selected the CTERIN proposal from out of more than 100 proposals statewide, awarding it more than three times the funding of the other 2017 Catalyst Awards combined. Acknowledging California’s teacher shortage, Napolitano said she hopes CTERIN’s work “will create a statewide network that aims to put highly qualified teachers in every California classroom, for every subject.”
Health doesn’t just mean the absence of sickness. That might be particularly true for mental health, which the World Health Organization recently defined as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.”

Enter Dr. Michael Furlong and the Covitality team of researchers, working to foster student well-being and social-emotional learning—both locally and internationally. Furlong, along with Dr. Karen Nylund-Gibson from the Department of Education and Dr. Erin Dowdy from the Department of Counseling, Clinical and School Psychology, teamed up with colleagues from Mexico (Drs. Chacón Gutiérrez, Ceja, Barradas, and Cisneros) and Oregon (Drs. Smith and Christopherson) on a project called “Cross-Validation of the Social Emotional Health Survey-Higher Education for Mexican and United States College Students: A Research Partnership to Foster Student Well-Being.” The project is funded by The University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States (UC MEXUS) and El Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT).

That Social-Emotional Health Survey [see chart below] examines “how covitality measures might connect with healthy and well students,” Furlong says. “The Centers for Disease Control conducts the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System every two years in secondary schools—a survey that focuses almost exclusively on problem or risk behaviors. There is increasing recognition that it is important to help the general population of individuals be more optimistic and more grateful. We see it as a direct benefit to schools and communities, helping them identify those who need immediate services, not just ones not in distress.”

Following work with secondary school students, the UC MEXUS study modified the Social Emotional Health Survey for use with college students, which has become the beginning of variations of the survey traveling the globe to Australia, Spain, UK, China, Italy, and Slovakia. Furlong says, “We’re developing a book for Springer Publishing this fall organizing what we’ve done on this work with partners from international universities. The next phase is to look at

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Social Emotional Health Survey-Higher Education

12 Social Cognitive Resources

- Optimism
- ZEST
- Gratitude
- Self-Regulation
- Cognitive Reappraisal
- Empathy
- Family Support
- Peer Support
- Institutional Bonding
- Self-Awareness
- Self-Efficacy
- Persistence

4 Domain Strengths

- Engaged Living
- Emotional Competence
- Belief in Others
- Belief in Self
the pool of information together and have a global view of covitality."

Meanwhile the work continues in California. "Over the next two years the GGSE Covitality team will ask more than 100,000 high school students to complete a survey about their social and emotional health," Furlong points out. "This will be the most thorough mental health database of California’s adolescents to date." At the same time surveys will also occur at the college level, including at Cuesta College and Hancock College. "About half of new community college students do not enroll in the following year," Furlong notes. "It’s a real interest: how do we help students finish successfully? At the college level, we are interested to see if measures such as the Social Emotional Health Survey might help to increase understanding of how students access higher education, and once enrolled, make progress toward earning a degree."

More and more data from different school environments will allow the Covitality team and other researchers to better understand the well-being needs at all levels—community college, transfer students, and non-traditional students. For example, Covitality team member Erin Dowdy says, "The persistence rate for students age 20 and above is much lower than for traditional students, and it’s particularly lower at 24 years old and older. How do intra-personal competencies foster student success?"

At UCSB, the Covitality team is working with an advisory council led by Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Margaret Klawunn. "We want student services to ground us," Covitality team member Karen Nylund-Gibson says. "What’s the best information we can provide student services for the needs of our students?"

Associate Dean of Students Don Lubach is especially excited about this partnership. "Professor Furlong’s work is powerful because it builds on student strengths and positive outcomes," he says. "As a long time practitioner in student affairs, I see daily examples of resilience and growth—not the same picture I see in deficit obsessed literature. We are very lucky to have an international expert who works from a platform of optimism."

Furlong muses, "In higher ed, universities are by nature a little less personal, but increasingly they are wondering what are the non-cognitive learning objectives—what are they trying to foster in students? How do universities foster belonging? For instance, my undergraduate students wanted to start a Gaucho Instagr[itude] account as an effort to increase a sense of appreciation and positive personal connections on the campus. When are we going to value having a recognition system for the top 20 grateful or optimistic schools in the country?"

Furlong, Nylund-Gibson, and Dowdy see the Covitality Project very much at its beginning, saying, "That’s how the UC MEXUS project has really blossomed. We are eager to carry this work forward and have applied for a federal grant to support the expansion of the postsecondary research beyond UCSB to community colleges and California State Universities. We will soon have for the first time an integrated approach to monitor social and emotional health from middle school through the college years. This will make for some fascinating longitudinal studies. We are creating databases that don’t exist right now—a data set that will be unique; our hope is that there will be many meaningful dissertations and knowledge coming out of this project."