



Dr. Brooke Breaux (R) and her students attending a previous southeastern psychological conference. Dr. Breaux is part of the faculty at University of Louisiana Lafayette, celebrating 100 years of Psychology.

## ULL College of Liberal Arts Centennial

## Psychology Department at U. of Louisiana Lafayette Celebrates 100 Year Anniversary

The psychology department at the University of Louisiana–Lafayette (ULL) is marking its 100th anniversary. The birthday celebration is part of the centennial of the College of Liberal Arts, UL–Lafayette’s oldest academic college.

"Once the home of all academic subjects across the campus," officials note, "the College was founded in 1921. UL Lafayette has greatly expanded the scope and depth of academic opportunity over the last 100 years, and the College remains at the University’s core, offering a broad array of comprehensive programs in the humanities and social sciences."

Activities to celebrate the milestone are happening now and will continue throughout the 2021–2022 academic year.

Head of the Psychology Department at UL Lafayette, Dr. Amy Brown, said, "The Psychology Department’s major events this academic year in honor of the COLA Centennial are our research showcase next week and “Psychology Week” next spring. Psi Chi has organized a “Psychology Day” every spring for years, but we are expanding it this year to feature a larger number of speakers, events, and themes," she said.

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Follows "State's Worst Surge of the Pandemic"

## Governor Extends Indoor Mask Mandates for Another Month

On September 28, Gov. Edwards extended Louisiana's statewide indoor mask mandate for another four weeks, until October 27, as the state's overall COVID-19 outlook improves following the state's worst COVID-19 surge of the entire pandemic. The statewide mask mandate includes K-12 schools and college campuses.

"There is no doubt that our COVID-19 situation in Louisiana has improved since the peak of our fourth surge, which was largely driven by the Delta variant, and for that I am deeply grateful. Even so, the amount of COVID in Louisiana is still incredibly high, at 243 cases for every 100,000 people. This is why, to

Cont pg 3

## Dr. Larrieu Recipient of the Janet R. Matthews, PhD, Outstanding Psychology Mentor Award

Dr. Julie Larrieu has been named by the La. Psychological Association the 2021 recipient of the *Janet R. Matthews, PhD, Outstanding Psychology Mentor Award*.

Dr. Julie Larrieu, developmental and clinical psychologist and Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Tulane University School of Medicine,



Dr. Julie Larrieu  
(Courtesy photo)

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## Psychologists Needed, Says New AFCC-LA Pres. Judge Oppenheim

by Leslie Todd, LCSW, ACSW  
AFCC Correspondent

Under the leadership of new President, Hon. Patti Oppenheim, 22nd JDC, the Louisiana Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) is eager to get back to in-person education and networking among its interdisciplinary members. Judge Oppenheim noted that psychologists are the least well-represented mental health professionals in AFCC-LA and she wants to actively promote their engagement.

"Since Hurricane Katrina, our region is sorely lacking in the number of mental health professionals willing to become involved in court cases," Judge Oppenheim noted. "This creates an unavoidable gap in helping our fellow Louisiana families through their crisis..."

"Collaboration between legal, financial and mental health professionals gives families a fighting chance. Mental health professionals often seem overwhelmed at the prospect of potentially having to testify in court, but they forget that the children and parents they decided to

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# Editorial Page – Opinions

## Psychologists Matter

by Julie Nelson

“Power corrupts” is the shorthand version of Lord Acton’s famous quote. Within these two little words is a world of wisdom. A succinct warning about human nature—our own and that of others.

A historian and moralist, Lord Acton expressed this opinion in a letter to Bishop Creighton in 1887. “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men.”

That power corrupts is a truism because it’s true. It explains unexplainable behavior, such as horrible crimes against humanity. It also warns us of the challenges of law enforcement.

Lord Acton said it very eloquently but Zimbardo proved it in his Prison Guard experiment. All you have to do is give someone power and they go sort of nutty.

There may be some few people who are immune to the dark side of power but that is a dangerous hypothesis. The wise position is to expect that we are all corrupted by power.

Consequently, the only way to correct for this fundamental human problem regarding the corrupting influence of power is to install organizational structures that correct the tendency. Everybody knows that.

Oh wait, everybody doesn’t know that. None of this seems to have dawned on those in charge of the complaint cops at our state psychology board. They have had years, essentially, to clean up their mess that they started in 2014, and they keep doing the same *wrong* things, over and over.

Space and time permit me only a few of the most obvious problems that our board either doesn’t understand or doesn’t want to correct.

1.) Base rate blindness. The base rate for actual mistakes is very low in psychology which drives up the danger of false positives. Additionally, a low base rate means that it may be very difficult to impact the outcome measures no matter what you do. It’s impossible to solve a problem that doesn’t exist on a practical level.

2.) Misaligned incentives and conflicts of interest. No one misses the obvious financial conflicts of interest that are structured in to the complaints committee. There are also non-financial incentives, such as identity or job security.

3.) They don’t seem to understand job match. The job of an investigator is to understand whether a psychologist made a psychological services mistake. You can’t hire an attorney or a private investigator or any other non-psychologist to figure out the practice of psychology.

4.) No checks and balances, violations of due process. They don’t seem to have any true oversight or psychological firewalls, such as separation between the “investigation” and the “arrest.” This lays open the process for contamination by confirmation bias, and other types of similar errors.

5.) Lack of transparency and system defensiveness. The board thinks they’re transparent but they are not. They are defensive.

6.) No outcome research to guide the public safety efforts program. It doesn’t seem to matter to the board that nothing has changed over the last 20 years in regard to disciplinary actions. They have no theory, no strategy, and no valid measurements to guide their efforts.

7.) Unintended consequences that reduce overall public well-being and safety. One example of this is having a painful and costly complaints program helps to drive psychologists away from working in the court system, the highest source of complaints. We report in this issue that a Judge is begging for psychologists. Another unintended consequence is how a punitive, secretive and inconsistent law enforcement program helps to suppress information—information that would help true problem-solving.

I could go on and on about this especially after talking to a few of the victims of our complaint cops.

A well-designed program, taking into account base rates, Intervening variables, and measures of public well-being and safety, would work much better than the current program which probably has the main result of instilling fear in psychologists, suppressing valid information, and wasting money.

*[Julie Nelson is a retired, licensed psychologist, journalist, consultant, and publisher of the Times. She also holds other positions in the community. However, her opinions here are those of her own, and do not represent any group or association. She and the Times receive no compensation other than paid advertising. Email her at [drj@drjulienelson.com](mailto:drj@drjulienelson.com), —she welcomes feedback.]*

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## Corrections & Clarifications

On page 9 of our last issue we accidentally substituted Dr. Thompson's picture for Dr. Franklin. (They are co-authors.) We apologize for this confusion and we thank Dr. Drew for pointing out our error. We corrected it in the link. Please send your corrections to:  
[psychologytimes@drjulienelson.com](mailto:psychologytimes@drjulienelson.com)



State & National News

Governor Extends Indoor Mask Mandates Continued

support continued decreases COVID-19 hospitalizations, cases and deaths, I am extending Louisiana's statewide mask mandate for another four weeks, including in our K-12 schools and on college campuses," Gov. John Bel Edwards said. "Masks have been proven to help slow the spread of COVID-19, with recent federal data from the Centers for Disease Control showing that schools without masking requirements are 3.5 times more likely to have a COVID-19 outbreak than schools where children and staff members are masked. We must do everything we can to protect ourselves and those around us who are vulnerable, including wearing masks indoors and getting the safe, effective and totally free COVID-19 vaccine."

"On August 4, the day that the mask mandate was put back into place, only 37% of Louisianans were fully vaccinated against COVID-19. As of today, that is up to more than 45%. While that improvement is something to be proud of, it is not enough. In the month of September alone, Louisiana reported that 1,4XX [sic] people died of COVID, which is tragic, as many of these deaths were likely preventable," Gov. Edwards said. "We have to get Louisiana's vaccine rate up even more so that we have strong vaccine protection in our communities. Just over half of all people in Louisiana who are eligible for the vaccine are fully vaccinated. That's why masking right now is important still." "Our COVID-19 indicators continue to move in the right direction and that is critical, but we are still wading in COVID," said Dr. Joe Kanter, State Health Officer at the Louisiana Department of Health. "All 64 parishes are currently at the highest possible level on our community risk scale. With the highly transmissible Delta variant circulating throughout the state, masking indoors is how we stay safe and protect our loved ones."

