



**WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE**

**Center for
Multicultural & Global
Mental Health**

Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health

Annual Report: 2019-2020



Lunar New Year Celebration & Launch of the Asian Mental Health Program

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

**One Wells Avenue
Newton, MA 02459
617.327.6777**

**cmgmh@williamjames.edu
www.williamjames.edu/cmgmh**

Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health

Annual Report: 2019-2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Overview of CMGMH.....	3
Mission.....	3
Vision Statement.....	3
Strategic Goals & Objectives.....	4
CMGMH's Academic Concentrations	5
African & Caribbean Mental Health	5
Asian Mental Health.....	5
Global Mental Health.....	6
Latino Mental Health Program.....	6
CMGMH's Programs.....	7
Black Mental Health Graduate Academy.....	7
Syrian Refugee Project.....	7
<i>Serving the Underserved</i> Scholarship Awardees.....	8
Service Learning & Cultural Immersion Programs.....	13
Professional Development & Social Cultural Events.....	20
Webinars on the Impacts of COVID-19 on Underserved Communities.....	34
Awards & Accomplishments.....	36
Get Involved with CMGMH.....	38

Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Multicultural and Global Mental Health (CMGMH) at William James College (WJC) was established in June 2016 with the primary mission of recruiting, training, educating, and mentoring a cadre of professionals to address mental health disparities among historically marginalized groups, practice trauma-informed care, and serve culturally diverse individuals and communities locally and across the globe.

This Annual Report provides a summary of the various academic, professional development, and social-cultural activities conducted by the Multicultural Center's students, faculty, and program administrators between August 1, 2019 and July 31, 2020.

To learn more about CMGMH and its academic concentrations and programs, please visit www.williamjames.edu/cmgmh or contact cmgmh@williamjames.edu.



OVERVIEW OF THE CENTER FOR MULTICULTURAL & GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH



The Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health (CMGMH) aims to be a preeminent academic, clinical training, and research center in promoting social justice and addressing mental health disparities among culturally diverse populations in the U.S. and abroad. CMGMH is comprised of academic

concentrations and programs at WJC that focus primarily on historically marginalized groups and underserved communities. These include the Concentrations in *African and Caribbean Mental Health*, *Asian Mental Health*, *Global Mental Health*, and *Latino Mental Health* as well as programs such as the Black Mental Health Graduate Academy and the Syrian Refugees Project.

MISSION

To train, educate, mentor, and prepare a cadre of professionals to serve culturally diverse individuals and communities locally and around the globe.

VISION STATEMENT

To inspire and empower students, clinicians, educators, and other providers as agents of social justice with a passion for and a commitment to serving historically marginalized populations.

STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Multicultural Center's Strategic Plan is consistent with William James College's Core Values of (1) *Social Responsibility*, which aims to “educate providers to meet a diverse society's evolving mental health needs including cultural competence and language training, [and] develop programs and partnerships to ensure access to mental health care for all persons”; (2) *Personal Growth*, which seeks to “foster a supportive, challenging and available learning environment that pays careful attention to [students'] personal and professional development”; and (3) *Experiential Education*, which is intended to “integrate rigorous academic instruction with substantial clinical experience.”

The Multicultural Center's primary goals are to:

- Educate students, mental health professionals, educators, community leaders, and service providers on topics germane to multicultural and global perspectives on psychosocial well-being.
- Provide clinical field training experiences and learning opportunities to students to work competently with culturally diverse individuals, families, and communities.
- Support the rigorous application of science to examining mental health disparities and the impact of multicultural and global factors on health and psychosocial functioning through evidence-based research and best practices.
- Offer transformative immersion and service learning experiences that will expose, inform, and deepen students' knowledge, cultural awareness and sensitivity, and cultural fluency.
- Mentor, nurture, and support dynamic and collegial advocates of underserved communities in order to empower leaders of social change and agents of social justice.

CMGMH'S ACADEMIC CONCENTRATIONS

AFRICAN & CARIBBEAN MENTAL HEALTH

The African & Caribbean Mental Health Concentration aims to recruit, train, and equip graduate students with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide culturally-sensitive, evidence-informed mental health services to meet the complex behavioral, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of individuals, families, and groups who are of African and Caribbean descent. The program focuses on addressing mental health disparities and inequalities in mental health policy, research, and practice in order to promote the overall well-being of African and Caribbean communities in the United States and around the globe.

ASIAN MENTAL HEALTH



Asians are the fastest growing racial minority group in the United States. Yet, Asians face significant barriers in accessing and utilizing mental health services. Cultural competency, cultural responsiveness and cultural humility have become imperatives in clinical and service practices in working with Asian individuals, families, and groups.

As our society becomes increasingly diverse, there is a growing need to recruit and train graduate psychology students who possess the knowledge and required skills to meet the mental health needs of culturally diverse individuals, families, and communities. This concentration is designed to promote students' awareness and knowledge of the unique mental health inequalities in clinical practice, research and policy, and their impact on the psychosocial well-being of Asian communities in the U.S.

GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH

The Global Mental Health Concentration is designed for students with an interest in advancing the Global Mental Health agenda. Through didactic, clinical, research, and advocacy-related experiences, students will acquire the knowledge, skills, and training to serve culturally diverse individuals and communities locally and around the globe. Courses incorporate the broad dimensions of ethnicity, race, and migration and refugee status, and their intersections with language, class, gender, education, and spirituality.

LATINO MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Established in 2006, the Dr. Cynthia Lucero Center's Latino Mental Health Program (LMHP) offers a unique opportunity for William James College students who are interested in working with individuals from Latino cultures. Through intensive immersion in Spanish language and Hispanic cultures, students are prepared as culturally sensitive clinicians with expertise to meet the mental health needs of this rapidly growing and underserved segment of the U.S. population.



