



Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling

President's Address Elizabeth R. O'Brien

The past year has been a remarkable journey for me as ASERVIC President. We completed so many items on our "to do" list, such as the 2015 ASERVIC Conference, the cross-endorsement of the ASERVIC/AMCD/ALGBTIC Competencies, convening the ASERVIC/ALGBTIC Joint Task Force, our cross-divisional webinars, launching both the Emerging Leaders Program and the Advisory

Board at ACA in Montreal, and the forthcoming publication of our ASERVIC Monograph in November 2016. Amazingly the best is yet to come in the coming years with our new ASERVIC leadership team beginning July 1, 2016. July will also bring our new CVJ Editor Craig Cashwell, and more information on the 2017 ASERVIC conference and future webinars.

I must confess that the ASERVIC Presidency became much more intensive with the Tennessee HB 1840/SB 1556 legislation. Prior to this legislation being signed into law, the ASERVIC Board had an intensive discussion at our meeting at ACA to craft the statement on conscience clause legislation that is posted on our website. This statement is an integral part of our communication to our fellow ACA divisions and Tennessee state legislators and leaders regarding ASERVIC's stance on this issue. After the legislation became law in Tennessee, members of the ASERVIC Board generously gave me their time to discuss and reflect on next steps. From these conversations I was able to formulate steps, such as the ASERVIC poll regarding the 2017 ACA Conference, connect speakers to the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development for a joint webinar, and engage with our ASERVIC/ALGBTIC joint task force on creating educational opportunities for members that will be announced later in the year.

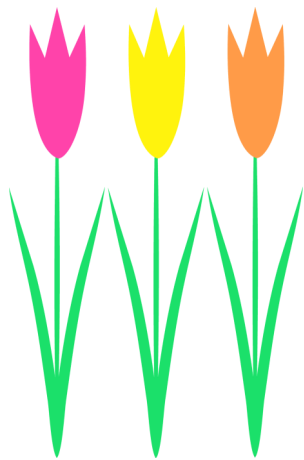
I personally believe that this legislation is detrimental to so many clients, and extremely short-sighted in a multitude of ways. As a professional counselor and counselor educator living in the state of Tennessee, my thoughts have naturally turned to advocacy on behalf of clients who may not have a voice as well as training opportunities for current Tennessee counselors and our next generation of counselors to come. I want to thank the ASERVIC board and other professional colleagues with whom I have spoken in the last months. The amount of support I have received in this process is so appreciated-I feel that thank you is hardly enough.

In this journey I have come to realize how true the words of Robert Greenleaf are, "The servant-leader is servant first....it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first." Although I certainly may not always exemplify servant leadership (anyone who knows me knows I do love a task list), it is my hope that I have served this organization to the benefit of our membership through communication, transparency, and opportunities to gather and share ideas in a safe and non-judgmental environment. I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity to serve ASERVIC; it is an organization that has fostered my development as a beginning counselor and counselor educator. More importantly, it is the organization that has introduced me to some of the most inspiring and truly good colleagues and friends that I have the fortune to know.

I know that a path is set for ASERVIC to lead the way in offering ideas, education, and training to counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators who are deeply engaged in understanding their own values and how these influence their counseling process with clients. Our history shows us to be thoughtful, reflective, and devoted practitioners and with deep roots, we will certainly have the foundation we need to engage in the growth and development that is essential to our future practice. I look forward to serving with you all in this task.

Be well and take care,
Libby

Elizabeth O'Brien, Ph. D., LPC
2015-2016 ASERVIC President



President

Elizabeth R. O'Brien
Elizabeth-O'Brien@utc.edu

Past-President

W. Bryce Hagedorn
Bryce.Hagedorn@ucf.edu

President-Elect

Stephanie Dailey
stdailey@argosy.edu

Treasurer

Amanda Giordino
amanda.giordino@unt.edu

Secretary

Rick Gressard
crgres@wm.edu



2016 ACA Conference Updates

Montreal, QC, Canada

**Governing Council Meeting
March 29-30, 2016**

MOTIONS

It was moved by the Financial Affairs Committee that Governing Council adopt the FY2017 proposed budget reflecting \$13,843,530 in Operating Revenues, \$13,842,880 in Operating Expenses, and excess Operating Revenue over Operating Expenses of \$650.
Motion passed.

