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**October 2018**

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## **Describe the site where you work and how you decided on this type of placement.**

I am a first-year, tenure-track Assistant Professor at the University of Northern Colorado. Since working toward my undergraduate degree in psychology, my ultimate career goal was to be a professor. Choosing when to start searching for faculty positions—right after predoctoral internship or after a post-doc—was the first decision I had to make. After interviewing at a few institutions, I decided that I wanted another year of applied experiences before moving into training and supervising others. During my post-doc year, I was able to gain more intervention, assessment, and supervision experiences that helped me hone my training skills and build confidence. The next year, I was intent on finding positions that were a good fit for me—both matching my research interests and vision of well-rounded work–life balance. I chose UNC for several reasons: I was able to train both EdS and PhD students; I found a niche for my research, opportunity for collaboration, and the program emphasized strong training and supervision, collaboration, and consultation over a “publish or perish” culture.

Things I might recommend considering when searching for faculty jobs include: (a) the type of program (EDs, PhD, or both; APA or NASP approved, etc.), (b) the theoretical orientation and training mission of the faculty, (c) how your research fits and contrasts with others in the department, (d) if the department specializes in a specific aspect—mental health intervention, social justice, or assessment, etc. (e) opportunities for collaboration in research and training across programs and colleges, (f) the tenure requirements for publishing research, and (g) colleagues with whom I could see myself going to lunch. Feeling at home and as part of a community was important to me as well—this differs for everyone, but I made it a point to interview places where I could see myself being involved in a community both personally and professionally.

## **What are your areas of expertise at this point in your career?**

My strengths are in promoting a growth mindset and preventive intervention, understanding mindfulness-based interventions, and mental health services in both primary and post-secondary education. My WiMSSΨ (Wellness in Multi-tiered Systems of School Psychology) Lab's current projects include understanding the effects of brief mindfulness-based interventions on students' attentional control, outcomes of academic and mental health intervention in postsecondary school psychology, and strengthening the theory to practice connection through mentorship for graduate students. In the spirit of life-long learning and growth mindset, I am aware that I still have much to learn and am looking forward to evolving and honing my interests through the next few years.

## **Describe your engagement in the local community and how this impacts your work.**

As first-year faculty, one of my main goals is to build collaborative connections in my new community to foster well-rounded training and supervision, advocacy, and research opportunities. I'm seeking ways to become more involved in area schools and community resource centers. Sometimes, the most wonderful opportunities for community engagement can happen inadvertently! Recently, I was at the dog park and struck up a conversation with a woman I had never met. Her work at a local recreational sports complex includes an empowerment and self-concept program called Girls2Women for young athletes and their mothers. I accepted the opportunity to speak at their inaugural event and made potential training and research connections. Important connections can happen anywhere—keep putting yourself out there and be open to connecting with others.

## **Describe a challenge that you have faced in your early career, and how did you handle it? What advice do you have for other early career school psychologists with similar challenges?**

Imposter syndrome has been something that has followed me throughout my early career—especially in the last years of grad school, internship, and post-doc. When meeting my internship cohort for the first time, I was convinced I was the least qualified intern—that I knew the least, everyone would see through me as being a “fake” or think I was terrible at my job. I think, at some level, we are all concerned about not being able to be effective helping professionals regardless of our knowledge and achievements, but we rarely speak about this fear with others. During one consortium meeting with my cohort, I revealed my imposter syndrome, and to my surprise, my fellow interns each shared similar feelings.

Moral of the story: We are all in this together. If you're feeling like an imposter, reach out for feedback, connection, or mentorship. Talk to a mental health professional in the community. Gently remind yourself that you chose a profession that promotes life-long learning; we aren't expected to know every single thing about our multifaceted careers, but we are expected to give our best effort, collaborate, and seek out opportunities for professional development.

## **What specific aspects of NASP membership and involvement have impacted or benefited you in your career thus far?**

I've been an active NASP member since I started my school psychology program in 2012, and it's been an important part of developing my professional identity, networking, and staying up to date in the field. I am a certified NCSP, dedicated to continuing education and training. In addition, I have submitted book reviews to *Communiqué* and have been a conference proposal reviewer many times. I enjoy going to conferences nearly every year and make it a goal to disseminate knowledge—I have

presented five posters at NASP conventions and recently had a paper presentation accepted for the 2019 Atlanta convention.

**SPAW is in November, how will you or your program engage others to potentially address the shortages in the field? What efforts does your program engage in to increase awareness of the profession?**

Our School Psychology Student Organization (SPSO) is actively planning SPAW week activities in order to help promote the profession and increase awareness. Some activities include outreach to the university or area public schools to increase awareness of the profession and recruit applicants to the program. I did not know what a school psychologist was until entering graduate school, so I am passionate about increasing awareness of the profession—especially to secondary and postsecondary students. My plans for SPAW include reaching out to the undergraduate psychology professors at University of Northern Colorado and the area community college about visiting their classes to talk about our dynamic profession, and exploring different community fairs, expos, and events where I can provide informational outreach and recruitment opportunities.