CMGMH'S PROGRAMS

THE BLACK MENTAL HEALTH GRADUATE ACADEMY

The Black Mental Health Graduate Academy (BMHGA) is a leadership and academic pipeline designed to recruit, mentor and support Academy Scholars: Black individuals interested in pursuing mental health careers and Black students in William James College's Master's and Doctoral degree programs for mental health counseling and psychology. BMHGA addresses racial and ethnic disparities in the mental health field by diversifying WJC and, ultimately, the mental health care workforce. The BMHGA provides opportunities to enhance student success. BMHGA Scholars receive professional mentorship support through the Academy Mentorship Program, participate in academic and professional development activities through the Academy Professional Development Program, and engage in community service with historically disadvantaged groups.

SYRIAN REFUGEE PROJECT

Through a partnership with Jewish Family Service (JFS) of MetroWest, William James College students and faculty provide trauma-based and culturally informed mental health consultation and psychosocial support to Syrian refugees who have resettled in the Boston area. CMGMH has served as the liaison between various programs at WJC and community-based organizations that have been actively involved in the resettlement effort. Faculty and students at WJC continue to work collaboratively with JFS staff to provide consultation and direct care services to Syrian children, adults, and families.



STANDING UP FOR THOSE LEFT BEHIND

SERVING THE UNDERSERVED SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

In the spring of 2017, under the auspices of the Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health, William James College (WJC) established the ***Serving the Mental Health Needs of the Underserved Scholarships*** to recruit, train, and mentor graduate students committed to pursuing careers in which they provide culturally informed mental health and/or organizational wellness services to historically underserved communities. The highly competitive scholarship, which covers two-thirds of total tuition costs, recognizes the achievements and promise of students who are seeking Master's, Certificate of Advance Graduate Studies, or Doctor of Psychology degrees at WJC.

In the fall of 2019, WJC welcomed four new awardees—**Jennifer Cotard, Frances Mathieu, Paulina Prieto, and Melanie Robinson Findlay**. As CMGMH Fellows, the awardees have been actively engaged in mentoring, community service, social-cultural, and professional development initiatives at WJC.



A native of Canton, Massachusetts, **Jennifer Cotard (Counseling Psychology)** is the youngest of three siblings and the mother of two boys. She grew up in a loving household where Haitian traditions and strong Christian values were instilled in her by her parents. After graduating high school, Jennifer obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English at Pine Manor College. For three years, she taught at City on a Hill Public Charter School where she worked with children with learning disabilities. Navigating through the Boston Public Schools systems fueled her desire to serve children and families from historically marginalized backgrounds.

Her Caribbean and Latin heritage further enhanced her passion for supporting families who struggle with mental illness. Currently, Jennifer is an Intensive Care Coordinator at Children's Services of Roxbury. She has also worked as a Home-Based Specialist in the Early Head Start Program at the Dimock Center. She is a Pediatric and Family Advisory Board Member at Boston Medical Center.

Jennifer has a love for learning and exploring and is fluent in four languages. During her graduate studies at William James College, she plans to continue to support and advocate on behalf of families affected by mental illness. She will complete an Area of Emphasis in Couples and Family Therapy through the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program. One of her long-term goals is to lead an agency that serves immigrant individuals and families who need social-emotional support and clinical services.

As a first-generation, Haitian American woman raised in the inner city, **Frances Mathieu (Organizational & Leadership Psychology)** has become an ardent advocate for serving marginalized communities with compassion and dignity. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with minors in Sociology and International Studies from St. John's University. Upon completing her undergraduate studies, she pursued a Master of Social Work degree at Clark Atlanta University where her research focused on depression and acculturation among first-generation Haitian Americans. Frances is bilingual in English and Haitian Creole. Her areas of expertise are in the fields of substance abuse and Applied Behavior Analysis. She is currently employed as the Developmental Service Coordinator at the North Suffolk Mental Health Association.



Frances has worked as a Drug Addition Counselor at Health Care Resource Center in Chelsea and as an Applied Behavior Therapist at Ubuntu Autism Consultants in Worcester. As the Chief Marketing Officer on the executive board of *For the Culture Media*, she ensures that the organization meets its primary mission: To inform, inspire, and engage urban millennials through curating content and social events. During her graduate training at William James College, Frances plans to become actively engaged in professional development activities and seek other learning opportunities such as international immersion experiences. She looks forward to applying the skills and knowledge that she will be acquiring at WJC to her current position as a Developmental Service Coordinator.

Frances also plans to focus her studies on organizational change management within non-profit agencies, and join the concentration in Leading Non-Profits & NGOs. Following the completion of her doctoral studies, Frances will work with historically disempowered employees to enhance their awareness of the impacts of culture and mental health on their work performance and productivity.



Paulina Prieto (Clinical Psychology)

was born and raised in Guayaquil, Ecuador. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Universidad de Especiales Espiritu Santo in Ecuador. In 2017, she moved to the U.S. to pursue her dreams of becoming a Clinical Psychologist.

Paulina's passion for mental health began in high school when she volunteered at a School for the Deaf where she created a natural social-recreational environment for primary school aged children to help them transition to a non-special needs school setting. Since then, she has continued to strive to dedicate her life to helping others. Paulina has volunteered at the Institute of Neuroscience in

Guayaquil where she administered a music therapy program for patients, and at the Fundación Cecilia Rivadeneira where she provided emotional health tools and skills to families as well as organized social-recreational activities for children who were diagnosed with cancer. Some of Paulina's most memorable experiences have been during her time working with people with chronic and severe mental illnesses.