Pres. Biden Approves Cost Share for Recovery from Hurricanes Ida and Laura

On September 25, Gov. Edwards received notice that Pres. Biden has approved his request for an additional 15 days at 100 percent federal funding for Public Assistance Category A, Debris Removal, and Category B, Emergency Protective Measures for both Hurricanes Ida and Laura. In addition, Pres. Biden increased the overall federal cost share to 90 percent for FEMA Public Assistance funding for Hurricane Ida.

"It is a meaningful and important step to help communities across our state recover as much work remains to be done," the Gov. said.

Gov. and Graves Weigh in on Congressional Approval for La Disaster Recovery Funding

Gov. J Edwards issued a statement on September 30, following congressional approval of disaster recovery funding for Louisiana.

"Today is a day that many in South Louisiana, myself included, have long waited for, with the passage of aid for Louisiana following a number of disasters, including the devastating Hurricanes Laura, Delta, Zeta and Ida. There is desperate need for housing in areas that were devastated by these disasters, and that will be the focus of our work once we learn more about Louisiana's share of this appropriation. In addition to aid for areas affected by Hurricane Ida, the people of Southwest Louisiana will finally get funding they've long deserved following Hurricanes Laura and Delta last year. It's tragic that they've had to wait so long, but this federal assistance will help revitalize communities that have been struggling for a year now. I want to thank the members of the United States

Congress, especially Louisiana's congressional delegation, and the White House for supporting this aid for our people, which is a good start to kicking Louisiana's long-term recovery into gear."

On September 30, U.S. Congressman Garret Graves of South Louisiana released the following statement.

"We are exactly one month from Hurricane Ida making landfall and our efforts to deliver hurricane recovery assistance for the citizens of south Louisiana is already paying off. We have folks living in tents back home without electricity while politicians are arguing in Washington DC about how many tens of trillions in debt is an acceptable amount when mortgaging our children and grandchildren's future. They tried to politicize the aid last week and despite the chaos, we were able to get some wins.

"This bill will provide direct assistance to individuals

and families to help rebuild communities and homes. We were also able to secure complementary funding that invests in projects such as the Upper Barataria Basin project (St. Charles, St. John, St. James, Jefferson, Ascension, Lafourche and Assumption parishes), Morganza to the Gulf (Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes), Larose to Golden Meadow levee system (Lafourche Parish), and Grand Isle that will make our communities safer. This will also provide funding opportunities to improve protection in communities like Kraemer, Lafitte and many others. This bill will also help to kickstart our economy by opening up and dredging our critical navigation canals such as Mississippi River, Bayou Lafourche, Houma Navigation Canal, the Atchafalaya Basin Channel, Calcasieu Ship Channel and others. We will keep working with our community and parish leaders to help address their needs."



“When was the last time you let him out at night?”

# Governor Makes Appointments

Gov. Edwards announced his appointments to several Louisiana boards and commissions this week and during September.

The Traumatic Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Advisory Board provides services in a flexible, individualized manner to Louisiana citizens with traumatic head or traumatic spinal cord injuries. The board administers a program which enables individuals to return to a reasonable level of functioning and independent living in their communities.

Robert H. Chatelain of Baton Rouge has been appointed to the Traumatic Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Advisory Board. Chatelain is the president of Cribbs, Inc. He will serve as a survivor of a spinal cord injury.

Yvette D. Pacaccio of Covington has also been appointed to the Traumatic Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Advisory Board. Pacaccio is senior vice president and business banking group sales executive for Capitol One. She will serve as a family member of a survivor of a traumatic head injury.

The Imperial Calcasieu Human Services Authority provides behavioral health and development disability services to the residents of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Jefferson Davis and Cameron parishes.

Melanie K. Sarro of Lake Charles has been appointed to the Imperial Calcasieu Human Services Authority. Sarro is an occupational therapist for Sarro Therapeutic Services. She will serve as a member who is a parent in the field of developmental disabilities.

The Capital Area Human Services District directs the operation and management of community-based programs and services relative to public health, mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services for the parishes of Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana.

Mary S. "Laverne" Aguiard of Ventress has been appointed to the Capitol Area Human Services District. Aguiard is a legal administrative assistant nurse-paralegal for Chad A. Aguiard Law Firm, LLC. She will represent Pointe Coupee Parish.

The Task Force to Study Health Care Outcomes will complete an in depth review of Louisiana's critical shortage of care and access to health care providers, particularly in the area of primary care medicine, placing particular emphasis on the role that physician assistants play to assist with the shortage of health care providers. The Task Force will report their findings and recommendations to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

Dr. Lester W. Johnson of Rayville has been appointed to the Task Force to Study Health Care Outcomes. Dr. Johnson is the vice chancellor of academic affairs with Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport-Monroe Medical Center. He will serve at-large.

Julie A. Nevers of Opelousas has been appointed to the Task Force to Study Health Care Outcomes. Nevers is the director of clinical integration for St. Tammany Health System. She will serve at-large.

Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board: Renee G. Cole of Baton Rouge has been reappointed to the Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board. Cole is the executive director of Behavioral Integration Group. She will serve as a behavior analyst nominated by the Louisiana Behavior Analysis Association.

Daniela I. Riofrio of New Orleans has been appointed to the Louisiana Behavior Analyst Board. Riofrio is clinical director for the Children's Autism Center. She will serve as a behavior analyst nominated by the Louisiana Behavior Analysis Association.

The Louisiana Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) was established by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to support the efforts of our citizens with disabilities to live independently in the community of their choice. SILC works to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence and productivity of individuals with disabilities, facilitating integration and full inclusion into the mainstream of American society.

Sharon L. Hennessey of Baton Rouge has been reappointed to the Louisiana Statewide Independent Living Council. Hennessey is executive director at People First. She will represent private industry.

# Organizations Receive Grants to Support Post-Ida Recovery

Louisiana Healthcare Connections announced on Sept. 29 that four organizations in some of Hurricane Ida's hardest hit areas have been awarded \$260,000 in funding to aid in critical relief and recovery efforts.

"We have checked in on our members in affected areas and have opened up a mental health hotline to the public, but funding community partners and healthcare providers to continue to supply so many needed resources is one more way we can help our communities recover."

The following organizations will utilize funding to address the social service and healthcare needs of those affected by Hurricane Ida: 1) Bayou Community Foundations - a leading coordinator of relief donations for Terrebonne and Lafourche

parishes as well as Grand Isle. Funds will be used to support critical relief, recovery, and rebuilding. 2) Teche Action Clinic - a leading primary care provider in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes. They operate nine clinics and six school-based health centers in the areas affected by Hurricane Ida. 3) Northshore Community Foundation - serves a four-parish area, including Tangipahoa Parish which was the hardest-hit parish outside of the bayou region. Funds would be used for critical relief, recovery and rebuilding services to benefit the Medicaid population. 4) Funds for People of the Bayou - a local nonprofit. Funds will be used to provide assistance to those who have lost their homes in Terrebonne parish, in addition to providing water, ice, gas, hot meals, and helping to coordinate FEMA assistance.

## The Fisher Project Suicide Prevention Program

The Mental Health Association for Greater Baton Rouge is operating a COVID-19 Emergency Response for Suicide Prevention Project in Louisiana funded by SAMHSA. In partnership with the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health and other agencies, we are offering comprehensive suicide follow-up and recovery support services. Mental health concerns have increased considerably during the COVID-19 pandemic. Louisiana has been affected by high rates of infection and deaths, and many of our communities are more vulnerable to trauma and increased risk for mental health problems. The services we provide are culturally affirming and trauma-informed. We invite you to utilize our services to better serve your patients. There is no cost to participate.

- Clients enrolled will receive 6 months of care:
- Screening for suicide risk at every appointment
    - Safety planning and means restriction
    - Discharge planning
  - Warm hand off(s) to treatment or community organizations

Services are available via telephone and video telehealth.

To Enroll or Refer a Patient

Call the Fisher Project 225.960.6800  
or email [sblauvelt@mhagbr.com](mailto:sblauvelt@mhagbr.com)

Eligible participants are: Age 25 and over and · Have an increased risk for suicide in past 3 months

All services are provided by a certified peer specialist and supervised by a licensed clinical psychologist.



# Psychologists Needed, Says New AFCC-LA Pres. Judge Oppenheim

Continued

by Leslie Todd, LCSW, ACSW  
AFCC Correspondent

help need them most during a court hearing," Oppenheim said.

