

# Liffrig Family School of Education and Behavioral Sciences

# Alumni Newsletter

Connecting Alumni with the University  
of Mary and the Greater Community

February 2015



**They're On  
Their Way  
to CHINA!**

## University of Mary

Christian, Catholic and Benedictine, the University of Mary exists to serve the religious, academic and cultural needs of people in this region and beyond.

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## The Dean's Message



**NEW IN 2015:** Next fall, the Liffrig School will begin offering a Doctor of Education (EdD), which will be the third doctorate degree offered at the University of Mary. The new program will focus on developing educational leaders. In the spring semester, our faculty in elementary and secondary education will pilot lab schools at both St. Mary's Elementary School and Shiloh Christian School. Our dream is to have more classrooms available where well-trained teachers can help our education majors become effective and compassionate teachers.

**THIS IS AN EXCITING TIME** for the faculty and students in the Liffrig Family School of Education and Behavioral Sciences. We have added new faculty and programs, promoted faculty to new positions, revised our organizational structure and begun the renovation on the second floor of Boniface Hall to create offices for our two new doctoral program faculty members.

The addition of the EdD program created a need to revise the graduate program's organizational structure. For the first time in the university's history, the Liffrig School will have four full-time faculty members dedicated solely to the implementation, development and improvement of graduate studies.

Structural changes include the promotion of Dr. Brenda Werner from the Chair of the Department of Education to become the Graduate Education Program Director. She will be responsible for the administrative oversight of our graduate education programs. Professor Werner's goals will be to "prepare transformative leaders who can bring about improvement in educational institutions and systems for students, teachers and communities." She continued, saying: "As program director, I will create a personal and supportive learning environment that models our Benedictine values and challenges candidates to be ethical and innovative leader." Professor Kim Marman was promoted from Special Education Program Director to Chair of the Department of Education.

Dr. Julijana Nevland was promoted from Psychology Program Director to the Graduate Counseling Program Director. Her goals include "redesigning the program's curriculum, aligning course outcomes with the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs standards and developing community partnerships to expand clinical training opportunities for our counseling students." Dr. Kristi Bitz was promoted from Assistant Professor of Psychology to Psychology Program Director.

Looking to the future, I envision the Liffrig School as poised to meet the educational needs of students in the state of North Dakota and beyond. Dedicated to the mission of the University of Mary, we are eager to take on the challenges that await us. *Go Marauders!*



**ON THE COVER:** Seniors Jill Rising, Kasi Reis, Jessica Melander, Jordon Hahn (top, left to right), with Professors Lucia Shelley and Kristi Bitz (sitting) and Alyssa Steiner (front), will take a 10-day trip to China in May at the invitation of Tonya Parham ('94), a vice-principal at the Shanghai American School in Shanghai.

# University of Mary Announces EdD Degree

**IN JANUARY, THE LIFFRIG SCHOOL** announced that the University of Mary has been approved by the Higher Learning Commission to offer its third doctorate degree, a Doctor of Education (EdD) in Educational Leadership and Administration. The other doctorate degrees are in Physical Therapy and Nursing Practice, established in 2003 and 2014, respectively.

As a terminal degree, the EdD helps address contemporary leadership challenges emerging in K-12 schooling and higher education in North Dakota, as well as across the region and nationwide. According to a state finding, the projected enrollment growth in western North Dakota ranges from 23 to 153 percent. Bismarck Public Schools have seen student enrollment increase every year for the past 11 years. From 2012 to 2014, enrollment grew by 632 students.

According to Dean Jonas, PreK-12 education leaders are faced not only with planning for and managing increasing student enrollments, but also providing well-trained teachers, cutting-edge technology, and a safe and effective learning environment, usually within existing infrastructure.

In recent years, there has been a rapid increase in jobs involving non-routine, analytic and interactive skills. This has created an urgent need for innovative leaders in PreK-12 and post-secondary education to prepare students adequately for these jobs. Forming educational

leaders who can bring about school improvement in institutions and systems is critical as educators strive to meet the needs of expanding school districts.

The EdD program is the only one of its kind between Fargo and Bozeman, MT, and unique to North Dakota, because it provides a rigorous curriculum and enables students to complete the program in less than three years, while fostering a Christian, Catholic and Benedictine learning environment. The demand for the EdD program has been so strong there are already numerous inquiries for admission.

"It's very gratifying to know the University of Mary will continue to play a significant role in preparing well-qualified, future educational leaders in our growing region and beyond," said Monsignor James Shea, the university's president, "just as our founders, the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, envisioned back when they founded Mary College in 1959.