As a recent immigrant to the United States, Paulina has a special commitment to promoting awareness of the links between migration and mental health. She plans to use her knowledge and personal experiences to advocate for individuals who are coping with acculturative stress and other migration-related challenges. Being bilingual has also influenced how Paulina views the impact of language on an individual's psyche and daily functioning. During her tenure at WJC, Paulina plans to continue volunteering and pursuing activities that will foster her professional growth. She will also join the Concentration in Latino Mental Health. One of her long-term goals is to enhance her clinical skills to work with chronically ill patients in inpatient settings. As she remains open to future opportunities, Paulina dreams of opening a clinic in her native Ecuador.



Melanie Robinson Findlay (Clinical Psychology) was born in Bristol, England to Jamaican parents. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Northeastern University and a Master's degree in Social Work from Boston College. She is an alum of the Graduate Certificate in Executive Coaching Program at William James College. Melanie's career has been dedicated to creating space for the seemingly unseen and unheard populations with whom she has worked. She is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker whose ten-year social work career began with her working in a correctional facility where she served as a Mental Health clinician, the Mental Health Director, and the Director of Social

Services. She also worked as a fee-for-service Behavioral Health Clinician at Codman Square Health Center where she provided individual and group therapy. Most recently, she served as a clinical social worker in the Boston Juvenile Court Clinic, completing court-ordered evaluations for youth and families.

Melanie was appointed to the Board of Registration of Social Workers by Governor Baker and currently serves as the Chair. She is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Social Work at Boston College and Simmons University, and is on the advisory board of the City of Boston's Office of Returning Citizens.

Melanie's research interests include psychological and neuropsychological testing. She is interested in exploring how culture affects not just the testing results but the individual experience of both the evaluator and those being evaluated. While at WJC, she plans to remain a champion for individuals and families who are involved in the criminal justice system. Her long-term professional goals involve reforming mental health services in correctional facilities and highlighting the importance of embracing inclusion while truly addressing difference as opposed to just narrowly endorsing the concept of diversity.



Service Learning & Cultural Immersion Programs

ECUADOR SERVICE LEARNING & CULTURAL IMMERSION PROGRAM

In the summer of 2019, the Latino Mental Health Program (LMHP) engaged in a series of academic activities resulting from a year of collaboration with different institutions in Guayaquil, Ecuador in addition to its annual cultural immersion program. Seven LMHP students (Emily Crain, Rebecca Dotti, Karina Fundora, Gabrielle McPhee, Amanda Salerno, Brenna Shanahan, and Rosie Sandberg) had the experience of embarking on a 5-week immersion trip to Guayaquil. They were welcomed by the Luceros, Sr. Johnny Gonzalez (Director of Centro Ecuatoriano), Psic. Claudia Zambrano (supervising psychologist), and the host families.



As “psychology interns” at the Instituto de Neurociencias (INC), the students rotated through different sections of the hospital, including the partial hospitalization program, the Center for Social Integration, and a substance use unit for women. They worked closely with local psychologists and medical professionals where they had the opportunity to observe administration of neuropsychological batteries, individual and group psychotherapy, music therapy, family consultation, substance use

counseling, and crisis intervention. They were able to enhance their clinical skills, understand the importance of providing culturally appropriate interventions, and improve their linguistic abilities.

Additionally, William James College (WJC) co-hosted a two-day conference with La Junta de Beneficencia de Guayaquil that focused on the integration of mental health and medicine. The conference was held at the Dr. Roberto Gilbert Children's Hospital and at INC with more than 200 attendees each day.

WJC President Dr. Nicholas Covino opened the conference with a well-received presentation on models of integration. The team of presenters included Dr. Stanley Berman from WJC and Dr. Margarita Alegria, Dr. Irene Falgas-Bague, and Ms. Sheri Lapatin Markle from the Disparities Research Unit at Harvard Medical School.



Furthermore, Dr. Elana Wolkoff, Faculty in the School Psychology Program at WJC along with two student co-presenters, Rosie Sandberg and Karina Fundora, led an all-day workshop for parents at Fasinarm, a private non-profit foundation addressing the educational needs of children with cognitive disabilities. The workshop was held in Spanish at the vocational high school with more than 100 attendees.



Lastly, Dr. Mari Carmen Bennasar, Director of the LMHP engaged in two other activities: (1) a 3-hour workshop on Psychological First Aid delivered at the fire department in Guayaquil, and (2) a radio interview at TELERADIO on issues pertaining to individuals with cognitive limitations. The team is grateful to their hosts in Ecuador where they were welcomed with great warmth and felt well integrated into the local community!

GUYANA SERVICE LEARNING & CULTURAL IMMERSION PROGRAM



Guyana, one of the least populated countries in South America, has had the unfortunate distinction of having the world's highest incidence of suicide—44.2 suicides per 100,000 deaths—four times the worldwide average of 11.4 per 100,000 (World Health Organization,

2014). In 2015, Guyana became one of only twenty-eight countries to develop a suicide prevention plan to reduce the suicide rate. The National Suicide Prevention Plan 2015-2020 identified risk factors and prevention strategies (Ministry of Public Health Guyana, 2014).

In response to the calls to action, in 2015, the *Guyana Service Learning & Cultural Immersion Program* was developed by Dr. Natalie A. Cort who is Guyanese by birth, under the auspices of WJC's Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health. The program is specifically designed to increase WJC students' cultural fluency and global competency by exploring the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural identities in Guyana.

Through a partnership with the American University of Peace Studies in Guyana, Dr. Cort traveled to Guyana from July 27 to July 31, 2019 where she conducted a two-day suicide prevention gatekeeper training workshop. The objectives of the workshop, titled "*Understanding & Preventing Suicide in Guyana*" were to 1) increase knowledge about suicide, depression, and trauma; 2) address beliefs and attitudes about suicide and mental illness; 3) reduce reluctance to intervene and stigma of mental illness; and 4) increase self-efficacy and skills to intervene with a person at risk of suicide. This highly



interactive and participatory workshop involved mini lectures, facilitated group discussions, role-plays, and expressive arts activities. Additionally, attendees were trained in the evidence-based Columbia Protocol (i.e., the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale) and related suicide safety planning.