It was moved by the Audit Committee that the Governing Council approve the audited financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2015 as provided by RSM US LLP.
Motion passed.

It was moved to approve the Consent Agenda minus the items the following items:

- Policies and Procedures Manual
- Approval of the Division and Branch Bylaw Changes
- Acceptance of the Professional Standards Committee Report
- Acceptance of the Research and Knowledge Committee Report
- Acceptance of the Professional Advocacy Task Force Report

Motion passed.

It was moved that the ACA Governing Council endorse the statement made by The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance on the need for Educational and Career Guidance services for Displaced Migrants.
Motion passed.

It was moved that the Governing Council postpone the vote for the petition for the All Counselors Interest Network until the July 2016 meeting.
Motion passed.

Discussion that the group does not meet the definition of interest networks/title//specific

It was moved that Motions that will substantially impact its members in areas which include but are not limited to impacting licensure, accreditation, and livelihood, the Governing Council will solicit input from the membership and provide an opportunity for a 30 day comment period from the membership.

It was moved to refer this this motion to the Executive Committee.
Motion passed.

It was moved that ACA request three years of test results (i.e., 2014-2016) from National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) for the Counselor Preparation and Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) and National Counselor Exam (NCE) for CACREP and Non-CACREP programs to be used for an independent analysis of differences in test results to be shared at the July 2017 Governing Council meeting.
Motion defeated.

2016 ACA Conference Updates

Montreal, QC, Canada

It was moved that the Governing Council reaffirms its support of the ACA staff and Government Relations Committee in moving forth in efforts to defeat Tennessee House Bill 1840.
Motion passed.

It was moved to approve the Bylaw Changes and to direct the Bylaws Committee to provide documentation that they have reviewed and approved the changes.
Motion passed.

It was moved that the GC examine ways that ACA may strengthen its position and decision making to ensure that it is the leader and in position of strength and influence to be the voice for the profession and determine the future of the profession.
Motion passed.

It was moved to accept the reports from the Professional Standards Committee, Research and Knowledge Committee and, Professional Advocacy Task Force.
Motion passed.





Spirituality in the Field

LaKeitha A. Poole, Ph.D., LPC, NCC

Attempting to wholly and fully embrace spirituality can be difficult, particularly within the field of counseling/mental health. What is even more challenging is adhering to our spiritual beliefs while affirming and upholding our ethical standards. Currently, we see the mismanagement of this task occurring in places like Tennessee and North Carolina. So how do we, in a realistic and authentic way, make space for both our spiritual identities and remain in alignment with our ethical standards and guidelines? While seemingly unachievable if using today's society as a reference, it is not impossible. I do it every single day.



While completing my doctoral degree, I became mesmerized with the Levels-of-Explanation approach discussed by Plante as method that allows what we know works in accordance to science and best practices to be combined with clinical and spiritual knowledge (Plante, 2012). Through assessing the biological, psychological, social and spiritual functioning of a client I am able to create “whole picture” diagnosis and treatment plans that allow clients to explore all parts of who they are and where they would like working with me in therapy to take them. I think this approach best fits with my personal view of client care and formulating a case conceptualization. However, I can also see challenges with this approach that lend support to where our nation finds itself within this great debate. Specifically, it leads directly to the age old debate of science versus faith/religion and the questioning of if the two can indeed coexist.

Nevertheless, the merging of science and assessment (social, spiritual, etc.) serves as a perfect picture of the type of clinician and educator that I strive to be. I believe strongly that our individual faiths and philosophies give us the ability to acquire knowledge through science and that it was created it as a means to be able to reach our clients in both unique and humanistic ways. My ability to hold dear the tenants of my faith allow me to be more empathic, loving, and open-minded to all people from all walks of life. I am a better counselor because of my spiritual beliefs. As a result, this method serves as a means of meeting those seeking guidance where they are by portraying the power of knowledge and enlightenment that can only be granted and explained by the influence of spirituality.