Although many evaluations are capably done by LCSWs and LPCs, psychologists are uniquely trained to conduct the testing which many Courts rely on in rendering judgments regarding parenting competency.

According to Dr. Alan Taylor, a charter member of the AFCC-LA Board and a child custody evaluation expert for 30 years, "Over the last 15 to 20 years, the number of PhD level psychologists involved in Family Court work has steadily decreased to the point that most local jurisdictions have either no one or only one or two psychologists to address cases," he said.

"There is a critical need for scientific and clinical experience and training to deal with the complex issues involved in high conflict divorce," Dr. Taylor said.

"Psychologists have the advantage of a strong background in psychological assessment techniques, which are even more important in conflicted divorces, since both parties are making allegations about each other and attempting to defend themselves at the same time," Taylor said. "Psychological testing can penetrate through the emotionally-charged allegations and provide accurate information about personality functioning and the presence of any significant mental disorders. There are research-based norms drawn from custody litigants, increasing the accuracy event more.

"An equally difficult situation in these cases is attempting to identify effective interventions," Taylor explained. "This requires a combination of expertise in behavioral change methods to help parents complete the divorce process by establishing a stable post-divorce relationship and allowing each parent to strengthen his or her relationship with the children. Psychologists are trained to have a strong background in both assessment and behavioral interventions and experience in multidisciplinary settings where they can assist other professionals in designing interventions."

Why are psychologists reluctant to take on Family Court cases? Fear of Board complaints and a lack of relevant training appear to be the main reasons. Dr. Taylor also notes that psychologists operate with more detachment than do professionals who primarily deliver direct-service work, and so the nature of high-conflict may be daunting. "But the best combination in Family Court involves tougher mental health professionals and more empathic attorneys."

Dr. John Simoneaux, who spoke in September at Lake Charles Family Law Section's Seminar co-sponsored by AFCC-LA, would like to see more psychologists take on Family Court work as well.

"For psychologists and other mental health professionals who work with children, AFCC and its quarterly journal, *Family Court Review*, is the best resource available," Dr. Simoneaux said. "Further, regularly held AFCC continuing education offerings (both at the national and state level) are uniquely helpful in the concrete application of our knowledge base and experience," he added.

"I recommend AFCC involvement to every legal and mental health professional [...] and try to push particularly my colleagues in psychology, to explore this invaluable resource," Dr. Simoneaux said.

In order to address one of the chief complaints about child custody evaluations, AFCC-LA hosted a webinar on September 13 on providing brief, sharply-focused and cost-effective CCE's. The speaker, Dr. Kate McNamara (Boulder, CO) is a psychologist who is encouraged her peers to experiment with new models as long as they still adhere to AFCC Standards on Child Custody Evaluations. (See [www.afccnet.org](http://www.afccnet.org)).

Hearing Officer Maggie Simar, 16th JDC, and AFCC-LA President-Elect for 2023, spear-headed that webinar and is now planning for the Chapter's annual conference, to be held March 18, 2021 in Baton Rouge.

Topics will include visitation resistance and refusal and the use and abuse of technology in Family Court cases—topics which all psychologists encounter, even if they don't take Family Court cases.



Simar, who reports a dearth of mental health professionals available in the Lafayette region, stated, "Mental health professionals are the backbone of Family Court. Not only do we rely on their professional assessments, but they often provide a bridge between acrimony and conclusion of a case. I am not trained in mental health methodology, so I rely on those who are to help heal and assess the trauma for my families."

Simar echoed Judge Oppenheim's concern about unmet needs: "Mental health assessments such as custody and psychological evaluations have become so expensive in my area that many in my rural parish are unable to pay for them. Therefore, there needs to be a concerted effort to figure out a way to assess these high conflict cases to the courts can rely on true professional opinions."

Simar would also like to see team meetings (mental health and legal professionals) handling juvenile cases. She added that she loves the networking AFCC provides at the national and state levels. "You have the lawyers and judges learning from MH professionals and you have the MH people learning what courts are looking for," Simar said. "It's a mutually beneficial endeavor!"

Lake Charles is another region desperately in need of Family Court services. Keri Forbess-McCorquodale, LPC, LMFT, owner of Solutions EAP, and a parenting coordinator for Lake Charles Family Court, stated, "We have been dealing not only with the pandemic, but also two devastating hurricanes, an extremely rare ice storm, and unprecedented flooding. The stress of all of these things combines has certainly challenged families," she said.

"We are seeing higher divorce rates, higher incidents of domestic violence, and child abuse, and more suicides. AFCC-LA can help bring compassion and information to all of us involved in Family Court through training and networking." When asked how many Lake Charles psychologists do Family Court work, she answered, "Maybe three?"

The AFCC-LA Annual Conference on March 18, 2022, will give psychologists another opportunity to explore Family Court work and talk with judicial officers as well as colleagues about its nature.

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*[Editor's Note: Leslie Todd served as the founding President of the Louisiana chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC). Her contributions were acknowledged by AFCC when they named her an "AFCC Ambassador," a designation for those who help develop the organization's contributions while exemplifying the collegial and collaborative spirit of AFCC membership. The Times is honored to have her join us as a correspondent.]*

## Act 433 Expands Those Who Provide Psychosocial Service

Sen. Patrick McMath's SB 127 was signed into Act 433.

According to the digest, prior law defined "psychosocial rehabilitation services" (PSR services) as psycho-educational services provided to individuals with mental illness in order to assist with skill-building, restoration, and rehabilitation, designed to assist the individual with compensating for or eliminating functional deficits and interpersonal or environmental barriers associated with mental illness. The new law retains prior law.

Prior law also provided that, in order to be eligible to receive Medicaid reimbursement, all behavioral health services providers shall ensure that any individual rendering PSR services for the provider

agency meets certain enumerated requirements including a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college in the field of counseling, social work, psychology, or sociology.

The new law retains prior law and expands the minimum eligible educational requirement to include a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college in the fields of counseling, social work, psychology, sociology, rehabilitation services, special education, early childhood education, secondary education, family and consumer sciences, or human growth and development with a minor in counseling, social work, sociology, or psychology.

## Sen. Jackson's SB 130 Helps Providers with Insurance Issuers

Act 434 requires if, during the time a health insurance issuer conducts a review or audit for purposes of reconsidering the validity of a claim filed with the issuer and a health care provider submits a request either orally or in writing to a health insurance issuer, the health insurance issuer shall provide a copy of all documentation transmitted between the health care provider and the health insurance issuer at no cost to the healthcare provider, within two business days of the request. Allows electronic access to the documentation.

Act 434 provides that any health insurance plan, except the La. Medicaid Program, that issued, amended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2022, shall not restrict the method of payment from the health insurance issuer or its vendor to the health care provider in which the only acceptable method for healthcare services rendered requires the health care provider to pay a transaction fee, provider subscription fee, or any other type of fee or cost in order to accept payment from the health insurance issuer.

The new law also requires a health insurance issuer initiating or changing payments to a healthcare provider using electronic funds transfer payments to notify a health care provider if any fees are associated with a particular payment method [...]