Additionally, Dr. Cort conducted a program evaluation pilot study to examine the mental health needs of the Guyanese people and to evaluate the preliminary benefits of the Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training workshop. The success of the workshop and the study was achieved with significant contributions by WJC faculty and students, Dr. Sunny Dutra and Sohenga Depestre, and Guyanese coordinators, Collis Spencer-Drakes (AUOPS) and Marsha Singh.



While in Guyana, Dr. Cort also facilitated a forum with Guyanese youth titled, *“Let’s Talk: Towards Improving Our Mental Wellbeing,”* to increase their understanding of mental health and ways to combat suicide and other mental health challenges. Dr. Cort also attended a number of cultural events, including the country’s Emancipation Day festivities.

HAITI SERVICE LEARNING & CULTURAL IMMERSION PROGRAM

The Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health (CMGMH) at William James College aims to inspire and empower students, clinicians, educators, and other providers as agents of social justice with a passion for and dedication to serving historically marginalized populations. Every year, CMGMH students participate in service-learning programs in Ecuador, Guyana, Haiti and Kenya. These immersion experiences exemplify the College's commitment to supporting student education and preparing them for careers that meet the growing demand for access to high quality, culturally competent psychological services for individuals, groups, communities, and organizations locally and around the globe.



From July 13 through July 22, 2019, WJC students (Elana Bayer-Pacht, April Clayton, Tania Jimenez, and Lisa Saunders), faculty (Drs. Gemima St. Louis and Jill Bloom), and a CMGMH Affiliate (Ms. Gina Dessources, LICSW) traveled to the rural community of Vallée, Petit-Goâve for the annual *Haiti Service Learning & Cultural Immersion Program*. During the immersion experience, the team conducted a series of workshops on mental health literacy for adolescents, young adults and teachers.

Guided by an evidence-based curriculum, the training and hands-on activities were designed to address the impacts of stigma on the Haitian community's attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors toward individuals with mental disorders; promote greater understanding of the relationship between

the brain, mental health, and mental illness; increase the community's awareness, sensitivity, and compassion for people with mental illnesses; and discuss culturally-appropriate interventions to combat stigma and enhance mental wellness.

Backpacks filled with school supplies were given to all the youth who attended the workshop. Additionally, the team hosted a summer camp program for young children ages 4 to 12 where they worked collaboratively with local teachers to organize expressive arts activities that incorporated traditional Haitian songs, music, and dance.



Toward the end of the immersion program, team members also took part in local cultural events and historical excursions, and attended the annual festival hosted by the Association des Paysans de Vallée (APV). APV is a local non-governmental organization led by Mr. Abner Septembre that is involved in several industries including agriculture, education, environment, infrastructure, arts and crafts, communication, health, and tourism. William James College is grateful to APV, Rebâti Santé Mentale and Team Unity for their participation in this year's service-learning program.



KENYA SERVICE LEARNING & CULTURAL IMMERSION PROGRAM



CMGMH concentration students Brianna Duval, Kristine Hernandez, Shelby Ripa, and Lisa Saunders travelled to Kenya along with Kenya Immersion Directors Drs. Claire Fialkov and David Haddad in December 2019. The Kenya Immersion Program explores the role of global mental health in addressing the humanitarian needs

of individuals, families and organizations in Kenya. The immersion experience is designed to offer students an opportunity to understand the complexities of global mental health and development work.

With support from William James College, Women First International Fund, Children's Safe Drinking Water Project (<https://csdw.org/>), the Always Keeping Girls in School Program, and Fairmont/Accor Hotels, the project involves work with schools, women's groups, and local governments. It strives to promote the empowerment of women and young girls, increase access to safe drinking water, and improve overall health outcomes.

The December 2019 immersion program was devoted to working with about 15,000 people from indigenous communities in Narok County, in the Maasai Mara region of Kenya.



Professional Development & Social Cultural Events

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health hosted and co-sponsored the following conferences, workshops, and social cultural events:

WELCOMING DINNER FOR CMGMH FELLOWS AND SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

On September 12, 2019, CMGMH hosted a *Welcoming Gathering* for the incoming Scholarship awardees. In attendance were Jennifer Cotard, Paulina Prieto, Melanie Robinson Findlay, and Frances Mathieu who joined the celebration via Zoom. Other awardees and CMGMH Fellows who took part in the gathering include Regina Banks, April Clayton, Michelle Codner, and Christopher Rosales.

CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH: “ENVISIONING A HUMANITARIAN PSYCHOLOGY”

The Global Mental Health Conference was held at William James College on Saturday, September 21, 2019. The event was a call to action for psychology and global mental health to envision responses to global and local crises ranging from world violence to the spiraling impact of climate change. The presenters included Drs. Marjorie Agosin, Stanley Berman, Jill Bloom, Richard Mollica, Amy Nitza, Nisha Sajjani, and Sebastian Ssempijja. The journalist William Blakemore presented on *The Psychological Aspects of the Global Warming Calamity and the New Science of Evolution that Offers Conceivable Hope*.



THE ADVANCEMENT OF CULTURALLY COMPETENT EDUCATION TO STOP STIGMA (ACCESS) PROGRAM

On Thursday, August 1, 2019, William James College welcomed a group of adolescents from the ACCESS Program. Led by S. Kwame Dance (4th year student in the Clinical Psychology Department), the *Advancement of Culturally Competent Education to Stop Stigma* (ACCESS) program aims to increase the number of Black mental health providers in the behavioral health field. In addition to early career exposure, ACCESS seeks to enhance teens' knowledge about mental illness/health, reduce mental health stigma, and increase self-efficacy and community capacity by providing basic psychological intervention training and resources.

