Postdoctoral Fellowship in Professional Psychology
August 19, 2024 – July 18, 2025

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES
BOSTON COLLEGE

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THE FELLOWSHIP provides postdoctoral clinical and counseling psychologists with a concentrated training experience in which they (1) attain advanced clinical skills with a young adult population manifesting the broad spectrum of psychopathology and (2) develop expertise in the challenges prevalent in university mental health practice today. At the core of a Fellow's training are individual and group treatment, crisis interventions, individual supervision, and participation in the teamwork of the department. Fellows are viewed as emerging professional colleagues and given the collaborative support and guidance necessary to participate fully in the multidimensional service delivery of clinical services that is typical of college mental health settings. They inevitably acquire considerable depth and breadth in their treatment and consulting skills as they see over 100 clients and triage 40-50 others through psychological emergencies. With the concentrated exposure to a late adolescent and young adult clinical population, Fellows hone their formulation and treatment planning skills, and they develop practical understanding of the intersections of psychopathology with developmental and cultural forces. They also gain experience with the unusual diagnostic and treatment challenges posed by those clients who present as both high functioning and diagnostically quite complex. Fellows complete the fellowship year meeting or exceeding 1600 license-eligible hours of supervised practice in a health services setting as required by the Massachusetts Psychology Licensing Board. Fellows also gain a consolidated sense

of their professional competence and personal career direction. In recent years, about half of our Fellows have gone on to acquire permanent positions in university mental health settings. The other half have gone on to work in private/group practices or mental health agencies.

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES (UCS) is a relatively large and highly utilized university mental health center with primary responsibility for addressing the mental health needs of the Boston College student community. A committed staff of 15 psychologists and social workers and 4 psychiatric prescribers provide a wide range of direct clinical services to approximately 1900 students each year. The department enjoys strong collaborative relationships with faculty, staff, administrators, and student groups, and it reaches the broader university network through indirect services such as consultation, outreach, and prevention programs.

Boston College (BC) has 12 undergraduate and graduate colleges and professional schools. BC students are bright, talented, and diverse. Approximately 35% of the student population identify themselves as persons of color, and the graduate student population, in particular, is substantially international. BC fosters an environment in which students are encouraged to integrate their intellectual growth and personal development. The clients seeking our clinical services are articulate, motivated, and still in the process of shaping key aspects of their identities. They are able to make use of self-exploration and insight-oriented interventions as well as cognitive behavioral treatment strategies to achieve pivotal developmental changes. They make up a psychologically rich population with which Fellows can explore closely and intensively the practice of psychotherapy with late-adolescents and young adults.

UCS emphasizes psychodynamic, developmental, and culturally informed approaches in formulating client difficulties, and it prioritizes brief, focused approaches to treatment while maintaining the flexibility to provide open-ended treatment, particularly for those clients with the greatest needs and/or the least resources.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES in which Fellows can expect to further their expertise include the following:

- **Intake, evaluation and treatment planning.** Fellows manage the intake, evaluation and treatment planning for three to four new clients weekly. Generally, Fellows assume responsibility for determining and carrying out treatment interventions for those clients whom they see on intake. Learning how to balance the needs of a growing caseload of clients with diverse problems generally becomes a particular area of challenge and mastery for Fellows. Opportunities to refine skills in treatment planning, case disposition, and referral are provided through supervision, seminars, clinical case meetings, and collegial collaboration.
- **Triage and Same Day Consultation.** Triage phone assessment and Same Day Consultation will allow Fellows to hone their skills on clarify presenting problems, assessing for risks, and determining next steps within a brief one-time clinical contact.
- **Individual counseling and psychotherapy.** Fellows readily establish caseloads, which allow them to develop skills with a variety of clients and client issues. With three supervisors, they benefit from the varied input of clinicians who have different styles and approaches. While UCS generally provides shorter-term treatment, Fellows are typically able to see a limited number of clients in ongoing psychotherapy over the course of the year.
- **Group counseling and psychotherapy.** Fellows have the opportunity to participate in leading groups and are provided guidance to support them in this work. Generally, they have opportunities to co-lead or lead at least one therapy or support group during their year.
- **Crisis intervention and emergency services.** The UCS staff provides emergency response for the student body throughout the academic year. This work routinely involves collaboration with other caregivers, mental health professionals, university personnel, and students' family members. Fellows receive close

training and have ready access to back-up consultation as they become full participants in the on-call system. They ultimately hold a weekly 8 - hour daytime shift, 2 to 3 times per month throughout the fellowship year. Last year the department responded to over 1,000 mental health emergencies, which ranged from the expectable developmental and situational crises to more serious matters of acute Axis I and II symptoms, suicidality, and decompensation.

- **Community consultation and outreach.** Fellows have opportunities to develop consultation/liaison relationships with university departments or organizations. Along with the entire staff of clinicians, Fellows participate offering psychoeducational programs, training, and consultation to various campus groups throughout the year. Often additional opportunities develop from a Fellow's pursuit of his or her own interests and ideas.

THE TRAINING PROGRAM is comprised of a combination of activities that emphasize learning through participation in the multidimensional roles and functions of university mental health practitioners. Most members of the permanent UCS clinical staff are part of the training committee, with the majority providing supervision. The training staff represents considerable expertise in university mental health and a strong commitment to training new professionals. After training doctoral interns for many years, we began training postdoctoral clinical and counseling psychologists in 1992 and have expanded the fellowship program in recent years with the support of the institution.

