

GERONTOLOGY NEWS

GP-IDEA Master's & Certificate Program Newsletter

May 2016

From the director's desk...

Hello, Great Plains IDEA students.

One of my greatest pleasures is seeing our online graduate students complete their goals by finishing our master's program. I really don't get to know you well until you get close to that point but I sincerely hope that we can change that dynamic and become much more engaged earlier in your academic career. One of the things that we encourage our on-site students is to network with their instructors—find ways to get to know them and to be known. It should be no different with you. Please call me or email me with any questions or just to say hi. One of the things that students are sometimes surprised to know is that there is an expectation for a final exam in the form of a paper and an oral defense of that paper. If you weren't aware of this, send me an email and I'll get the instructions to you. It shouldn't be scary but just one more opportunity for you to demonstrate your mastery of gerontology. Many students have done it before you and look where they are now! You can read about one of them in this issue.

Best wishes,

Gayle

“You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something - your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.”

Steve Jobs



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Personhood and Dementia

April 7, 2016

KSU faculty and staff, students, and community members joined together to attend this workshop focused on storytelling techniques for those with dementia and their caregivers. The storytelling exploration was guided by internationally acclaimed Irish storyteller Clare Murphy. She helped the audiences understand the art and craft of storytelling and why it is imperative to the maintenance of personhood in those with dementia.

Kim Richards of the Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art shared her work using visual thinking strategies to discuss artwork with persons with dementia and how to facilitate this type of activity. This event is held annually, sponsored by the KSU Center on Aging. Watch our website at www.he.k-state.edu/aging/outreach/personhood-dementia/ for info on our 2017 program !



Clare Murphy, Irish storyteller



Helpful hints about online learning

While online courses are convenient and easily accessible, specific skills are used for this type of learning. Here are some ideas to make online studying easier:

- ◆ Make sure your computer has all the suggested technical requirements and that you have reliable internet access.
- ◆ Take time to develop your computer skills before the class starts so you do not fall behind. *You can find some help under the GPIDEA student success center, go to the Tech Skills.*
- ◆ Have a dedicated, spacious workplace that is free of distraction.
- ◆ Connect with instructors and your classmates and do not hesitate to ask for help.
- ◆ Know your resources: schools offer all kinds of advising, library resources, technological help and financial assistance. *You can find some help under the GPIDEA student success center. Go to the Online Library Help, visit Tech Skills and Finances.*
- ◆ Create a study plan: plan ahead, have a calendar system, create a to-do list, set time limits and stay on schedule.
- ◆ Participate in all discussions: post questions, comments and respond to other student's posting.
- ◆ Stay motivated!
- ◆ Apply what you learned!
- ◆ Make sure you occasionally take a break from studying.

SPOTLIGHT: MONICA BLANTON-BIRZER



Monica started the GP-IDEA Masters in Gerontology while she was a practicing Physician Assistant. The vast majority of her patients are older so the course of study had both reiterated some of her medical knowledge while augmenting it with the social, psychological, and also policy sides of aging. Last year she participated as a guest lecturer in Biogerontology along with Professor Gayle Doll and this year she became a full instructor.

She thinks that despite living their lives digitally, online courses are challenging for undergrads. "Online courses demand a level of personal responsibility and accountability that is different than just showing up for class." Sometimes she also found it challenging to meet the deadlines with her full-time career and family obligations. Since she started graduate school her position as a PA has changed numerous times. After spending many years in surgical subspecialties, she now works in Endocrinology, seeing mostly diabetes patients. She thinks this is the hardest work she has done in a while. She is planning to complete her seminar course and final exam this summer/fall and graduate!

After that, she will continue working as a PA in some area of medicine, continuing to provide care and compassion for her many patients, all of whom are aging. After a much-needed break, she hopes she can continue teaching the Biogerontology course as well. "The students keep me on my toes and challenge me as much as I hopefully challenge them. The GP-IDEA format has allowed me to pursue a Master's degree in an unconventional way in a subject I find inspiring and thought-provoking. The question of why humans age has not been elucidated yet and the fascinating world of how humans age continues to be explored."

Amazing Careers in Aging Race

The center on Aging held their 5th Amazing Careers in Aging Race on April 8.

There were 26 students from various majors participating in the race and competing in different physical and mental challenges. The idea came from the popular CBS TV program called The Amazing Race, in which teams race around the world in competition with other teams.

