

Editorials

Student Interview with Psychology Professor, Dr. Edwards

Yessa Anorve Basoria, Staff Writer

Students in Dr. Duncan's professional writing course interviewed Meredith College professors, alumni, and professionals who shared a commonality with the student's projected major. The interview's purpose was to teach the importance of "soft skills" such as writing and communication in order to demonstrate how these skills are incorporated into a variety of career paths.

Below, student Donna Babhbhena shares her interview with Dr. Edwards, professor and Department Head of Psychology and Social Work. Dr. Edwards joined the Meredith College family as a faculty member in 1991.

Bahena: Writing is an important skill needed in most disciplines, and psychology is no exception. How do you use writing to contribute to the field outside of the classroom?

Dr. Edwards: Like most academics, I write for academic publications, journals and so forth. I have also written some pieces for the popular press. I'm contacted pretty regularly by reporters and news agencies for small quotes about particular issues that are relevant to my area of expertise. I have sometimes followed up by writing an article of my own—that's appeared in popular press types of publications—to try to bring the science to the public.

Bahena: Is it easier to bring science to the general public these days?

Dr. Edwards: Historically, the sciences have not done a great job of communicating science to the public. Psychology is getting better about this. People write in blogs; they write in popular magazines. The Meg Jay event—her book, *The Defining*

Decade: Why your Twenties matter—and how to make the most of them now) is talking about very real science; she's talking about research that I know and have spent tons of time in, but it certainly never occurred to me to write it for the audience that she's addressed—that's really who needs it. And I think that's where we fall down.

Bahena: Had you heard of Meg Jay and her book prior to the announcement of her visit at Meredith?

Dr. Edwards: Well, certainly, but mostly because Bill Brown on the convocation committee approached me back in the beginning of the summer and said, "Hey, do you know this person? We're thinking of having her here to speak." So, I dug up her stuff, read her book, and I'm glad I did.

Bahena: You have some shared interests with Meg Jay. What did you discuss during her visit to Meredith?

Dr. Edwards: We talked about [our] research, because there's a lot of overlap. Her whole thing about leveraging your weak ties was interesting to me, because part of my work is looking at shifting strong ties. I'm interested in social support during transition—the movement from attachment to parents to peers and significant others. We talked about the juxtaposition of strong ties and weak ties, and we don't disagree; we have different purposes. She's more interested in what's going to break you out of the mold that you're in and move you forward with a job, or a new relationship, and I'm more interested in the social support that supports you in being brave enough to reach out to those new experiences.

Bahena: During her talk, Meg Jay

spoke about the importance of building identity capital, or significant experiences that add to one's identity. What type of identity capital did you build as an undergraduate to prepare for graduate school?

Dr. Edwards: I worked at a Girl Scouts summer camp through part of high school, undergrad, and grad school. [I] did my dissertation with girls in the same camp. That was a significant piece of identity capital. It really told me I enjoyed both researching and working with young women. I did undergraduate research. I offered to help my professor, Jerry Burger, in his lab because I was interested in the work he did, and I thought he was a cool professor. I was like, "Can I get some research experience?" I published as an undergraduate; I presented at a conference as an undergraduate.

Bahena: Are you currently working on any new projects or research?

Dr. Edwards: I'm trying to dig through some of the literature that Meg Jay had. I sent her some articles, and she's given me some [articles]. I'm trying to hash through where my work intersects hers and, I'm looking for the new direction. I know where I want to be, and now I'm doing all the background reading to figure out where I really want to be.

Bahena: How do you stay updated with the latest psychological developments?

Dr. Edwards: Got to read. Every Wednesday morning, I am over in the library with a group of faculty that have carved out sacred reading and writing time.

Bahena: Do you travel to field gatherings?

