



Serving THE COMMUNITY

College of Education programs prepare thousands of high-quality educators, counselors, psychologists, administrators, researchers, educational and health-related specialists each year. These research- and practice-oriented programs allow students to work with highly cited faculty in several centers, which provide an array of services to hundreds of local clients. Here's a look at how just a few of them serve the community.

STORIES BY CATHARIN SHEPARD

Uga School Psychology Clinic Has Helped Thousands of Parents Learn More About Their Children's Needs

Discovering that your child may have a learning disability, behavioral problem or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the most frightening challenges a parent can face. Every year, dozens of parents in northeast Georgia turn to the UGA School Psychology Clinic for answers.

The clinic offers one of the most thorough and advanced psychological evaluation programs in Georgia. Packed with more resources than most school systems can provide, the clinic has helped thousands of parents learn more about their children's needs and what they can do to help them achieve happy, successful lives.

"We're known for the thorough, comprehensive assessments that we conduct," said Michele Lease, who is the director of the school psychology program and who will co-direct the school psychology clinic with Jonathan Campbell starting in fall of 2007.

All clinic workers—doctoral students in their second or third year of the program—are trained in child psychology and psychopathology, school law and ethics, cognitive assessment, and social-emotional assessment before they begin to see patients one-on-one. Under the guidance of Lease, Campbell, and other supervising licensed psychologists, each doctoral student evaluates about a dozen children each year in the program. Students learn to assess patients for developmental functioning, intellectual functioning, comprehensive language evaluation, social communicative function, personality and behavioral adjustment and specific neuropsychological functioning, such as memory and motor skills.

This invaluable experience helps to prepare students for work in school systems and as consultants, as well as providing the opportunity for lab-based data collection. Few universities operate fully-fledged school psychology clinics, and students in the program report the clinic as among their top three reasons for attending UGA.

The Clinic for Autism SPectrum Evaluation and Research (CASPER), which operates as part of the school psychology clinic, is a program specifically geared toward the research and diagnosis of autism. Director Jonathan Campbell selects one or two students each year to focus on designing test instruments and evaluation methods to meet this goal, making the clinic one of only a handful of places in Georgia capable of diagnosing autism and related disorders in teens and adults as well as toddlers and elementary school-aged children.

CASPER seeks to refine the screening process of children with an autism spectrum disorder, and many students involved with the program have gone on to jobs in school systems or in private practice or research.

"We're providing specialized training to psychologists who will be working with kids in the future," said Campbell, who co-directs the school psychology clinic with Lease.

CASPER students working with kids and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders create individualized intervention plans, and will begin evaluating the efficacy of parent-child interaction therapy, an intervention designed to increase parent-child relationships through behaviorally-oriented parent training techniques.

The school psychology clinic and CASPER are funded by patient fees, but offer a sliding payment scale and make an effort to take on a number of pro bono cases each year.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY CLINIC AT-A-GLANCE

Founded: 1983

Home department: Educational Psychology and Instructional Technology

Location: 302 Aderhold Hall

Co-directors: Michele Lease and Jonathan Campbell, both associate professors

Brief description: The UGA school psychology clinic offers comprehensive psychological services for infants, toddlers, preschool and school-age children and adolescents throughout the state of Georgia and the southeastern U.S. The clinic conducts psychological evaluations and offers individual therapy and group intervention, and the clinic's CASPER program is thoroughly equipped with resources for diagnosing autism spectrum disorders. Services are provided by advanced graduate students under the supervision of a licensed psychologist.

Number of students involved: 30 graduate

Number of faculty involved: Three are directly involved, others volunteer their service.

Number of clients seen annually: Approximately 360

Web: www.coe.uga.edu/epit/research/clinic.html

Phone: 706/542-4265

Founder: John D. Nolan

John D. Nolan left his first career as a high school mathematics teacher to attend Harvard University. In 1971, he earned a Ph.D. in experimental psychology and attended Teachers College, Columbia University, to specialize in school psychology. He briefly joined the Columbia faculty before coming to UGA in the 1970s. Nolan founded the school psychology clinic in 1983, drawing on his expertise in research design, scientific theory, and mathematical modeling of psychological theories and laws. He currently lives in Nevada with his wife, Joyce.