The ACCESS pilot cohort consisted of about 20 Black adolescents who were enrolled in the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program of the City of Cambridge. The program ran from July 2nd to August 9th at Cambridge Community Center. As part of the curriculum, the group visited the College where they actively engaged in conversations about the fields of psychology and counseling with graduate students from the Black Mental Health Graduate Academy. Congratulations to Kwame and his team on the success of the pilot program!



HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION: SALSA CLASS / CLASSE DE SALSA (LMPH)

National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated annually from September 15 to October 15. It begins on the anniversary of independence for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, and also celebrates Mexico's Independence Day on September 16.

Dr. Mari Carmen Bennasar, faculty member in the Clinical Psychology Department and Director of the Lucero Latino Mental Health Program, explained in a recent email to the William James College community that the month is “an opportunity to review the way we understand ‘American’ identity.” Adding, “It gives us an opportunity to help build a narrative that accurately reflects the positive role that Latinx have played in U.S. history.”



William James College held a variety of events in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month this year, including a discussion on September 24th about the importance of culturally-sensitive work in the field of psychology, which was accompanied by traditional Dominican cake and Latin music, and a free salsa class on October 2nd. The salsa class was organized by clinical PsyD student Tania Jimenez. Students, faculty and staff gathered for a lesson from *Salsa y Control Dance Studio*.

Tania Jimenez, who was part of a group of students in the Latino Mental Health Program who were involved in planning this year's Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations, explained, "As a previous Latin dance student from New Jersey, I thought it would be a great idea to expose the WJC community to



Latin culture with our dance and music. Latin music and dance are a significant aspect of our culture because for me, my family always came together to celebrate special occasions with dance, music, and food."

In the community email, Dr. Bennasar also provided a number of resources to provide background about Hispanic Heritage Month and information about the U.S. Hispanic population, including the origins and differences between Hispanic, Latino and Latinx; the diversity with this population; and 'Does Hispanic Heritage Month Need a Rebrand?'.

William James College is home to the Lucero Latino Mental Health Program, a college-wide concentration, which is named after the late Dr. Cynthia Lucero, a WJC graduate whose career, in part, was devoted to addressing the needs of Spanish-speaking people. This concentration trains students with the language skills, cultural sensitivity, and clinical competence that will enable them to deliver high-quality care to Latinx populations. Students also participate in a five-week Ecuador Summer Immersion Program every year that includes living with a host family, a clinical rotation and a variety of social and cultural activities.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS FOR BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

On Saturday, October 19, 2019, the Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health hosted a day-long workshop that offered four culturally-sensitive treatment approaches for helpers who work with boys and men of color impacted by psychological trauma (e.g., sexual abuse, interpersonal



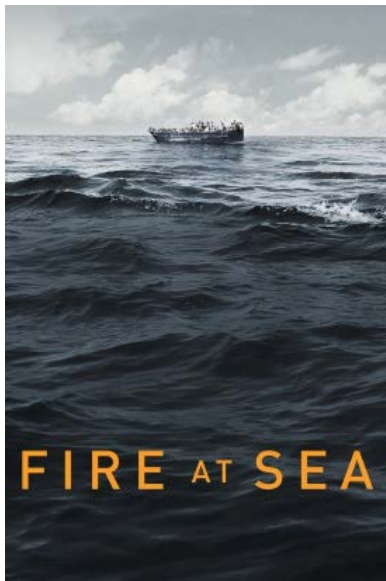
violence, and race-based trauma). The panelists included Martin Pierre, Ph.D., Ulric Johnson, Ph.D., Daniel Callahan, and Damon Chambers. They addressed the effects of sexual abuse and other trauma-related experiences on the psychological functioning of Black youth and men as well as provided therapeutic interventions to support survivors of abuse and help historically marginalized individuals to better understand the impacts of racism and discrimination on their mental health.

PRESENTATION ON CULTURAL IMMERSION PROGRAMS

The *Annual Service Learning & Cultural Immersion Programs Presentation* took place at William James College on Wednesday, October 30, 2019. Students and faculty provided an overview of the service-learning activities that took place in Ecuador, Guyana, and Haiti during the summer of 2019. Additionally, they shared personal narratives and reflections on the transformative impacts of the immersion experience.



CMGMH FILM SERIES: *FIRE AT SEA*



On October 21, 2019, Dr. Jill Bloom hosted the first film series event this year: *Fire at Sea*. The 2016 film was shot on the Sicilian island of Lampedusa during the European migrant crisis and sets the migrants' dangerous Mediterranean crossing against a background of the ordinary life of the islanders. The main characters are a 12-year-old boy from a local fishing family and a doctor who treats the migrants on their arrival. A discussion was led by Camilla Modesti who works at the Department of Social and Developmental Psychology at the University of Rome where she is conducting research on refugee resettlement.

In his acceptance speech for the Golden Bear Award, film director Gianfranco Rosi explained that his reason for making the film was to heighten awareness of the migrant situation. He stated, "It's not acceptable that people die crossing the sea to escape from tragedies."

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY BLOG

Deon Mowatt, MA, a pioneering Academy Scholar, wrote an inaugural article in CMGMH's Black Mental Health Graduate Academy's Psychology Today Blog. Deon is dedicated to empowering Black parents through education about mental health issues that impact their children. His well-written blog, entitled *Mentoring Black Boys Matters*, spotlights ongoing concerns about the lives of Black boys in America's challenging society.



Click on this link to read more: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/achieving-excellence-through-diversity-in-psychology-and-counseling/201911/mentoring-black-boys>

Learn more about Deon's informative **Aywyn Ed.** [\[https://aywyned.com/\]](https://aywyned.com/) blog, which he founded to focus on child education and mental health.

