



# Spartan Rehab News

A newsletter out of the Office of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies (ORDS) at Michigan State University designed to build bridges between practitioners, researchers, & educators.

**Keep reading for:**

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## Opening Remarks

First of all, I want to congratulate all those involved in designing the new ORDS newsletter for our program so that our students, alumni and other friends of the program can stay informed about new initiatives and activities that we are all engaged in together.

For our doctoral program the biggest news item this year is our application for doctoral-level accreditation by CACREP. The entire faculty has been very active over the past year developing our self-study and addendum. On December 5-6 we underwent the CACREP site visit and it went very well. We will be receiving a draft report from the CACREP survey team within the next month. The CACREP Board will then review the survey report and recommendations and make their final decision on the accreditation for our program. We greatly look forward to receiving this new accreditation for our doctoral program, and will keep you posted on the outcome.

Everything else is going quite well. We have great group of current doctoral students who are making excellent progress on their advanced degrees. Our alumni continue to make very substantive contributions as stewards of the discipline and we are all very proud of you. Hopefully this newsletter will provide regular opportunities to heighten our valued communication within our extended community of scholars.

-Dr. Michael Leahy, ORDS Director



*Program faculty & current Master's students (above) and doctoral students (below)*



## CORE-CACREP Merger

Allison Levine, MS.Ed, CRC  
Doctoral Candidate, Rehabilitation  
Counselor Education

In July 2015, the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) signed a merger agreement between the two accreditation bodies following many years of collaboration and an official affiliation that was established in 2013. The two groups feel that "their vision for a unified counseling profession is better realized through a merger of both organizations". As of July 1, 2017, CACREP will officially take over and CORE will no longer exist. In the interim, rehabilitation counselor education programs, both at the master's level and at the doctoral level have been



given notice regarding requirements for renewing accreditations, and for applying for accreditation at the doctoral level for the first time. In October 2015, a press release went out to the public which announced the requirement of doctoral programs to obtain accreditation, which had not been required under CORE. Programs were asked to seek accreditation through an abbreviated self-study, following CACREP standards for doctoral accreditation. At the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) Spring Conference in April, CORE and CACREP announced plans to accept one final round of applications for CORE-accredited programs which are seeking dual-accreditation status as both a Clinical

Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. Previously, programs could have been dually accredited as a Rehabilitation Counseling and Mental Health Counseling program.

*In 2017, CORE will cease to exist, and CACREP will be the only accrediting body for counselor education and related specialties. CACREP is to adopt CORE's standards going forward, and disability studies are going to be part of counselor education programs across the board.*



Council for Accreditation of  
Counseling & Related Educational Programs

ORDS at Michigan State

University houses one of the two currently top-ranked programs in Rehabilitation Counselor Education by U.S. News & World Report (2016). In light of the merger, program director Dr. Michael Leahy lead the way, seeking accreditation via CACREP's abbreviated self-study, which was offered for doctoral programs. Prior to the merger, doctoral programs in rehabilitation counselor education had not been accredited at all. The following is based on an interview with Dr. Leahy:

**What were your initial reactions to the CORE/CACREP Merger?** *I think we were all quite surprised. In 2005 when the last attempt at a merger failed between these organizations it didn't appear likely that CORE would move in this direction. Overall, I am in favor of this type of relationship as long as RC is treated fairly and the full range of knowledge and skills associated with masters and doctoral programs are respected and part of the accreditation process.*

**Why did you decide to seek CACREP accreditation for the Rehabilitation Counselor Education PhD program at MSU?**

*For the doctoral program the main reason to apply for accreditation is the protection of the academic job market for our graduates. This was clearly in my mind why we needed to go forward with this process. Without accreditation, our graduates could be adversely affected in terms of employment access to universities accredited by CACREP after 2018.*

**How has the process of applying for CACREP accreditation gone?**

*The process is generally similar to what we have experienced with CORE these many years in terms of the rehabilitation counseling master's degree program. What was unique in this process were the many standards required by CACREP that we have not dealt with in the past and had to try to see where they fit in our training curriculum and where we would need to develop additional content to comply in the future with these standards.*

**How do you see this merger impacting Rehabilitation Counselor Education in the future?**

*It's somewhat unclear at present, but the initial advantages include the national unification of all counseling programs under one accreditation body, the elimination of problems associated with CORE graduates having access to counselor licensure in some states, and the opportunity to affect all the counseling specialty areas in terms of the introduction of standards that address disability issues.*

## Spartan Project SEARCH— Working Together to Make an Impact

Kelsey Foote, BA  
Master's Student, Rehabilitation Counseling

“It’s just amazing,” says Dr. Connie Sung, Co-Director of Spartan Project SEARCH, a program that has recently been partnered with support by Research in Autism, Intellectual and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (RAIN) from Michigan State University. The aim of the project is to provide hands-on employment readiness, social, and independent living skills training to high school students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. MSU is now one of the 12 Project SEARCH sites around Michigan as the program continues to grow.