My professional identity is one that I take great pride in both developing and protecting. When I think of how it defines me, what I identify with most is the ability to put myself in the shoes of someone else for a short time and be their biggest supporter. My clients are men, women, husbands, wives, gay, straight, Black, Latino, White, young, old, liberal, conservative, etc. The never-ending list of all of the identities that walk into my counseling office within a single individual is not a test of what I am sanctioned to work with, but a testament of who I am called to serve. In those precious moments, there is no part of me that feels different than the person sitting across from me, even though, more often than not, we may physically appear to be very different. In those moments where a client, student, or family mentions some part of their identity that is very different from my own, while it may be unfamiliar to me initially, my heart immediately returns to a place of compassion. That is how spirituality in this field works.

I am not suggesting that we ignore the fact that sometimes we feel conflicted for denying parts of our own identity at the expense of being neutral. However, what comforts me personally, based on my own spiritual beliefs, is knowing that I am replicating the instructions that Jesus gave to the disciples when he said to “deny yourself and take up your cross” (Matthew 16:24 KJV). While I know the calling of being a therapist in no way compares to bearing the sins of the world, there is something redeeming about knowing that I can listen to and “bear” my clients’ deepest fears, most precious family moments, and most fulfilling victories by allowing who I am to fade into the background and become whatever it is that they need me to be in those few short moments. I am the listening friend, the non-judgmental parent, the challenging coach and teacher, and the soothing reminder that our internalized feelings of civility and compassion are matchless. In this role, I define the epitome of what Volf (1996) describes as “God’s reception of hostile humanity into divine communion” (p. 100). To me, that is what it means to wholly and fully embrace. That, as a result, is the true definition of integration, empathy, and competence required by us all.

References

- Plante, T. G. (2012). Levels of explanation approach to Jake: Using a bio-psycho-social-spiritual and evidence based model. In T. Sisemore & S. Greggo (Eds.). *Christianity and Counseling: Five Approaches*, pp. 60-83. Westmount, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Volf, M. (1996). *Exclusion & embrace: A theological exploration of identity, otherness, and reconciliation*. Abingdon Press: Nashville, TN.



N
O
M
I
N
A
T
I
O
N
S
N
E
E
D
E
D

We Need YOU!

We are seeking those individuals who are willing to move into the future leadership of our wonderful organization. As such, ASERVIC is accepting nominations for the following two positions:

ASERVIC President (2017-2018) – This individual presided at all meetings of ASERVIC and at meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Executive Committee and shall exercise such additional duties as decided by the Board of Directors.

ASERVIC Board of Directors (2 open positions serving 2017-2020) – Duties of Board members include (but are not limited to): (a) establishing policies and governing the affairs of ASERVIC and (b) identifying and prioritizing issues and activities related to the integration of spiritual, ethical, and religious values in counseling and counselor education.

You may nominate yourself (i.e. volunteer) or you may nominate someone else for these positions. I will confirm with anyone who is nominated by a third party regarding their willingness to serve in this capacity.

Nominations (i.e. names and email addresses) are due to Bryce Hagedorn (Bryce.Hagedorn@ucf.edu), ASERVIC Past-President, by July 1st.



NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

DANA OLEKSA

How did you get here? What is your spiritual story?

My spiritual journey has been a long one, but really I suppose a short one in some ways as well. I say this because for most of my life, I did not have a religious or spiritual identity. I grew up in a Jewish-Catholic home, which didn't give way to much in terms of compromising beliefs or sharing beliefs; my family ended up sort of just throwing any kind of religion or spirituality to the wayside. I have always identified in a cultural way with my Jewish identity, but spirituality and religion were never of much interest to me. I typically felt like, "If I can't see it or touch it or make sense of it, it isn't real," and left it at that. Recently, however, since my start in counseling education, I have started to develop my own brand of spirituality. Even more recently, the deaths of two of the most beloved people in my life also led to a reevaluation of the importance of spirituality in my life. I'm still working out what spirituality means to me, and haven't had a whole lot of time to do so, but I'm realizing now that the vast majority of my life without spirituality was also a part of the journey. One of the most important things I have learned is that spirituality doesn't have to fit in someone else's box or idea of what spirituality is or how you practice it. It is my own, and I think that is what made all the difference to me in opening up around it.

What drew your membership to ASERVIC?