PALESTINIAN MENTAL HEALTH WITHOUT BORDERS: CHALLENGING BARRIERS AND TAKING DOWN WALLS

The Palestinian Mental Health Conference was held on Saturday, November 2, 2019 at UMass Boston. The conference generated transnational dialogues on community mental



health in Palestine, and took place simultaneously in Gaza City, West Bank, and Boston. The conference explored and reflected on meanings and pathways for creating liberating knowledge and critical community mental health practices in Palestinian contexts. The theme was applicable to the work of psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, community organizers and activists, policymakers, and researchers who are interested in coming together to call into question hegemonic psychological and psychiatric theories and practices. Presenters included Drs. Yasser Abu-Jamei, Yousef Al-Ajarma, Devin G. Atallah, Rita Giacaman, Haneen Haddad, Jodie Kliman, Hana Masud, Othman Mohammad, Hani Murad, Ayman Nijim, and Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian.

LMPH FIESTA

On December 14, 2019, the Latino Mental Health Program hosted an end-of-the-year Fiesta at WJC. The Fiesta was filled with great music, dancing, and food. We would like to thank everyone that attended!

El 14 de diciembre, el Programa Latino de Salud Mental organizó una Fiesta anual de fin de año. Tuvimos buena música, baile y comida. ¡Nos gustaría agradecer a todos los que asistieron!



NEW ENGLAND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

CMGMH students and faculty were well represented at the *2019 Annual Meeting of the New England Psychological Association*, which was held on Saturday, November 9, 2019 at Southern New Hampshire University. They co-authored two poster sessions and a symposium about CMGMH's international immersion programs. Among the presenters were Elana Bayer-Pacht, Emily Crain, Brianna Duval, Kristine Hernandez, Dr. Jodie Kliman, Juliana Rezende, Tia Rivera, Arianna Slotnick, and Patrick Sviokla. Congratulations to all the presenters!



ACADEMY SCHOLARS PRESENTATIONS

Black Mental Health Graduate Academy Scholars Damon Pryor and Adetutu Ajibose received first and third prizes, respectively, for their poster presentations at the *2019 Conference of the Massachusetts Psychological Association*. Damon also delivered a paper presentation at the *Annual Meeting of the New England Psychological Association* and presented at the *2020 Annual American College Counseling Association Conference*. Additionally, Sohenga Depestre was a Plenary Panel Presenter at the *18th Conference of International Society for Psychological and Social Approaches to Psychosis*; and S. Kwame Dance was a Guest Presenter on the *Pebbles and Leroy Podcast*.



Adetutu Ajibose



Damon Pryor

ASIAN MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM: *LUNAR NEW YEAR INAUGURAL EVENT*

The Lunar New Year officially arrived on Saturday, January 25, 2020, marking the beginning of the Year of the Rat in the Chinese zodiac cycle. The annual festival, which is celebrated by millions of people around the world, is an important time for Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese communities. William James College held a multicultural celebration on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 to mark the occasion.

The celebration featured Lion Dancers from the *Boston Chinese Freemasons Athletic Club*, a keynote speech about traditions surrounding the Lunar New Year by Renne Lu, Director of the *Greater Boston Chinese Cultural Association*, a live calligraphy performance by artist Quanzhou (Jack) Zhao, and



speeches by William James College community members, including President Nick Covino, faculty member Dr. Catherine Vuky, and students Lan Ho, Ellen Yang and Thanh Phan.

The event also served as an opportunity to announce the launch of the College's newest academic Concentration in Asian Mental Health, which is directed by Dr. Vuky. Asians are the fastest growing racial minority group in the United States but, as with other minority groups, the number of behavioral health providers who are trained to deliver culturally responsive services to this population hasn't kept pace. Dr. Vuky and other speakers noted that, as our society becomes increasingly diverse, there is a growing need to recruit and train mental health professionals who possess the knowledge and required skills to meet the mental health needs of culturally diverse individuals, families and communities.

“We know that there are far too few mental health professionals to be able to meet the needs of any community,” said President Covino. “Even in Massachusetts, which is one of the best staffed states for mental health care, more than half of the time you can’t find it. It becomes more complicated if you are looking for someone who looks like you, understands your background, has a sense of culture, and is able to meet you with great understanding – 9 times out of 10 you won’t find that, because mental health care is 90% non-Latino Caucasian.”

In her opening remarks, Dr. Vuky stated, “I came to William James College in 2014, teaching one course in the theory of child and family systems.” She shared that she’d worked in a community health center for 20 years where 98% of the client population spoke Chinese only. When she shared cases in class, she



received feedback from students who were grateful for access to the topic because, at the time, there were no courses offered on the topic at the College. Students who spoke during the Lunar New Year celebration said that the new concentration had special meaning for them.

Ellen Yang, a second year student in the Clinical Psychology Program remarked,

“I grew up in an area where people rarely looked like me... basically, I was never in the in-group, but at the same time I didn’t feel Asian enough to feel like I was part of that community. I spent a long time in that limbo... To me, this program means that a significant part of me, of my identity, was seen, and accepted and even celebrated. It means that soon people that look like me can Google ‘William James College’ and see ‘Asian Mental Health,’ which is important. For me, the program means recognition, support, and belonging.”

The William James College concentration in Asian Mental Health is the first clinical doctoral program in the nation with a specific emphasis on treating Asian individuals, families, and communities.

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HABITS OF POSITIVITY:

TRANSFORM YOUR THINKING AND CHANGE YOUR WORLD

On February 26, 2020, in celebration of Black History Month, a group of William James College students, faculty, staff and community members attended Dr. Oneeka Williams's dynamic and motivating presentation on her 5 Habits of Positivity. Dr. Williams, who was hosted by the Black Mental Health Graduate Academy, chronicled how her personal transformative journey has informed a set of principles designed to embed an empowered and positive approach to life.