Spartan Project SEARCH  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

In 2016-2017,  
ten students  
from Ingham  
Intermediate

School District have joined Spartan Project SEARCH for its first year on campus. The comprehensive program utilizes a classroom curriculum, on-the-job training, and peer mentorship to foster vocational and social skills. In the classroom, students develop a variety of aptitudes, from self-advocacy, budgeting, and self-care, to transportation and time management. At the same time, they are participating in job placements around campus where they are trained and supervised. This will be a valuable experience for the students because MSU “as a large campus, offer(s) so much in terms of different departments, different types of jobs” says Dr.

Sung. Students are working at jobs in offices, copy center, dining halls, residential halls, coffee shop, animal clinic, and more. Students complete rotations through three different positions during their time with the program.

The college campus setting of Spartan Project SEARCH offers a community feel, unlike the hospital or company feel participants experience in other Project SEARCH settings in Michigan State. Students meet a lot of different people, learn to use the bus, and have a variety of choices about where to eat and go to have fun. Dr. Sung says, it “gives all the students a different experience, rather than just working in a building or department.” The peer mentoring program is also unique to MSU. Each student is paired with a peer mentor who they meet with for an hour each week. The program’s Peer Mentor Coordinator, Lindsay Hill, believes “the interns have shown excitement about the opportunity to spend time with their fellow Spartans on campus.” Once a month a fun activity is planned for all of the students and peer mentors. November’s event is a potluck, 'Friendsgiving'. Lindsay says, “both the interns and peer mentors are looking forward to the first monthly event where everyone can get a little better acquainted.” The peer mentoring program helps further develop social skills, an important aspect of employment. “Yes, having a job is important, but the social piece is also important,” states Dr. Sung, it “teach[es] all these students to be able to socialize with people at work.” The ultimate goal of the program is for its students to find competitive integrated employment and get one step closer to independent living.

*The Spartan Project SEARCH team has been selected for the 2017 Excellence in Diversity Awards and recognized as doing work that promotes inclusion and diversity on campus.* Looking forward, Dr. Sung

hopes to continue and expand Spartan Project SEARCH, because in her opinion this is “not just impacting the students...but also impacting the peer mentors and the employers who are working with these students with disabilities.” The application period for next year’s program is already open to students at Ingham ISD. Dr. Sung is excited for the program to progress; through research and continued collaboration with statewide community partners, she hopes to spread the initiative of hiring people with disabilities. She says, “we are really hoping this program will embrace more people with disabilities in different kinds of settings...we hope this can become a norm.”

[Click for Spartan Project SEARCH’s website](#)

## The 43rd Annual Ralf A. Peckham & Harry R. Smith Memorial Golf Tournament

*An insight into two rehabilitation icons*

Sara Grivetti, MA, CRC  
Doctoral Student, Rehabilitation  
Counselor Education

For 43 years, the Ralf A. Peckham & Harry R. Smith Memorial Golf Tournament has raised funds for the Ralf A. Peckham Memorial fund at Michigan State University (MSU). Interest from this endowed fund has been used by the Rehabilitation Counseling Program of MSU to support special student scholarships, educational activities and emergency support for students in need. However, how many of us can claim to really know who Ralf A. Peckham and Harry R. Smith were?



If you are new to the field of rehabilitation or even of MSU, these two individuals and their impact on the state and federal rehabilitation program might have gone unnoticed.

**However, without their contributions we wouldn't have a Rehabilitation Counseling program at MSU, nor would we have our local, annual professional development conference, known as re:con.**



Dr. Peckham led Michigan Rehabilitation Services for nearly two decades, beginning in the mid 1950's. According to Dr. Michael Leahy, he was a farsighted, dedicated, and visionary leader in the development of national and state disability policy. He was also instrumental in the development of the Rehabilitation Counseling Program at Michigan State University, where he also served as an adjunct faculty member. His legacy continues today through the projects financed by the tournament named in his memory.



Mr. Smith was committed to ongoing professional development in the field of rehabilitation and before his death in 2010 became very concerned about leadership development

and succession planning in the profession. He was instrumental in helping to develop the Michigan Rehabilitation Association and MARO partnership for re:con

(formerly known as the Michigan Rehabilitation Conference) and was very visible and active in the conference since its inception. His name was added to the golf outing after his untimely death.

The next time you see the flyer for the annual golf tournament, consider dusting off your golf clubs and taking a much needed day off from work to celebrate the contributions of these two rehabilitation icons. The 43rd Annual Ralf Peckham & Harry Smith Memorial Golf Tournament took place at Forest Akers West in September.

We hope to see you on the course next year!