"Education was one of the university's founding cornerstones, and continues to be a vital and growing legacy of the Benedictine Sisters' desire to serve the needs of the people.

"We are tremendously proud of this long tradition of excellence. This new doctorate is another step forward, in a time of exciting growth for the university, to serve the expanding and complex needs of our local community, North Dakota, our region and beyond."



**This is the perfect time for Mary's new Doctor of Education program. In the next five years, half of upper-level educational administrators in the PreK-12 system statewide will be eligible for retirement."**

*Mike Bitz  
Superintendent of  
Mandan Public Schools*

Applications for the EdD degree will be accepted until April 1. The first student cohort will enter the program in August 2015 and graduate in May 2018. **For more information contact Dr. Carmelita Lamb at (701) 355-8186 or by email at [clamb@umary.edu](mailto:clamb@umary.edu).**

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## Who's Who at the Liffrig School

**LISA HOLTER, MA LPC**, (New Faculty) is the Program Coordinator for the MS in Counseling Program at the Fargo campus and a Licensed Professional Counselor. She earned a BA in Psychology from Mayville State University and an MA in Counseling from the University of North Dakota. For ten years previously, Professor Holter worked with children and their families at the Stadter Center in Grand Forks (2004) and Sanford Hospital in Thief River Falls, MN (2005-11). Most recently, she directed the Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota's Family Counseling Program (2011-14), which prevents out-of-home placement for at-risk youth referred by the state's juvenile justice system. She has a passion for service to clients and the education of future counselors. Professor Holter says the favorite aspect of her job is interacting with students and assisting them in meeting their educational and career goals.

**KATIE KRUKENBERG, MSW LCSW**, (New Faculty) is the Director of Field Education for the Social Work Program. She earned a BS in Social Work and Criminal Justice from the University of North Dakota and an MSW with a clinical concentration from Florida State University. Professor Krukenberg's areas of special interest include child and adolescent mental health and cultivating resilience in the at-risk teenage population. From 2009 to 2014, she was a social worker with

Bismarck Public Schools. Beginning five years earlier, she worked with teenagers in residential placement facilities, including Charles Hall Youth Services in Bismarck (2005-09) and Home on the Range in Sentinel Butte (2004-05). Professor Krukenberg has also been a foster parent since 2007. She says the favorite aspect of her job is having the opportunity to share her passion for social work with students and experience their excitement as they enter the field during their senior internship. She also enjoys researching social work theory and its implications for practice.

**PATTY KELLER, EDD**, is an Assistant Athletic Director and the Senior Women's Administrator in the Athletic Department, as well as the Physical Education and Health Program Director for the Liffrig School. She earned a BS in Physical Education and Sports Medicine from Greensboro College, an MEd from Campbell University and an EdD from Rowan University. Professor Keller says the favorite aspect of her job is working in any capacity she can to impact her students and assist in creating a positive learning experience.

**JULIJANA NEVLAND, PHD**, is the Director of the Graduate Counseling Program. She earned a BA in Psychology from Minot State University, an MS in Counseling from the University of Mary



('09) and a PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of North Dakota. Professor Nevland says the favorite aspects of her job include mentoring students, participating in committees and professional organizations, and enjoying the company of her colleagues.

**LUCIA SHELLEY, MED**, is the Director of the Student Teaching Program. She earned a BS in Spanish Literature from the Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon in Mexico and an MEd from the University of Mary ('15). Professor Shelley is also licensed by the State of Texas as a Bilingual Generalist Teacher. She says the favorite aspect of her job is to support students in fulfilling their dreams of becoming teachers.

**MANISHA SAWHNEY, PHD**, is an Assistant Professor of Psychology. She earned a BA in Psychology and Economics from St. Bede's College in Shimla in Northern India, an MA in Clinical Psychology from Himachal Pradesh University, also in Shimla, and a PhD in Clinical Psychology from Delhi University in New Delhi, India. Professor Sawhney says the favorite aspect of her position is interacting with supportive, creative coworkers in order to establish a learning environment for student growth.

**JANET BASSINGTHWAITE, MED**, is the Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator. She earned a BS degree in Child Development from North Dakota State University and an MEd from the

University of Mary ('12). Professor Bassingthwaite says the favorite aspect of her position is interacting with pre-service teacher candidates and helping them expand their learning experiences by connecting them with resources and useful information.