ASERVIC was brought to my attention by my professor, advisor, and mentor who has been a part of it for at least as long as I have known her, most likely longer. She originally told me about ASERVIC I believe at the very beginning of my counseling education; she handed me a brochure and told me a little bit about the purpose ASERVIC serves. At that time, unfortunately, the brochure got lost with a slew of other papers. In my counseling education journey and journey through life in general at this time, I have recently realized the impact that ACA and ASERVIC may have in my education and career moving forward. I want to expand my professional and personal endeavors and continue to grow, and I believe ASERVIC may be a way for me to do that.

How do you see yourself contributing to ASERVIC?

I'm not sure how I see myself working along ASERVIC yet, at least not in a specific way. I know that I want to get involved and learn more about what it means to be competent in spiritually oriented counseling, and I know that ASERVIC is my best opportunity for that. In that process, I am open to and excited about being able to work alongside other ASERVIC members and mentors in whatever ways I can to further their work and purpose.

ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies: Did You Know?

- ▶ The ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies were originally 9 items, but were revised to include 6 categories and 14 individual competencies;
- ▶ The Cashwell and Watts (2010) article presenting the ASERVIC Revised Spiritual Competencies has been cited 34 times since publication;
- ▶ A Spiritual Competency Scale (SCS-R-II) based on the ASERVIC competencies has been developed (and validated);
- ▶ The book, *Integrating spirituality and religious into counseling*, edited by Cashwell and Young (2011) thoroughly presents the ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies and is currently on its 2nd edition;
- ▶ The ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies are frequently are referenced in scholarly presentations, both at our own ASERVIC conference and ACA (especially the ASERVIC sponsored presentations); and
- ▶ That the ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies are officially endorsed by ACA, AMCD, and ALGBTIC.
- ▶ What about you? How have you used the ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies in your work? We would love to hear from you! Contact our *Interaction* newsletter editor with your submissions.

LaKeitha A. Poole, Ph.D., LPC, NCC
lakeithapoole@gmail.com



ASERVIC Welcomes our new *Interaction* Assistant Editor

HEIDI HENRY



Heidi Henry received her B.A. in Christian Ministries from Messiah College in 2008. She then joined Teach For America, where she taught high school math in Pointe Coupee, Louisiana. Upon completion of her TFA commitment, she attended Louisiana State University and graduated in 2012 with her M.A. in Education with a concentration in community counseling. She worked with Communities In Schools as a Site Coordinator in Baton Rouge, Louisiana for two years before moving to Houston, Texas to pursue doctoral studies. She currently works as a Student Support Counselor with YES Prep Public Schools and is pursuing her Ph.D. in Counselor Education at Sam Houston State University. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Texas with interests in multicultural, career, and academic counseling.

Heidi believes that part of living out her faith is working towards social justice, including inequality in education, and through helping individuals find their vocational calling. Her main research interests include ethical issues and competencies in school counseling, multicultural education, and career counseling with diverse populations.



Spirituality in the Field

Do you have ideas or a story to share regarding your practice of spirituality in the field?
If so, please submit to the next edition of Interaction.

The Innovation Committee would like to formally invite current ASERVIC members to consider sharing their “Spirituality in the Field” experiences for publication in an upcoming ASERVIC newsletter.

Inquiries and submissions for this special section of the newsletter can be sent to
LYNN BOHECKER (lbohecker@messiah.edu)

- ◇ Follow the ASERVIC newsletter “guidelines for submission” as published in the most recent newsletter publication (See ASERVIC webpage www.aservic.org)
- ◇ Articles include an opening paragraph introducing the author to the readers.
- ◇ Articles include a second paragraph describing how the author incorporates one or multiple Spiritual Competencies in practice.
- ◇ Articles include a concluding paragraph or list of resources (books, trainings, websites/blogs, inspirational quote, etc.) related to the practices and competencies addressed in the article.
- ◇ A professional picture of the author is attached (in .jpeg format) with the article.

Interested in submitting an article for the **SUMMER issue of the
Interaction?**

The deadline is FRIDAY, JULY 22^d



Please refer to ASERVIC.org for guidelines for publication or contact the editor at lakeithapoole@gmail.com for more information.