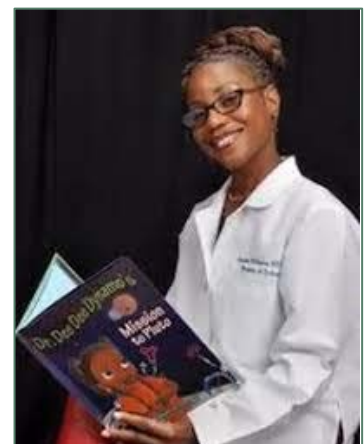


She spoke about her commitment to addressing the issue of underrepresentation of women in STEM careers and the lack of diversity in children's books by creating a book series featuring an African American/ Black girl superhero surgeon whose Habits of Positivity form her superpowers and who encourages children to live a life without limits. Dr. Williams is keenly aware that

children model what they see and thus has expanded her focus to train adults to internalize these habits that will transform not only their lives but the lives of their children.

VIRTUAL STORYTELLING: DR. ONEEKA WILLIAMS

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Oneeka Williams hosted a Virtual Storytelling segment for children, caregivers and families from all over the country. Dr. Williams is the author of the children's book series, Dr. Dee Dee Dynamo. She is committed to inspiring all children, and especially girls, towards a greater interest in science, a positive attitude, and the pursuit of excellence in all their endeavors. To learn more about her work, please visit www.droneeka.com.



POST-IMMERSION APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

On March 4, 2020, a post-immersion Appreciative Inquiry (AI) group discussion was held at the College with students who took part in international service learning programs in Ecuador, Haiti and Kenya. The purpose of the gathering was to support the ongoing integration of learning from the students' various immersion experiences. Since their immersion experiences were very different, as are the cultures in which the groups were immersed, the post-immersion AI discussion was also designed to help the groups to benefit from each other's experiences in other countries. This allowed each group to share their experiences in a structured way, and for students from other groups to offer reflections on those experiences. The AI group discussion was facilitated by Dr. Jodie Kliman.



CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE, COMMUNITY-BASED RESOURCES FOR MANAGING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19

To assist providers, agencies and communities in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, William James College created a Resource Hub, which offers a collection of materials gathered from reputable sources and curated by WJC faculty and staff for the benefit of the community. CMGMH faculty compiled the list of resources that focus on culturally-responsive care, social justice, social advocacy, and activism. The Resource Hub is designed to provide training tools for mental health professionals, resources on telemental health, psychoeducational materials for school personnel, parenting tools for caregivers, mental health resources for those who need support, and services for youth and families from historically marginalized and underserved communities.



THE LEGACY OF DR. CYNTHIA LUCERO: ANNUAL MEMORIAL 5K WALK/RUN

Dr. Cynthia Lucero was a much-loved, community-oriented William James College (WJC) graduate from Ecuador who completed her doctoral degree days before the start of the 2002 Boston Marathon, during which she collapsed and later died. In remembrance of Dr. Lucero, WJC organizes an annual 5K Walk/Run. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the walk was canceled. However, using a social media platform the community came together to honor her memory and legacy.



Dr. Mari Bennasar, Director of the Latino Mental Health Program, wrote, *“While we cannot be together in the traditional sense for the Annual Dr. Cynthia Lucero 5K Walk/Run, we can still come together to make a difference!”* She added, “I challenge you to go for a run, a walk, or engage in any at-home exercise to celebrate the life of William James College alumna Dr. Cynthia Lucero.” On April 5, 2020, the WJC community shared photos on social media using *#LuceroLegacy* and tag *@WilliamJamesEdu* on Facebook and Twitter, and *@WilliamJamesCollege* on Instagram.

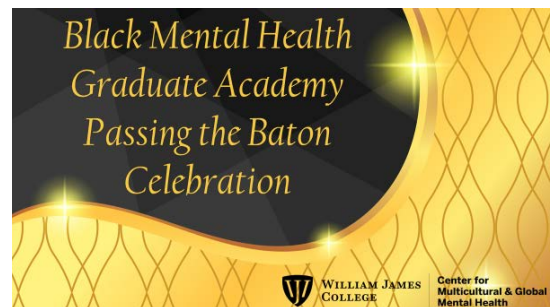
The 5K walk is one of many programs at the College that honors the Lucero legacy: The Dr. Cynthia Lucero Center for Latino Mental Health, is named for her, as is the Dr. Cynthia Lucero Scholarship program, which is awarded to a student who exhibits a strong dedication and commitment to the delivery of human services to the Latino community. WJC has also developed and maintained a strong relationship with mental health service providers in Lucero’s hometown, Guayaquil, Ecuador. Last year, the College entered into a formal partnership with *La Junta de Beneficencia de Guayaquil*, which will continue to host future immersion programs during the summer.



BLACK MENTAL HEALTH GRADUATE ACADEMY: “PASSING THE BATON CELEBRATION”

Prior to the unprecedented global health crisis with COVID-19, the *Black Mental Health Graduate Academy Scholar Induction & Recognition Dinner* was scheduled for the evening of April 16, 2020. Given the current state of emergency and safety concerns, the celebration was canceled.

However, the Academy decided to meet via Zoom for a gathering titled “*Passing the Baton*” where attendees shared their hard-earned wisdom, empowering praise and professional advice about ways to succeed at William James College (WJC) and in the psychology and mental health fields. To survive in times of tragedy, it is necessary for us to interpersonally connect and celebrate inspiring accomplishments. Academy Scholars are fortunate to be able to easily access their strong connections with each other to feel less alone, less anxious, and more hopeful about the future.