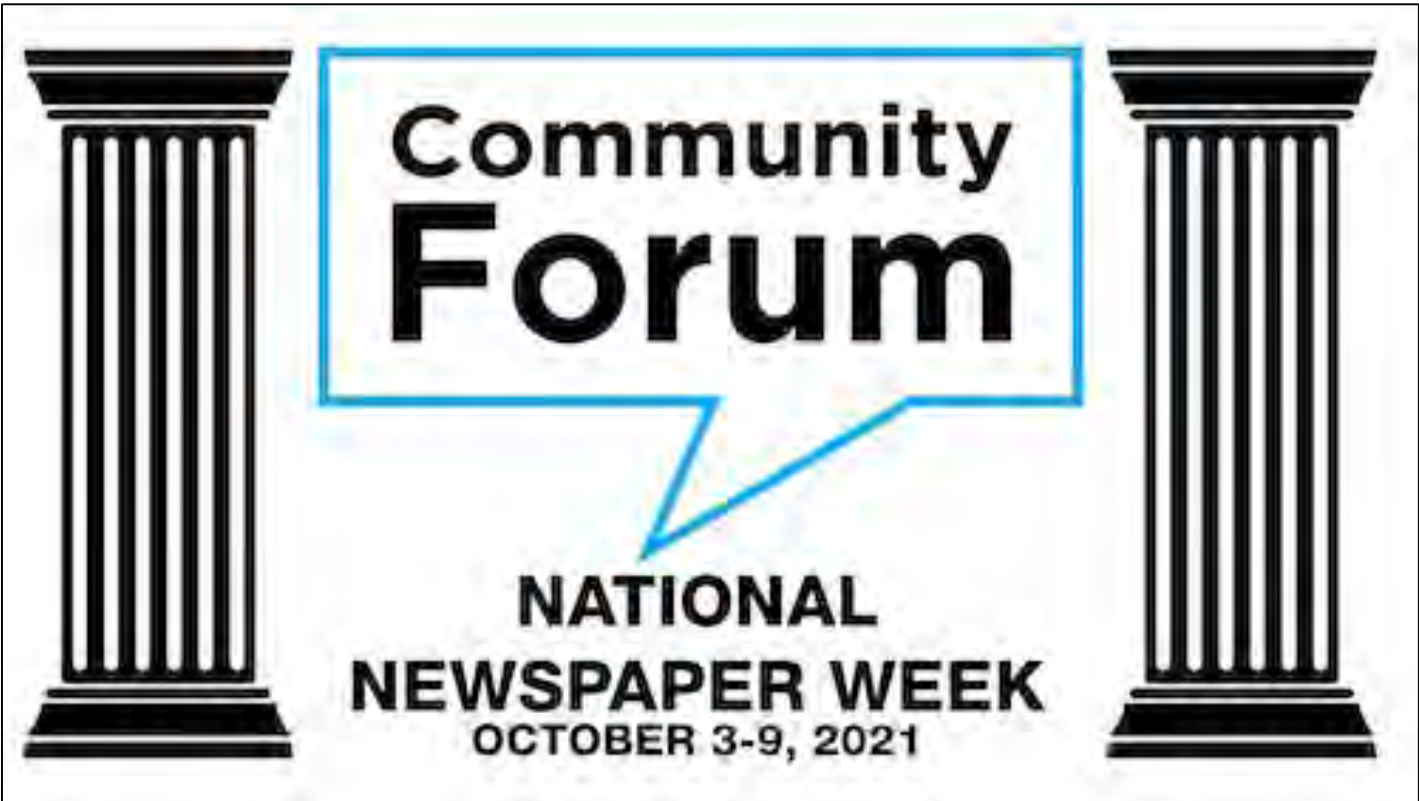
The new law provides that violations of new law are deemed unfair methods of competition and subject to provisions regarding unfair or deceptive acts or practices [...] cannot be waived by contract.

## Act 351 Establishes a "Foster Youth's Bill of Rights" to be Implemented by Dept of CFS

Senate Bill 151, authored by Sen. Regina Barrow was signed by the governor making it Act 351. The measure establishes a "Foster Youth's Bill of Rights" to be implemented by the Department of Children and Family Services. The Department is to support the rights of youth, ages fourteen through eighteen, who are in foster care in this state.

Act 351 includes 18 elements of rights including the following:

- (1) The right to privacy concerning the youth's personal and confidential information.
- (2) The right to attend all court hearings regarding the care to be received.
- (3) The right to be in a stable and supportive setting that is free from neglect and emotional, verbal, physical, and sexual abuse or exploitation, and that is the least restrictive to meet the youth's needs.
- (4) The right to participate in all case plan meetings, to include supportive adults of the youth's choice to be on the planning team, and to be provided a copy of the youth's case plan every six months or whenever changes are made to the plan.
- (5) The right to have the youth's medical and mental health needs met on a regular and timely basis.
- (6) The right to be provided adequate trauma-based counseling and therapeutic services throughout the youth's time in foster care.
- (7) The right to be provided the contact information of the youth's caseworker, attorney, and CASA volunteer, and to attend meetings with them on a regular basis.
- (8) The right to have access to a telephone to talk to or visit with approved friends and relatives, including siblings, at least once a month.
- (9) The right to access materials necessary for school and to further the youth's education, including access to a computer or other electronic devices and to the internet when needed to complete assignments, the right to receive tutoring services, and the right to a access information regarding college admissions.
- (10) The right to access information regarding testing accommodations for any learning or developmental disability or special health need.
- (11) The right to be involved in extracurricular activities, including school clubs, dances, field trips, and sports teams, and to be provided with supplies and uniforms required for team participation.
- (12) The right to remain in the youth's school of origin.
- (13) The right to attend a driver's education class.
- (14) The right to obtain employment and transportation to employment within the vicinity of foster care placement.
- (15) The right to refuse involvement in religious-based activities and the right to continue the youth's cultural, religious, and ethnic traditions and belief systems.
- (16) The right to be free from discrimination of any kind on the basis of the youth's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status. [...]







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# Psychology Department at U. of Louisiana Lafayette Celebrates 100 Year Anniversary, Continued

Dr. Brown noted the popularity of the psychology department. "We are the largest major in the College of Liberal Arts, with over 700 majors. In addition to the traditional psychology major, students can elect a psyc pre-med concentration. This is intended for students who want to attend medical school to become physicians, and who want to have a strong foundation in psychological science. Medical schools seem to be increasingly valuing the behavioral sciences in general and psychology in particular (given that doctors ultimately have to deal with human patients and are better at their jobs if they understand some psychology!). The concentration is new, and we graduated our first two psyc pre-med majors in May," she said.

"In addition to the undergraduate major," Dr. Brown said, "we offer a master of science degree in general psychology. The master's program is aimed to better prepare students for doctoral study in (any area of) psychology."

Dr. Emily Sandoz, the Emma Louise LeBlanc Burguières/BORSF Endowed Professor of Social Sciences, and Graduate Coordinator of the Psychology MS Program, agrees.

"So many young people in our community find themselves interested in understanding, predicting, and influencing behavior, regardless of their primary academic focus or ultimate career path," she said. "Our Psychology program teaches students to approach this interest from a scientific perspective, applying critical thinking, knowledge of existing research, and novel data collection to inform their decisions. This orientation is so universally useful that it prepares students to be effective in any number of roles on any number of paths," said Dr. Sandoz.

Dr. Brown also pointed out another fun bit in department history. "The Psychology Department has had a female department head for the past 51 years," she said.

These female department heads are: Dr. B. Geraldine Lambert (1970-1981); Dr. Aline Garrett (1981-2003); Dr. Theresa Wozencraft (2003-2007); Dr. Cheryl Lynch (2007-2019); and Dr. Amy Brown (2019-present).

Dr. Sandoz has experienced some enjoyable memories over the years with ULL.

Some of her most enjoyable moments include, "... from the student role to the professor role are definitely the research collaborations," she said. "In classes, students are taught to understand existing knowledge, but with research, students are empowered to create new knowledge for the world. Watching new researchers orient to this possibility, and bring their unique perspectives to bear on research questions, experimental design, and data analysis is phenomenally inspiring.

She has also enjoyed her role as graduate coordinator. "I am incredibly proud of our graduate program, which fills an important need. We prepare students with the research training, discernment, and experience to achieve in ways that are personally and professionally meaningful at the doctoral level and beyond."

Dr. Valanne MacGyvers, Asst. Professor and director of the Achievement and Social Cognition (TASC) Lab, believes in the importance of a strong research and education program for the psychology department at the university.

Her TASC Lab focuses on the psychological factors associated with the

Cont next pg



*Dr. Theresa Wozencraft here presents to a group of psychologists at a past conference. Dr. Wozencraft chaired the psychology department at Lafayette from 2003 to 2007.*

*Dr. Brown pointed out another fun bit in department history. "The Psychology Department has had a female department head for the past 51 years," she said.*

*These female department heads are: Dr. B. Geraldine Lambert (1970-1981); Dr. Aline Garrett (1981-2003); Dr. Theresa Wozencraft (2003-2007); Dr. Cheryl Lynch (2007-2019); and Dr. Amy Brown (2019-present).*



Science & Education

# Psychology Department at U. of Louisiana Lafayette Celebrates 100 Year Anniversary, Continued

achievement of excellence. In particular, she is most interested in academic excellence, in how self- and other-perceptions influence the achievement of excellence.

"In education," Dr. MacGyvers explained, "there is a construct that helps educators plan lessons that enhance student learning, and the more interactive the learning is, the better the students learn. At the lowest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, we are looking for knowledge, understanding and application. That is what we do in the classroom for the most part," she said.