## Student Spotlight:

### Brenna Breshears, BA

#### Master's Student, Rehabilitation Counseling

The first time I met Shawn, he spoke maybe 10 words in our hour session. At 27, Shawn had been in and out of jail for much of his adult life and was participating in a Mental Health Court program that places individuals with mental illness and psychiatric disability in a unique probation program that offers complete expungement after completion.

**Like many of his peers, Shawn has been in and out of a system designed to punish rather than treat.** He was incredibly wary of me at first; it took weeks to establish regular eye contact, months before he trusted me with his full story. Last week he asked me for a hug, and today, Shawn is employed, one test away from earning his GED, and working to become a peer mentor and advocate for early intervention in his community.

When I walked in the door of A.R.R.O (Advocacy, Re-entry, Resources, Outreach) for the first time, a year ago, I was simply seeking a way to serve my local community and a population I am passionate about. In a place where not a single person had ever heard of a

“Certified Rehabilitation Counselor” it was sometimes difficult to explain the title, but never the work we carry out. As CRCs our unique training in disability and vocational placement, combined with our commitment to the counseling relationship is particularly suited for this population. **For many returning citizens, employment and community support are equally important, and the responsibility of highlighting this intersection lies with us.** Not only have I been able to work with people like Shawn at an individual level, I have also had the opportunity to facilitate an employment soft skills class in collaboration with Dr. Connie Sung which has yielded 14 graduates to date with a new group beginning after the new year.

Although I began my work at ARRO as a volunteer, with the support of MSU faculty and Northwest Initiative, I was able to turn my volunteer work into a practicum site. Creating space for our profession in community settings such as ARRO is something I am incredibly passionate about, and within the year I have spent here, the experience I have gained is immeasurable. I’ve grown as a counselor, a student, an advocate, a leader and a citizen. It is my hope that future students in our program will also utilize this incredible opportunity to work with this growing and underserved population. While our training is unique, our values are universal, and the need for our skills is indisputable.

## Updates from Hegarty Fellows

### Hyun-Ju Kang, Ph.D.

I completed my Ph.D. in Special Education in the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. My research

interests include adolescent transition to adult life, functional life skills, parental expectations, and assistive technology. I am especially interested in developing evidence-based intervention programs to improve social skills, communication skills, self-care skills, and job skills using assistive technology.

I am currently a postdoctoral research fellow in MSU-DOCTRID Hegarty Fellow Program at Michigan State University. As a Hegarty fellow, I have great opportunities to refine my research methodology skills and work with international and interdisciplinary research teams. I have also learned how to conduct meaningful research and disseminate the knowledge by attending brown bag meetings, RAIND meetings, and my mentor’s lab meetings. In particular, I had a valuable opportunity to observe how Spartan Project SEARCH program helps individuals with developmental disabilities engage in employment. **I would like to bring these experiences to South Korea in order to impact the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.** I really appreciate that I am a Hegarty fellow at Michigan State University. I believe that this program is promising in preparing for my future career as a faculty member in South Korea.

### Rebecca Shea Irvine, Ph.D.

As a Hegarty Fellow, I have been able to work between Michigan State University, Queen’s University Belfast (QUB), and the National University of Ireland, Galway. This position has been a sort of homecoming for me, having graduated from MSU’s James Madison College (International Relations, 2001) and undertaking my graduate work at QUB.

**It has also provided me with opportunities to develop collaborative projects with colleagues from around the world.**

My research interests primarily fall within two areas: the participation of people with disabilities in political and public life (with a focus on people with intellectual disabilities) and the experiences of disability in conflict-affected areas. During my time as a Hegarty Fellow, I have had the opportunity to develop a number of projects; a brief description of a few of them can be found below.

- Interviewed people with intellectual disabilities from around the world about their experiences of influencing public policy and conducted an analysis of political participation based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
- Provided training for people with intellectual disabilities on political participation in Europe and was subsequently asked to consult on the redevelopment of the European Platform of Self-Advocates;
- Part of six research grant applications with colleagues from MSU, Nigeria, England, Northern Ireland, and Somalia – including two successful applications (one as co-Principal Investigator) for studies aimed at measuring the quality of life of people with disabilities in Northern Ireland and the impact of terrorism on health and disability in northeastern Nigeria;
- Co-authoring a book manuscript with Dr. Bronagh Byrne, Co-chair of the Disability Research Network, QUB, on the implementation of the CRPD, and a book chapter with Dr. Nancy Hansen, Director of Disability Studies, University of Manitoba, on the inclusion of disability and LGBTQ communities in conflict transformation.

**If you're interested in contributing to Spartan Rehab News, please contact Drs. Sung or Kuo at:**

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**#SpartansWill**

Connect with us for program updates & highlights!

<http://www.educ.msu.edu/cepse/rehab/>



**Rehabilitation Counseling,**  
**Michigan State University**