William James College's Black Mental Health Graduate Academy, led by Dr. Natalie A. Cort, is a mentorship and leadership pipeline program, which provides critical mentorship, career orientation and professional enrichment, and represents WJC's commitment to reducing racial/ethnic disparities by diversifying the mental health workforce. Since its inauguration in 2016, the Academy has had a total of 40 Scholars. The majority (60%) of the Academy's Scholars are from immigrant families from the Caribbean (e.g., Haiti) and Africa (e.g., Nigeria). Our Scholars are committed to social justice advocacy and demonstrate a record of exceptional accomplishments.



Webinars on the Impacts of COVID-19 on Underserved Communities

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, CMGMH co-hosted a series of webinars, which focused on the detrimental impacts of the Coronavirus on historically marginalized and underserved communities. Below is a brief description of the programs that were offered between May and July 2020:

- ❖ **Human Trafficking & the COVID-19 Crisis** (May 7th): Co-facilitated by Dr. Paola Contreras and Ms. Stacy Reed, this webinar reviewed human trafficking risk factors related to COVID-19. Using examples from their work with victims and survivors of trafficking, the presenters described how the risk of exploitation increases with contextual stressors, such as the current health crisis. The presentation included a review of practice recommendations and local and national human trafficking resources to assist victims and survivors.
- ❖ **Domestic Violence and the Impact of COVID-19 on a Marginalized Population** (May 27th): Co-led by Mulin Cai and Dawn Saunders, the webinar highlighted how victims of domestic violence are more vulnerable during the COVID-19 outbreak, given that most incidents of family violence occur in the victim's home. It described the risk factors, reviewed best practices, and recommended resources to assist victims and survivors of domestic violence amid the global pandemic.
- ❖ **Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Virtual Spaces** (June 17th): Co-facilitated by Akané Kominami and Galina Smith, this webinar described the processes and creative strategies used by BAGLY and GLASS to engage with LGBTQ+ youth while practicing physical distancing. Challenges, trends, and needs that emerged among clients were also discussed. Participants came away with an understanding of the unique challenges facing LGBTQ+ youth and their strengths during this time, as well as resources in the Boston area and beyond.

❖ **Dismantling Systemic Racism Requires White Allies** (June 26th):

This *Community Forum on Effective & Authentic Allyship* was moderated by Dr. Natalie Cort and led by Mr. Joseph Winn who facilitated a dynamic and interactive conversation on ways of effectuating powerful systemic social change and building allyship with historically oppressed and intersectionally marginalized groups, especially people of color who are most impacted by institutional racism and police brutality. A panel of WJC students (Emily Crain, Tania Jimenez, Juan Rosario, Aliana Wilkey and Ellen Yang) also took part in the Forum.

❖ **We Can't Breathe: On Black Lives, White Lies, and the Art of Survival** (July 14th):

Accomplished poet, playwright, and writer, Jabari Asim, led a powerful community conversation based on his critically-acclaimed essay collection, *We Can't Breathe*. Mr. Asim has been described as one of the most influential African American literary critics of his generation. He has served as the editor-in-chief of Crisis magazine—the NAACP's flagship journal of politics, culture, and ideas—and as an editor at The Washington Post where he wrote a syndicated column on politics, popular culture, and social issues. The webinar was moderated by WJC graduate student, S. Kwame Dance.



Awards & Accomplishments

Congratulations to the following CMGMH students on their awards and accomplishments: Adetutu Ajibose, Michelle Codner, Alexis DiGasso, Damon Pryor & Tia Rivera!

Adetutu Ajibose, a fourth-year Clinical Psychology student at William James, was featured for her work as founder of the Towards the Light Foundation (TTLF). She has very ambitious goals with launching this program, which seeks to redefine mental health awareness in Nigeria.



Michelle Codner was among the 2020 winners of the Sonya Kurzweil Grant Award. This award, which includes a \$5,000 grant, is given to two students whose doctoral projects offer the most promise in contributing to the field of child and family clinical psychology. Michelle received this award for her study titled, *Recollections of Childhood Parentification, Current Caretaking Roles, and Acculturation in Jamaican-American Adults*.

Alexis DiGasso held her Colloquium on August 21, 2019 where she shared the results from her doctoral research project entitled, *A Summative Program Evaluation of a Syrian Refugee Resettlement Program*. The study utilized a mixed-methods design to conduct a summative program evaluation. The results indicated that the resettlement program was successful in helping Syrian refugees achieve autonomy over life



Alexis DiGasso (left) with Drs. Richard Mollica and Jill Bloom

decisions and self-sufficiency while establishing social connections within their new communities. Based on the findings, it was recommended that U.S. policies on resettlement be changed to extend the current 90-day model to two years, and to provide greater resources for integration efforts.

Damon Pryor held his Colloquium on August 10, 2019. His doctoral thesis, titled *Life Stressors and Overall Mental Wellness in Black Men*, used a semi-structured tool to conduct in-depth interviews to explore the experiences of being a Black male in the United States and the



factors that promote well-being among Black men. The results showed that salient themes that are shared among Black men and that promote their well-being are linked to the importance of the Black family, activities of survival, maintaining a healthy body, and fostering a healthy mindset.



This fall, Tia Rivera was awarded the Clinical Psychology Department's *Retaining Diverse Student Leaders Scholarship*, in recognition of her strong academic performance and leadership skills. The objectives of the scholarship are to retain students from diverse backgrounds in the Clinical PsyD program, and provide financial support to enable them to complete their doctoral degrees.

Get Involved with CMGMH!

There are numerous opportunities for William James College students, alumni, staff, and faculty as well as individuals and community-based agencies to engage in CMGMH-related programs and activities.



**BECOME A CMGMH FACULTY FELLOW, CMGMH STUDENT FELLOW,
OR A CMGMH INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL AFFILIATE.**

To learn more, please contact cmgmh@williamjames.edu
or visit www.williamjames.edu/cmgmh.