"Adding in lab or research experience provides our students with a chance to reach the more advanced and interactive levels of learning, what Bloom referred to as analysis, synthesis and evaluation," said Dr. MacGyvers. "For example, yesterday, as my lab members were presenting their summaries of research articles, and I asked them for specific bits of information, they began to understand the research we were reviewing better and were able to begin to see how that research would help us as we designed the research project we were working on. It is in the doing of psychology that psychology comes to life for our students.

An interesting fact in overlap between Lafayette's psychology department and organized psychology in Louisiana is the emergence at Lafayette of the Louisiana Psychological Association in 1948.

The effort to create a state psychological association had started 16 years earlier when Drs. E. Terry Prothro from Lafayette, Dorothy Seago from Tulane, Kenneth Hait also from Lafayette, Paul C. Young, Louisiana State University, joined later by Drs. Bernard Bass, Ron Pryer, and Ed Timmons, and others, all who would assume the presidency for the Louisiana Psychological Association.

Dr. Brown said that UUL was known as Southwest Louisiana Institute (SLI) in 1948.

The *Times* asked Dr. MacGyvers what are her best experiences and memories are so far at ULL?

"I am not sure that this is a fair question to ask me, I have been here for going on 28 years!" she said.

"I love those moments when research turns out findings that make me understand people better. Like the moment I found out that people who do not support women breastfeeding their babies in public places are low in empathy. Essentially, our data revealed that those who criticize breastfeeding mothers are jerks! What a beautiful moment! We could empower moms to go ahead, because it is much easier to discount the jerks in the world.

"The other sort of great moments are when my students blossom into confident researchers and instructors. When they find their path and move boldly into their future. I love that. I know I am watching them walk away, but I also know that they are empowered to be fully themselves and that I had a role in that development," Dr. MacGyvers said.

"I guess that is really the crux of my best experiences, empowering others to be their best self."

Currently she is the President of the PBK Association of Southwest Louisiana and "proud mama to four furbabies." Dr. MacGyvers, along with a team of graduate students and undergraduate students, is engaged in a number of research projects, some large and some smaller, which will include mindset as a variable of interest.

Dr. Amy Brown is an Associate Professor and her research focuses on social psychological aspects of sexual victimization including victim blame, stigma, and prosocial bystander intervention. She is also interested in the role of alcohol in these processes.

Dr. Sandoz directs the Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, "using specific theoretical perspectives grounded in

behaviorism with an emphasis on Relational Frame Theory and the psychological flexibility model in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy."

She is an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science* and also for *Frontiers in Psychology*.



*Dr. Emily Sandoz presenting at a previous conference.*

*Dr. Sandoz directs the Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group, "using specific theoretical perspectives grounded in behaviorism with an emphasis on Relational Frame Theory and the psychological flexibility model in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy."*

*She is an Associate Editor for the Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science and also for Frontiers in Psychology.*

## People

# *Dr. Julie Larrieu Recipient of Janet Matthews, PhD, Outstanding Psychology Mentor Award*

## *Continued*

as well as Director of the Psychology Division at the School of Medicine has been honored as the Louisiana Psychological Association's 2021 recipient of the *Janet R. Matthews, PhD, Outstanding Psychology Mentor Award*.

"This award recognizes and honors Dr. Janet R. Matthews for her lifetime of mentoring work and the impact she had on psychologists in Louisiana," said program officials.

"Dr. Larrieu has supported and supervised dozens of psychology interns and postdocs, social workers, child psychiatry and other trainees. She has also trained and supported a wide range of professionals in our state and nation more broadly."

Those nominating Dr. Larrieu said, "We believe Dr. Larrieu represents all of the qualities of an outstanding mentor, and her work has significantly impacted the growth and development of psychologists and psychology in Louisiana and beyond."

Dr. Larrieu is senior psychologist and supervisor for a multidisciplinary team at Tulane that evaluates and treats infants and young children who have sustained abuse and neglect, and their families. The team provides evidence-based interventions to alleviate distress and repair relationships between parents and children referred by the Department of Children and Family Services.

Larrieu is also the site director for the Tulane component of the Early Trauma Treatment Network, a program within the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. This program, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, is disseminating Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) for children ages birth to six who have experienced interpersonal violence and sudden loss.

Those nominating Dr. Larrieu include Lisa Abbrecht, PsyD, Aaron Armelie PhD, Angie Breidenstine, PhD, Jill Boutte, MA, Angela Keyes, PhD, Amy Mikolajewski, PhD, Lisa Settles, PsyD, Alexandra Casalino, PsyD, Laura Marques, PhD, James McAbee, PhD, Devi Miron, PhD, Kristen Pearson, PhD, Monica Stevens, PhD, Valerie Wajda-Johnston, PhD, Anna Kelley, PsyD, Melissa Middleton, PhD, Sharde Pettis, MA, and Paula Zeanah, PhD.

Her colleagues said, "It is no exaggeration to say that the systematic approaches developed by the Infant Team created an understanding of the needs and experiences of young children in foster care that simply did not exist previously and significantly impacted the growth of infant and early childhood mental health in Louisiana, the US, and internationally. Infant Team has evolved to the Tulane Parenting Education Program (T-PEP), serving a wider age range of children involved in child protective services, and Dr. Larrieu continues her investment and involvement in teaching and supporting the staff and trainees as the senior psychologist.

"From 2006 to 2013, she served as the psychology internship's training director and led the successful re-approval of the program to full accreditation. In 2015, Dr. Larrieu was named Director of the Division of Psychology in the Department. In that role, she oversees and supports psychology faculty, interns, and postdocs. In addition, Dr. Larrieu serves as a consultant and advisor to numerous university, local, state, and national committees and organizations.

"Clearly evident on a daily basis, Dr. Larrieu absolutely loves teaching and mentoring," her colleagues said. "At LSUHSC and Tulane, Dr. Larrieu has supported and supervised dozens of psychology interns and postdocs, social workers, child psychiatry, and other trainees. She worked closely with Dr. Janet Matthews to create a clinical practicum for psychology students from Loyola University. Though we do not have exact numbers, we are aware that many of those students were accepted into doctoral psychology programs, at least in part inspired by and bolstered by their work with Dr. Larrieu and the Infant Team. Anecdotally, Dr. Matthews frequently commented



*Dr. Julie Larrieu*  
(Courtesy photo)

on how she highly valued the opportunities and expertise provided by Dr. Larrieu," they said.

"At Tulane, she created internship and postdoc opportunities specifically focused on infant mental health, drawing interested and well-qualified applicants from across the US. Many of these psychologists now hold leadership positions in the field, including faculty members, clinicians and researchers at Tulane, Vanderbilt, University of Denver, University of New Mexico, Gallaudet University, Indiana University School of Medicine, University of California at San Francisco, and Columbia University's Zuckerman Institute, among others."

The nominating psychologists also noted, "Because of her excellence in teaching, Dr. Larrieu has won several awards, including twice being selected Educator of the Year in Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Tulane.

"In addition to the teaching and supervision she has provided through Infant Team, T-PEP, and the psychology internship program, Dr. Larrieu has trained and supported a wide range of professionals in Louisiana, the US, and internationally. She co-created and co-teaches, along with Paula Zeanah, the Foundations of Infant Mental Health (FIMH) professional development course supported by the Louisiana Office of Public Health/Bureau of Family Health for more than 20 years. This six-day educational program targets professionals serving young children and families on the "front lines" of health and mental health care, including public health, home visiting, child protection, pediatric, mental health, and early intervention; ..."

Dr. Larrieu is a master trainer for Child-Parent Psychotherapy and has worked with professionals in Louisiana and around the world in learning this highly effective treatment approach, and is a popular invited speaker nationally and internationally.

**Cont next pg**



# Dr. Julie Larrieu Recipient of Janet Matthews, PhD, Outstanding Psychology Mentor Award Continued

"As Director of Psychology, Dr. Larrieu is highly regarded and well-loved. Her perspectives and contributions are valued and respected by psychology and psychiatry faculty, trainees, administrators, and staff.

The nominating group explained that Dr. Larrieu's colleagues say she is "—*'compassionate, dedicated, enthusiastic, genuine, engaging, warm, an incredibly talented psychologist and mentor, a constant advocate for us all, unfailing, masterful, unconditionally supportive, ever present, always available, reassuring, supportive, encouraging, generous, committed, resourceful, wise, flexible, dependable, inspiring, brilliant, a true role model, a great colleague and friend, she influenced me profoundly as a clinician and I use many of the skills she has taught me*

*on a daily basis in my work, I always know I can call her or reach out to her for advice or if I need her.'*"

"All who signed this letter have worked closely with Dr. Larrieu, and we recognize we are just a few of those who have positively benefitted from her teaching, mentoring, support, and leadership."