**KRISTI BITZ, PHD**, is the Director of the Psychology Program and the School Counseling Program Coordinator for the MS in Counseling degree program. She earned a BS in Elementary Education from Valley City State University; and a BS in Psychology, an MA in Counseling and a PhD in Teaching and Learning from the University of North Dakota. Professor Bitz says the favorite aspect of her position includes facilitating an appreciation for and understanding of how psychology affects our daily lives.

**TIM SCHUETZLE, MA**, is the Chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Director of the Criminal Justice Program. He earned a BA in Psychology from Gustavus Adolphus College and an MA in College Student Personnel Administration from Bowling Green State University. Professor Schuetzle worked for 31 years with the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, including 19 years as the warden at the state penitentiary. He says the favorite part of his job is watching the growth and development of criminal justice students, as they complete the coursework towards their degrees. He loves sharing their passion as they describe what they are learning in their work internships.

## Who's Who at the Liffrig School

**ROD JONAS, PHD**, is the Dean of the Liffrig School. He earned a BS in Physical Education from Augsburg College, an MEd from North Dakota State University and a PhD in Physical Education, with an emphasis in Higher Education Administration, from the University of Minnesota. Dean Jonas says the favorite aspect of his job is working with faculty to create a collaborative school culture focused on developing strong academic programs, which are designed to help students reach their personal and professional goals.

**BRENDA WERNER, PHD**, is the Director of the Graduate Education Program. She earned a BS in Secondary English Education and K-12 Health/PE from Minot State University, an MS in Master Teaching from Fort Hays State University, and a PhD in Secondary Education and Administration from the University of North Dakota. Professor Werner says the favorite aspect of her job is teaching educators effective strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students, as well as showing teachers the immense impact they can have in empowering each student entrusted to their care.

**KIMBERLY MARMAN, PHD** (candidate), is the Chair of the Department of Education and Director of the Emerging Leaders Academy for the Liffrig School. She earned a BS in Elementary Education and Special Education ('03), and an MEd specializing in Learning Disabilities ('11) from the University of Mary. Currently, she is pursuing a PhD in Special Education Leadership from Capella University. Professor Marman says the favorite aspect of her job is the opportunity to impart knowledge to future teachers and education leaders.

**DAWN HINTZ, MAT**, is the Liffrig School's administrative assistant. She earned a BS in Mathematics Education and an MAT in Teaching Mathematics from Minot State University. The favorite part of her job is seeing students get excited about their future professions, as well as helping education students prepare for the math portion of the pre-professional skills test, which is required for teacher licensure.

**CARMELITA LAMB, PHD**, is the Chair of Graduate and Distance Education. She earned a BS in Animal Science from Texas A & M University,

an MS in Reproductive Physiology and a PhD in Institutional Analysis/Occupational Adult Education from North Dakota State University. Professor Lamb says the favorite aspect of her job is the opportunity to collaborate with so many highly supportive and deeply committed people across the University of Mary campus.

**DAPHNE GHORBANI, PHD**, is the Secondary Education Program Director. She earned a BS in Education from the University of North Dakota, an MEd from the University of Mary ('95) and a PhD in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education from the University of North Dakota. Professor Ghorbani says the favorite aspect of her position is having the opportunity to shape the future through the development of tomorrow's teachers.

**CHERYL KALBERER, MED**, is the Secondary Practicum Supervisor. She earned a BS in Medical Technology and a BS in Secondary Science Education from Mary College, and an MEd from the University of Mary ('91). Professor Kalberer says she enjoys helping future educators as they experience the classroom for the first time as teachers.

**LINDA GUTENSOHN, PHD**, is the Director of the Elementary Education Program. She earned a BA in Music Education from Jamestown College, an MA in Elementary Education from the University of Nevada-Reno and a PhD in Adult Postsecondary Education from Capella University. Professor Gutensohn says the favorite part of her job is interacting with students as she teaches and advises them to become exemplary elementary level teachers.

**HEIDI NIEUWSMA, MSW LICSW**, is the Director of the Social Work Program. She earned a BS in Social Work from Minot State University and an MSW from Florida State University. Professor Nieuwsma says the favorite aspect of her job is working with the students in all areas of their education and also being present for them while they enhance their ability to be advocates for social justice and servant leaders in their communities.

# Annual Poverty Simulation Changes Perceptions

**LAST OCTOBER**, the Social Work Program staged the fifth annual Poverty Simulation with 75 students in various majors. The simulation's purpose is to provide a "glimpse" into what it would be like to live in poverty and to challenge attitudes that the poor are entirely responsible for "creating their own poverty."