Dr. Edwards: Every two years, Dr. Morris and I go to SRCD—Society for Research of Childhood Development—that is the big organization in our area. We have different specialties, so we go to different sessions and we get back to our room at night and data dump at each other: "Like, what a cool session!" [We] swap out a lot of stuff because we're both developmental psychologists, but I'm more social development, she's more [cognitive]. In a couple of weeks, we're going to a conference on early childhood in Charlotte. Last year I went to a developmental neuroscience conference in Leiden.

Bahena: Oh, The Netherlands. How was that?

Dr. Edwards: It was really cool, although I learned a lesson: Never go to a conference I really care about without accounting for jet lag. Because, in my notes, there are all these like places where I just fell asleep. (laughs) I don't do jet lag well.

Bahena: How does having access to worldly knowledge affect the way you communicate with others?

Dr. Edwards: I'm always teaching. My kids will tell you that I kind of nerd out or geek out about certain topics. They'll ask me a question, and every now and then, they'll have to shut me down. "Like, okay, that's enough. We really just had a simple question, mommy!"

Bahena: How do you emphasize the importance of writing for psychology students that are unconvinced of its importance?

Dr. Edwards: (laughs) Require it.

UNC rape case holding universities accountable

Morgan Whithaus, Staff Writer

It is commendable that 19-year-old Delaney Robinson is speaking out about how she was raped by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill football player, Allen Artis, in February 2016. Through holding press conferences and engaging with the media, she is drawing attention to the issue of how colleges may not be properly responding to sexual assault reports and how American society must work harder to dismantle the current rape culture.

Universities across the country must first stop trying to preserve their reputation and public image from minimizing assault complaints. Universities, including UNC Chapel Hill, must start supporting and advocating for their students who have been sexually assaulted, regardless of if the students are star athletes, top of their academic class, or students who seemingly fly under the radar. Schools will develop a much more satisfied student body when they fight on their

students' behalf and work to make it known that consent is everything and that rape culture must end.

If universities such as UNC Chapel Hill are serious about reducing sexual assault on their campuses, schools must take intentional approaches to develop and enforce sexual misconduct policies as well as address rape culture as a whole. Campuses must continue to provide information and resources for sexual assault victims. They must treat victims with respect and work on their side. Rapists must be punished, and their punishments must serve as a deterrent for others not to rape. Finally, university administrators must instill a message across campus that makes it clear that rape and other forms of sexual misconduct are not acceptable.

And to move beyond the college sphere, if Americans want victims to no longer be treated as suspects and student athletes such

as Artis to no longer be told, "don't sweat it, just keep on living your life and playing football," society must come together to alter how rape culture is addressed within our society. Teaching about consent needs to start at a younger age, and families, sports teams, and schools must condemn children, teenagers, and adults when they make excuses for rape. Blaming the victims, asking "what were you wearing?" and "were you leading him on?" must stop. A rapist has full control over his actions, and a person's choice of clothing, state of consciousness, or ability to consent should not matter. Robinson is working to hold UNC Chapel Hill accountable for their claims to be supportive of sexual assault victims and to have a strict policy against sexual misconduct. I applaud Robinson for stepping forward and I stand with her and other rape victims as they seek the justice they deserve.

Resources for reporting incidents of sexual misconduct and/

or receiving support for sexual assault victims at Meredith College and/or in Raleigh:

Meredith College Title IX Coordinator Pamela Davis Galloway, Office of Human Resources, 122 Park Center, 919-760-8760, davispm@meredith.edu.

Meredith College Deputy Title IX Coordinator Ann Gleason, Office of the Dean of Students, 212 Park Center, 919-760-8521, gleasona@meredith.edu.

Meredith College Counseling Center (919) 760-8427, Academic year hours: Monday - Friday 8 am - 5 pm.

InterAct of Wake County, private, non-profit, agency that provides safety, support, and awareness to victims and survivors of domestic violence and rape/sexual assault. InterAct of Wake County 24-hour Rape Crisis Line: (919) 828-3005

Solace Center (919) 828-3067

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