The *Times* asked Dr. Larrieu how she felt about this award. "It is a great honor to be selected as the recipient of the 2021 Janet R. Matthews, Ph.D., Outstanding Psychology Mentor Award," Larrieu said.

"Dr. Matthews was an exceptional mentor, educator, and psychologist. I learned a tremendous amount from her, as have so many of us who also were able to interface with her at Loyola, through LPA and APA

conferences and activities, and innumerable other professional initiatives.

"I am deeply honored to be associated with her through this award because I wish to impact and inspire students, trainees, and colleagues as she did so effectively throughout her stellar career. I want to thank LPA and the Awards Committee for this recognition, as it is my hope to carry Dr. Matthews' legacy forward in a way that would make her proud.

Dr. Lee Matthews, husband and lifelong partner to Dr. Janet Matthews until her death, said," I can not think of anyone more deserving than Dr. Larrieu."

## UL Lafayette Psychology Department Hosts Research Showcase for Centennial

The University of Louisiana Lafayette Psychology Department is hosting a research showcase on October 6, 2021 from 9 am to 4 pm.

Dr. Emily Sandoz of the Louisiana Contextual Science Research Group Will present the "Welcome and Research Lab Overview."

The welcome is followed by a Symposium on College Student Well-Being with presentations as follows:

1. The Associations of Self-harm and Suicidality with Mental Health Symptoms in College Students, presented by Hung Chu Lin, Manyu Li, Courtney Stevens, Stephanie Pinder-Amaker, Justin A. Chen, & Cindy H. Liu; Developmental Science Lab;
2. Music And Math: The Effects of Key and Tempo on Mathematics Anxiety, by Mateo Chavez, David R. (Rick) Perkins, Valanne MacGyvers; Music Lab;
3. Mindset and the College Experience by Valanne MacGyvers and Audra Jensen; The Achievement and Social Cognition (TASC) Lab;
4. Bystander Intervention Against Sexual Violence: The Role of Bystander Drinking Behavior by Amy L. Brown and Dylan John; Sexual Violence Research Lab.

A Second Symposium on Social and Community Concerns.

Symposium 3 is Psychological, Cognitive, and Physical Well-Being.

Several panel discussions are also planned.

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# Invisible Changes in the "Complaints Committee" of the State Board and the Rising Price Tag

by J. Nelson

The state psychology board surprised the community when they put forth legislation in 2020 and again in 2021. The board cast the measures as “housekeeping,” but the sweeping changes they wanted were anything but. The 23-page bill detailed an ambitious set of changes to the Psychology Practice Act, including a financially significant change for many practitioners—to register their assistants, creating new red tape and fees.

The motivation? The board needs more money for it's expensive "Complaints Committee."

Over the last two decades the structure, personnel, and tone of the board's complaints subcommittee has changed dramatically, evolving from a small, basically volunteer group of senior psychologists, often hand-picked for their subspecialty knowledge to investigate a complaint, to a committee of criminal law enforcement professionals.

In this report we review these changes, the meaningless impact these changes have had on public safety, and the increasing costs, both financial and emotional, to psychologists.

## Invisible Changes in the LSBEP Complaints Committee

The Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (LSBEP) conducts two main duties as a board—approving new licensees and administering discipline. New licenses are handled by the volunteer board members and a salaried Executive Director.

The discipline leg of the LSBEP investigates and prosecutes misdemeanors, violations of the law as outlined in the Psychology Practice Act. The aim is to protect the public from harm by ensuring that licensees conform to ethical and professional guidelines. While the rare formal hearings involve the full board, the investigations of possible violations are investigated by the "Complaints Committee." The "results" are presented at some point to the board along with a recommendation.

Investigations lead to three outcomes: 1) a decision that there is "no violation" or not enough evidence, 2) a "clear violation with minor offense," or 3) "a clear violation with significant offense." These categories are determined by the policies and the subjective judgments of those making preliminary decisions.

In 2000, the Complaints Committee was composed of the LSBEP Chair and volunteer psychologists—all previously chairs or members of the board, and also volunteer psychologists with special knowledge. These volunteers were recruited from the available subject matter experts in the at-large psychology community by specialty or subspecialty, according to sources.

The policy at that time noted, “Complaints received shall be rotated between former LSBEP members appointed as investigators." These experienced psychologists were appointed by the board and could call upon other psychologists if needed.

The attorneys serving as general counsel for the board were also included, but only as consultants. “... an attorney for the Board may be consulted by the Complaints Coordinator or an LSBEP Investigator.”

The tone was communicated in a newsletter in 2000: "The philosophy of the Committee on Complaints is to take into consideration the aspirational and technical aspects (i.e. the spirit and the letter) of the rules and regulations when reviewing a complaint." And, "Investigators are appointed as a means of enhancing due process for the psychologist against whom a complaint has been filed."

Sometime around 2005, the position of Complaints Coordinator was created. Dr. Gary Pettigrew, an experienced psychologist and former board chair, held the position until he retired at the end of 2015. His service was mostly a volunteer role, since he typically submitted invoices of only \$150 to \$250 monthly.

According to several sources, beginning around 2012 or 2013, the LSBEP began to embrace a more aggressive, adversarial style for dealing with complaints. By 2015, both the structure and personnel of the committee had changed from a psychologist-dominated committee to a group of law enforcement professionals.

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS			
Home	Boards and Commissions	Upcoming Meetings	Other Resources
Feedback	Log		
Board	Contacts	Members	Reimbursements
Employees	Notices	Minutes	Citations
Rules			
Budgets			
State Board of Examiners of Psychologists			
Summary Statement of Actual and Budgeted Expenditures/Expenses For Years Shown			
Category of Expenditure/Expense	Prior Year (2020) Actual	Current Year (2021) Budgeted*	Projected Year (2022) Budgeted
Salaries:			
Salaries - Employees	\$92,430	\$117,131	\$149,295
Salaries - Board Members	\$3,550	\$5,400	\$6,750
Other Salaries - Part-time/Hourly Employees	\$4,945	\$5,172	\$3,000
Related Benefits	\$23,702	\$112,376	\$93,515
TOTAL SALARIES	\$124,627	\$240,079	\$252,560
Operating Expenses:			
Travel - Employees	\$1,262	\$550	\$2,400
Travel - Board Members	\$8,637	\$1,331	\$14,089
Operating Services	\$51,987	\$52,301	\$57,482
Supplies	\$4,216	\$3,300	\$4,140
Per Diems - Board Members	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$66,102	\$57,482	\$78,111
Professional Services:			
Accounting	\$6,034	\$7,700	\$7,700
Management Consulting	\$3,729	\$8,495	\$6,545
Legal	\$58,587	\$78,126	\$20,000
Other	\$16,305	\$25,636	\$22,635
Professional Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$84,655	\$119,957	\$56,880
Other Charges:			
Other Charges	\$0	\$0	\$0
Debt Service	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL OTHER CHARGES	\$0	\$0	\$0
Acquisitions and Major Repairs:			
Acquisitions	\$0	\$3,020	\$0
Major Repairs	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL ACQUISITIONS & MAJOR REPAIRS	\$0	\$3,020	\$0
Interagency Transfer			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$275,384	\$420,538	\$387,551

In 2014, for the first time, a Prosecuting Attorney was hired for the Committee. Also, a Private Investigator had been hired. The then new Executive Director, Ms. Kelly Parker, who had previously worked as a Fraud Analyst/Investigator in the Criminal Division of the Maryland Attorney General, took a significant role in the complaints process. This was also a first.

In 2015, the *Times* had requested internal policies and procedures from the LSBEP but was told they did not exist. Eventually, in 2017, ten sets of policies were produced by Ms. Jaime Monic, the then new Executive Director. There were gaps and inconsistencies in these documents.

Nevertheless, the 2017 policies outlined the new personnel of the complaints subcommittee. These were 1) the Complaints Coordinator, and now 2) a Board Investigator; 3) a Board Prosecutor, and a role for 4) the Executive Director.

The Complaints Coordinator was the only psychologist. The requirement for board experience or a certain number of years of experience had been dropped. After Dr. Pettigrew retired, the next two complaint coordinators had no board experience.