Seven years ago, Nancy Kleingartner, MSW LCSW, the former Director of the Social Work Program, attended a local Poverty Simulation and was so moved she initiated hosting the event on the University of Mary campus, starting two years later.

The Social Work Program remains committed to providing each student with a learning environment that supports best educational practices, furthering the social work profession's historical commitment to serve the poor and challenge the social, cultural and economic factors perpetuating poverty. Hosting the Poverty Simulation helps the Social Work



Program's faculty and students "live out" this professional commitment.

During the simulation, students role-play the lives of low-income families who might be newly unemployed, homeless or senior citizens. The students struggle with the stressful tasks these "families" face providing for basic necessities, such as food and shelter, on a limited budget over the course of four 20-minute "weeks."

The exercise is a simulation, not a game. Its objective is to help people understand the complexities and frustrations of living in poverty day-to-day and to sensitize participants to the realities faced by low-income people. With greater awareness, students are better equipped to address

poverty and related issues in their careers.

"My perceptions changed quite a bit," said Jayme Pischel ('16) a social work major. "The poverty simulation showed how anyone could become poor in a short period of time. I'm from a small town, and it was a good learning experience about the many resources and services available for the poor."

"As a future social worker, it helped me realize how difficult it is for those in poverty to find and access services," said Nicole Carew ('15), also a social work major. "I shouldn't just assume they will be able to drive here or there. It's more complicated than we realized."

## Alumni Connections

### Give Back to Liffrig School

Providing the best education for current and future students requires continual investments at an increasing cost. Please consider becoming a University of Mary donor. To do so, please go to [www.umary.edu/giving](http://www.umary.edu/giving) to contribute by debit or credit card, or to pledge a gift by check.

### Contact Info

For all alumni-related issues or for more information, please contact Paul Keeney, Director of Alumni by email ([alumni@umary.edu](mailto:alumni@umary.edu)) or by phone: **(800) 408-MARY x8370** or **(701) 355-8370**.

# Focus on Alumni

## Aimee Copas: A Woman for All Sessions

**SINCE JULY 2013**, Aimee Copas, EdD has served as the Executive Director for the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders, which advocates for public and private school leaders and administrators state-wide, and provides for their professional development. In the current state legislative session, Copas serves as the main lobbyist for K-12 education and is currently working for a funding increase for public schools. There is one such executive director per state and only nine are women nationwide.

"The University of Mary is a fabulous place to get



an education," said Aimee Copas, who graduated in 1999 with a BS in Secondary Education, in a recent interview. "The university provides both an intimate environment and the academic rigor of an elite institution." Since 2010, she has taught courses in superintendent credentialing in the Liffrig School's graduate program and will teach in the new EdD program.

Copas earned an MS in Educational Administration from Northern State University, and an EdS and EdD in Educational Administration from the University of South Dakota.

From 2005 to 2013, Copas was Dean of Faculty at Rasmussen College in Bismarck and taught business and English courses, such as marketing and public speaking. Then from 2011 to 2013, she served as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Director of Research for the North Dakota University System.

Copas and her husband Shannon reside in Bismarck with their five-year-old daughter.

## Troy Schulz: A Cessation for More Men

**TWO YEARS AGO**, Troy Schulz was appointed Deputy Warden of the North Dakota State Penitentiary in Bismarck. Eight years earlier, he began working there as a correctional officer, while studying at the University of Mary, and graduated in 2008 with a BS in Social and Behavioral Science. Schulz recommends that current students, regardless of major, seek part-time employment at the penitentiary in a wide range of occupations including social work and addiction counseling.

Looking out his barred office window at the beginning of February onto a small strip of land between fences topped with wire ribbon, Schulz said he hopes to construct an inmate garden in the spring. "It's a great way to create jobs and provide job training. The men can grow fresh produce for all inmates and donate vegetables to homeless shelters."

Imparting the skills necessary for success in society is part of Schulz's plan to reduce recidivism from 39 percent—already below the 43-percent national average—to 25 percent. If successful, then men sentenced to the state's maximum security facility would stay out of jail for three years or longer upon discharge, which is the standard measurement.



As well as maintaining a safe environment for offenders, which currently number 740 men, and fellow staff, Schulz works hard on changing the criminal mentality to achieve his goal.

Schulz's awards include the Department of Corrections Life Saving Award and the North Dakota Peace Officers Association Life Saving Award, both of which he received for helping save an inmate's life in 2010.