Supervision is seen as the most critical piece of clinical training as it provides Fellows with the opportunity to explore their work with careful attention and thoughtfulness. Fellows will receive three hours of supervision per week; 2 hours of individual and 1 hour of group supervision. Fellows are encouraged to collaborate with supervisors of different therapeutic styles, theoretical approaches, and clinical interests. Fellows also receive supervision in group and couples work.

Didactic sessions and workshops on topics specifically relevant to the provision of psychological services to college students are generally clustered during the comprehensive two-week orientation program scheduled for Fellows in late August. A series of **Professional Practice Seminars** for Fellows occurs across the year, covering topics related to professional identity and career development. An ongoing **Multicultural Conversations Hour** explores issues of cultural identities as it applies to the clinical work as well as personal and professional development. Additionally, the department hosts a number of **Professional Development Seminars** which provide training tailored to the needs and interests of the UCS psychology staff. Presenters for these seminars are chosen for their expertise in specific topics. UCS is approved by the APA to grant Continuing Education Units to psychologists for the latter series of training activities.

Fellows participate in the weekly **Clinical Case Conference** which is attended by the department's entire clinical staff. This is a forum for presenting and consulting about cases of particular interest and complexity. Case Conference provides staff an opportunity to clarify clinical and administrative issues in difficult cases and exchange a variety of perspectives regarding formulation, therapy process, and treatment planning. Fellows also participate with staff in a regularly scheduled **Staff Meeting**, which focuses on the administrative business of the department and its operations within the systems of the university setting. Program planning, the clarification of policies and best practices, and the discussion of student-life issues are among the matters typically addressed in this meeting. Fellows are also asked to participate in monthly department **Diversity Conversations**.

Additionally, Fellows may take advantage of an opportunity to co-facilitate a supervision seminar for advanced practicum students in the Counseling Psychology Ph.D. program as well as a guest membership and mentoring program at Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute.

In accordance with APPIC standards, the training program provides a structured process for Fellows to be evaluated twice a year. Mid-year evaluations are written and discussed formally with Fellows, but mutual

feedback is encouraged in an informal ongoing manner throughout the year. Year-end evaluations are geared toward supporting Fellows in their transition toward employment, and they tend to be less structured than those conducted at mid-year. The training program has a well-defined due-process procedure in the event Fellows encounter difficulties in the training experience.

The department's training committee has meetings throughout the year to discuss issues pertinent to the training program, including the progress and performance of Fellows. Supervisors consult one another about the performance and supervision of Fellows. Material from supervision may be discussed in these contexts in order to aid Fellows' development and maintain the highest level of clinical care for clients of UCS.

DIVERSITY

The postdoctoral training program is highly invested in recognizing and honoring diversity among its staff, postdoctoral Fellows, and clients. UCS devotes both resources and attention to fostering an environment that values awareness and appreciation of all aspects of diversity. Our department's Diversity Committee works to support marginalized and disenfranchised student populations as well as facilitate training and discussion forums for UCS staff on issues of diversity with a social justice frame.

At the larger institutional level, BC recruits and supports a student body that is increasingly comprised of persons of color and persons who come from backgrounds of social and economic disenfranchisement. Presently, the proportion of students identified as AHANA (African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American) at BC is approximately 30%. Students with marginalized identities are a large portion of clients served by UCS.

We encourage Fellows with underrepresented and/or marginalized identities to make use of the mentoring opportunities available to them with our supervisors and staff. We also invite them to develop useful connections outside of the department with students, staff, and/or faculty. At all levels, we believe this enhances our work and the futures of our Fellows.

STIPEND AND BENEFITS

We have five eleven-month, full-time postdoctoral positions available. Each fellowship position has a minimum stipend of $50,526 for its eleven-month duration and a full-benefits package that includes medical, dental, vacation, and illness coverage, as well as a range of other perquisites.

APPLICATION PROCESS

We are committed to having a counseling service that is diverse and strongly encourage applicants of all identities and abilities to apply to our postdoctoral fellowship program. Applicants must have completed all requirements for a doctoral degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning and a doctoral internship that meets APPIC standards prior to beginning the fellowship on August 19, 2024**.** We cannot hire individuals who have not completed and defended their dissertations by late-August. Candidates who have not been officially awarded their doctorates must be prepared to provide us with an official letter from their department or dissertation chair attesting to their predicted completion of all components of their doctoral program by August 19, 2024.

The application deadline is **January 2, 2024.**

Completed application "packets" require the following:

- ❑ Personal statement (explain your interest in the fellowship, why you would be a good fit, clinical strengths and growing edges, and training goals)
- ❑ A curriculum vitae
- ❑ Current OFFICIAL transcripts of graduate work
  - ❑ Unofficial transcripts can be submitted while Official transcripts are in transit; however, official transcripts are required
- ❑ Two letters of recommendation from clinical supervisors
- ❑ Applicant Questionnaire (found on our website: www.bc.edu/counseling)

Complete application "packets" can be submitted several ways:

1) Via APPA CAS (APPIC Psychology Postdoctoral Application) **OR**
2) Emailed to Selina Guerra, PhD (guerrase@bc.edu) with the subject heading COMPLETE FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION MATERIALS FOR (your name) **OR**
3) Mailed to:

   Selina Guerra, Ph.D.
   Assistant Director for Training
   Boston College University Counseling Services
   Gasson 001
   140 Commonwealth Ave.
   Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

Please note: We do not accept any application materials by fax.