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# Invisible Changes in the "Complaints Committee" of the State Board and the Rising Price Tag, continued

In the new structure, the Investigator was not a psychologist, but a Licensed Private Investigator.

The “Board Prosecutor” was an attorney and now a regular member of the complaints committee.

The 2017 policies also identify the Executive Director as a committee member and a participant in face-to-face meetings with individuals involved in the disciplinary process. She now was both to "oversee" operations and "may participate in face-to-face meetings with Complainant, Respondent or witnesses as deemed necessary;..."

In the new structure, there was no firewall between a frivolous complaint and the investigation. By 2017 the term "Complaint" had been replaced with "Request for Investigation."

Several sources in the community have reported an adversarial tone in the subcommittee over the last years. “You’re guilty until proven innocence,” one source said.

"They told me one thing and did another."

Another reported that after being exonerated from the original complaint, the investigators then asked to review unrelated files, to which he felt he had to comply.

Another stated that the case against him was “...built on lies...”

It was noted in an email exchange by the board’s general council, that a defense attorney used the term “repugnant” to describe his feelings about the process.

The experience was described as traumatic. “My heart was pounding at every meeting.” “You feel isolated and helpless.” “It has been devastating.”

According to records, fees at the LSBEP began to escalate in 2015, after the prosecuting attorney, private investigator, and executive director became the core group in the complaints committee. This was also the time Dr. Pettigrew retired.

Over 2015 and 2016, and into January 2017, the Prosecuting Attorney prosecuted 16 cases. Three of these 16 cases amounted to \$146,987. One of these appears to be the case involving Dr. Alicia Pelligrin, the case against her stemming from high-conflict custody situation. Pelligrin demanded a public hearing and the case was dismissed. The board's legal fees came to \$45,269.50.

Some reforms have been attempted during the last few years. In late 2017, the policies allowed, "The Board may contract with individuals, who are licensed psychologists, as needed, and within its budgetary

allowance in order to fulfill its fiduciary duties in the review and investigation of complaints."

After community discussions, the 2018 policies declared that "one or more board members" could now be involved.

However, an expansion of the complaints committee continued. By June 2020, the policy included a new staff position, a Compliance Officer (Investigating Officer). This position would be supervised by the Complaints Coordinator or Executive Director.

The board approved the new staff position, in September 2019, after "Ms. Monic discussed the continuing and vital need for staff development." No additional details about this need were given in the minutes.

Ms. Monic said that there was a need for increased staff she also said "...the current fund balance of the board would support a salary for this FY, but that the board would have to engage in revenue development in order to support an additional salary for subsequent fiscal years."

In October 2019, "Dr. Amy Henke moved in favor of approving amendments to the budget to accommodate the Compliance Officer position previously approved."

The Board also reviewed the budget for the impending Fiscal Year 2020-21, and by motion of Dr. Gregory Gormanous, adopted a resolution to create new fees to pay for the Compliance Officer they had already approved.

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LSBEP will engage in rulemaking to address the requirement for registration of assistants to psychologists in order to protect consumers of psychological activities which are performed by 'unlicensed assistants' (e.g., need for authorizing criminal background checks) and the preapproval of continuing professional development activities which will impact the budget, therefore requiring continued financial analysis of the projected 2020-21 Budget for future amendments."

It was Dr. Gormanous who had first presented the idea of regulating unlicensed assistants, in June 2019. According to the minutes, Dr. Amy Henke was opposed to considering a requirement to register assistants, stating that she did not see a need.

According to the policy manual, the Compliance Officer may be a full-time or part-time, may conduct investigations and/or inspections outside of the main office, conduct investigations into

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Legal costs (in green) rose sharply in 2016 and 2017 at the state psychology board after dramatic changes in the personnel in the complaints subcommittee.

Legal and professional costs are rising again and will include the new salaried position of compliance officer (yellow is salary without benefits.).



# Invisible Changes in the "Complaints Committee" of the State Board and the Rising Price Tag, continued

alleged or suspected misconduct by licensed members, applicants for licensure and/or others who may be suspected of violating state and federal ethical and agency laws, rules, and policies, may conduct surveillance and unannounced on-site monitoring/ compliance visits, among other duties.

The new position would increase total salaries and benefits from the 2019 cost of \$85,727 to a projected \$252,560 for 2022, according to Boards & Commissions budget tracking.

### The Rising Cost of the Complaints Committee

Based on the financial tracking data, the LSBEP stayed within budget for most years prior to 2015 and carried a reserve, called a fund balance, of \$100,000 or more.

In FY 2009 the LSBEP paid \$34,564 for "professional services." In 2010 they paid \$39,700 and in 2011 the total was \$28,273. The total for professional services jumped up to \$44,643 in 2012 and the following year, 2013, the amount was \$47,350.

In 2014 the records began to separate professional services into four categories: accounting, management consulting, legal services and other. It appears that the "other" category may include additional complaints coordinators, the private investigator, and/or the contract compliance officer before he became salaried.

Legal costs have increased over time. The board paid \$37,882 for legal services in 2014 and increased to \$56,002 in 2015.

In 2016 legal services rose to \$104,894, and by 2017, legal services had shot to \$149,774, and the fund balance reached a fund balance deficit of \$352,395.

For 2018 the legal services dropped to \$40,826 and in 2019 legal services were \$61,182.

Legal services for 2020 were \$58,587 and projected for 2021 to be \$78,126.

In 2020 a salaried Compliance Officer was added. The Executive Director was at \$62,400, and the Compliance Investigator at \$46,200, without the related benefits.

Total salaries and benefits will increase from the 2019 amount of \$85,727 to a projected \$252,560 for 2022, according to Boards & Commissions budget tracking.

What do the defendants spend? According to several sources, the fees to defend against the board can vary from almost zero to \$50,000 or more. Insurance may pay for much of the attorney fees but the defendant may also have to pay prosecuting costs if they agreed to a consent order, or lose at a formal hearing.

Estimating 20 investigations per year at an average of \$10,000 each, would suggest a \$200,000 cost to psychologists per year.

### No Change in Rate of Discipline Actions

Considering the depth and breadth of law enforcement personnel assigned to the complaints subcommittee, an observer might think that there is a serious problem with psychologists' services.

However, based on LSBEP's statistics the number of annual disciplinary actions averages between one and three actions per year. See graph.

For the year 2020–2021 there were two disciplinary actions, for 2019–2020 there was one disciplinary action, for 2018–2019 there were two, for 2017–2018 there were also two, for 2016–2017 there were three, in 2015–2016 there was one, and in 2014–2015 there was also one.

Using a conservative estimate of 10 clients per psychologist per year, this translates to a safety problem of one or two per 10,000 service events.

The number of Request for Investigation, while varying per year, has remained a consistent trend across the last 12 years.

The *ASPPB Disciplinary Data System: Historical Discipline Report* show rates of disciplinary actions for psychologists to be consistently low. For an estimated 125,000 psychologists in the US and Canada, the disciplinary rates remain around 1–2 per 1,000.

For 2016–2020, the total reported disciplinary actions across the U.S. and Canada ranged from 139 to 186. Louisiana's rate is similar to the national average.

In research over a sample of a five-years, 75 percent of discipline actions were related in some way to forensic child custody evaluations. The remainder were sexual/dual relationships, supervision, and impaired

psychologist issues. More recently there is one discipline action related to advertising and one related to termination of therapy.

Using data of the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, which estimates the product-related injuries for various industries, psychologists compare very favorably regarding public safety. Furthermore, to compare to hospital care, where 98,000 patients die annually due to medical errors, psychologist services presents a very safe alternative to inpatient care.

### Conclusions

The psychology board is growing its misdemeanor law-enforcement capability leading to more expense without any proof of additional benefits for the public.