Watch for our announcement about the 2017 Amazing Careers in Aging Race!

Useful APPs

[Spritz](http://spritzinc.com/) (http://spritzinc.com/) helps you to learn to read digital text faster — so if you don't absorb everything the first time, a second read of study material isn't such a big outlay of time. Rush Reader iOS app lets you type in an URL and read the Web page. Rush Reader lets you connect to your Pocket account and read saved content faster. Readsy is a Swiss-army knife website for Spritz. Cut and paste text, pull from a URL or upload a PDF file and read it fast.

[Goodreader](http://www.macworld.com/product/89369/goodreader-for-iphone.html) (http://www.macworld.com/product/89369/goodreader-for-iphone.html) Reading a PDF for class? GoodReader has earned its accolades by the way it handles huge PDF and TXT files, manuals, large books, magazines. Use typewriter text boxes, sticky notes, lines, arrows, and freehand drawings on top of a PDF file.

[Kami](https://www.kamihq.com/) (https://www.kamihq.com/) is a free online document viewer, annotation, and editing tool. Users can view common file types, highlight texts, underline and strikethrough texts, add text, and do some freehand drawing. It works with Google Drive, runs offline, and allows sharing and real-time collaboration.

[iA Writer](https://ia.net/writer/updates/ia-writer-3-1-comes-in-colors) (https://ia.net/writer/updates/ia-writer-3-1-comes-in-colors) app has a simple text editor that allows you to write out your notes, and then sync them with your iPad or desktop.

[Evernote](https://evernote.com/?var=c) (https://evernote.com/?var=c) offers a suite of excellent free productivity apps that include Evernote, Penultimate, Evernote Peek, Clearly and several more. This is a group of tools that are ideal for students and researching, as well as for practically anyone.

[Cold Turkey](https://getcoldturkey.com/) (https://getcoldturkey.com/) is for those who want to get things done. Stay focused by blocking applications, websites, and even the entire World Wide Web.

[Focus Booster](https://www.focusboosterapp.com/) (https://www.focusboosterapp.com/) Keep track of how long you've been focused on a task. You will also remember to take a break when the timer sounds.

[Todoist](https://todoist.com/) (https://todoist.com/) There are tons of to-do apps available but Todoist one of the more versatile of the bunch. As it also functions as a bookmarker for Web sites, it doubles as a great research tool. Even better, if you're studying with a classmate, you can share tasks or entire projects. Use it also as a reminder for assignments.

[Dictionary.com Mobile](http://www.dictionary.com/apps) (http://www.dictionary.com/apps) With more than two million definitions, synonyms and antonyms, this app is fast and user-friendly mobile app will decode that confusing media law textbook in no time.

[Dragon Dictation](http://www.nuance.com/for-individuals/by-product/dragon-dictation-iphone/index.htm) (http://www.nuance.com/for-individuals/by-product/dragon-dictation-iphone/index.htm) uses accurate voice recognition software to let you speak and instantly see your words in text. Try this if you're in a time crunch and really need to churn out an essay; or, if you're just someone who prefers speaking over writing.

[Chegg](http://www.chegg.com/mobile/) (http://www.chegg.com/mobile/) ships printed books, and while you wait for arrival, you can use their mobile app. It provides eTextbooks, free weekly guided solutions and free digital access to books for seven days while physical book ships.



Congrats to our 2016 Graduates!



Melanie Ziegler

Denise Wolney

Janet Clearwater

Monica Blanton-Biryer

Human Ecology Graduate Student Council Ambassador Program

Would you like to be more engaged with Kansas State University? Are you looking for some leadership experience? Here is your chance! Become a Human Ecology Ambassador!

Ambassadors' duties:

Represent the College of Human Ecology during college- and university-wide recruitment events on and off campus.

Demonstrate leadership by participating in as many high school and transfer student recruitment events as possible each year.

Serve as an advocate and the representative for their department.

Report and relay messages between HE GSC and department grad student, faculty, and staff.

It is not required that interested students have extensive knowledge about the college and its academic programs as it is all provided during formal training and weekly meetings.

For additional information please contact Madaí Rivera, advisor, at madai@k-state.edu or 785-532-5500. You will find the link below to the Ambassador application:

<http://www.he.k-state.edu/students/services/student-organizations/ambassadors/CHE-Ambassador-Application16-17.pdf>

KANSAS STATE
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College of Human Ecology
Center on Aging

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