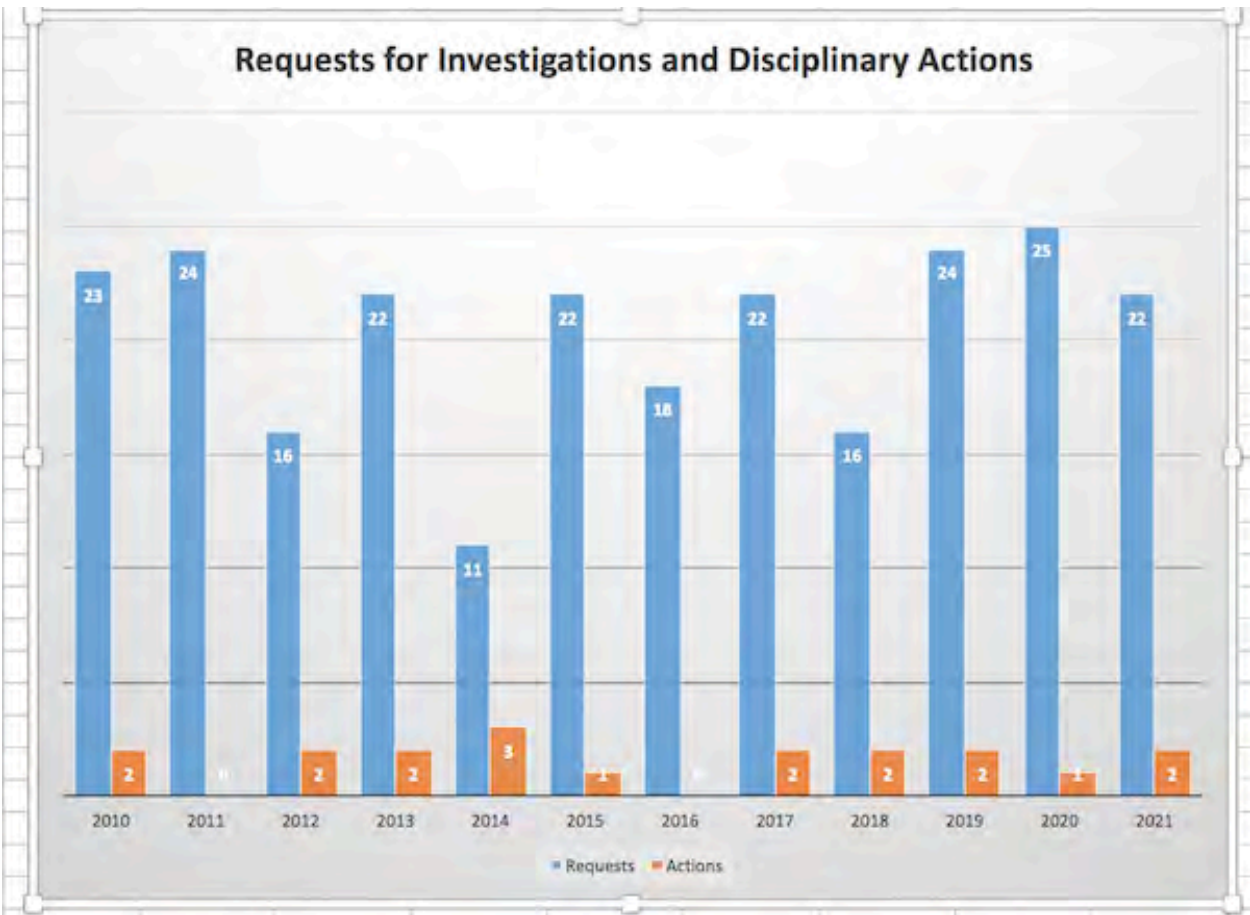
In an interview with an MBA, he said, "Alignments and incentives are all wrong in the subcommittee. High costs and inefficiencies would be expected."

There are serious financial conflicts of interests in the present organizational structures at the board. The subcommittee has achieved too much autonomy and secrecy, there is poorly defined oversight of the process, and decision-making is likely contaminated.

Additionally, there is evidence of due process violations. The impact on psychologists that get caught up in this high-powered law-enforcement group is negative and unlikely to be doing any good in actually protecting the public.

In June last year the board voted to set up a program to purchase monogrammed shirts for its investigators.

Rather than spend its time and money on bolstering the group identity of its criminal law enforcement professionals with monogrammed shirts, the board would do well to address its underlying organizational problems using modern psychological science.





# A Shrink at the Flicks

## CODA A Review

by Alvin G. Burstein, PhD

This 2021 movie is a re-make of the 1914 French film, *La Famille Belier*. Written and directed by Sian Heder, it is available in theatres and on Apple TV+, a streaming service that offers a free one-week trial of its \$4.95/month service—of which I took advantage.

Two things stand out about the film. An unabashed feel-good film, it achieves its goal without a trace of mawkishness. More, it is deeply moving.

Its title, *CODA*, has a double meaning. It is both an acronym for children of deaf adults and it is a term signifying the end of a musical passage. A clever choice because its protagonist, Ruby, is a hearing child in an otherwise culturally deaf family and because the film is a classic *bildungsroman*, a coming of age tale in which Ruby moves toward a career in song. Intense tension inheres in that goal's competition with her loyalties and life in the culturally deaf family of her origin.

This plot is brought into high relief by a brilliant cast of characters. There is Ruby Rossi herself (played by Emelia Jones) winding up a high school career marked by feelings of rejection by her peers. There is her father, Frank (Troy Kotsur), a rambunctious third generation fishing boat operator, her mother, Jackie (Marlee Matlin), a former high-school beauty queen, and her older brother, Leo (Daniel Durant), who is chafed by his sense that he is unable to



have enough of a role in shaping the family. All the Rossi's, save Ruby, are culturally deaf, as, parenthetically, are the actors portraying them.

Then there is Bernado Villalobos, (Eugenio Derbez) the high-school choir director charged with producing the annual school concert. He recognizes Ruby's nascent singing talent and urges her to seek a scholarship at the Berklee College of Music. He also pairs her with Miles, a fellow senior (Ferdia Walsh-Peelo), to perform a duet at the concert, with whom Ruby becomes romantically involved.

The film opens with Ruby, her brother and father, working on the family commercial fishing boat. They bring the catch ashore and, like others in the fleet, are unfairly treated by the middle-men buying their catches. Not only is Ruby a vital member of the Rossi fishing crew, she also becomes an ambassador, literally voicing her family's views in attempts by the local fishermen fighting to rectify the exploitative injustice with which they are beset. Both issues play out in tandem with Ruby's burgeoning interest in a musical career and the time and effort demanded by her musical mentor, Villalobos. Ruby becomes increasingly torn by the competing demands of family needs and loyalties on the one hand and personal aspirations on the other.

Two remarkable scenes remain in my mind. One is that of Ruby's parents at the concert, unable to hear her sing and to appreciate her artistry, must take cues about how to react from the behavior of the hearing audience. The second scene is one in which Ruby's father asks her to sing her solo for him and uses his hand to her throat literally seeking the feel of her music.

The film is a feel-good effort. But it will leave you with a lump in your throat, and maybe tears in your eyes.

Guest Columnist,  
Dr. Alvin Burstein

Burstein, a psychologist and psychoanalyst, is a professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee and a faculty member of the New Orleans-Birmingham Psychoanalytic Center with numerous scholarly works to his credit. He is also a member of Inklings, a Mandeville critique group that meets weekly to review its members' imaginative writings. Burstein has published flash fiction and autobiographical pieces in e-zines;



courtesy photo

*The Owl*, his first novelette, is available at Amazon. He is, in addition to being a movie fan, a committed Francophile, unsurprisingly a lover of fine cheese and wine, and an unrepentant cruciverbalist.



# Birds, Humans & the Covid-19 Pandemic

by Samantha Dooley

With the autumn equinox behind us, thoughts turn to fall. A cozy fire, leaves changing color, and birds migrating south for the winter are classic symbols of the changing of the seasons. But with the Covid-19 pandemic still going strong, will those birds fly south the same way, or at all?

What effect does the pandemic have on migratory birds?

For some birds the lack of human activity has caused a surge in breeding. According to an article from *Audubon*, "the Kentish Plover, a small shorebird that breeds on the beaches of Venice's Treporti peninsula, is typically very sensitive to the presence of people. In 2020, however, this shy species spread its nesting sites along the unusually quiet shorelines, laying eggs in spots where they had not been recorded in recent years."

With less human activity, some birds have become more common in areas previously dominated by humans. With most city residents homebound, the noise and traffic levels have decreased greatly, helping the cities become more welcoming to birds.

According to a report by *CBN news*, "Warblers, hummingbirds, hawks and other migratory birds across Canada and the U.S. hung out in cities during the pandemic lockdowns in the spring of 2020, treating urban-dwelling humans to far more visits than usual, ..."

The lack of human interference opened up many new habitats for the birds, which, in theory, can be expected to increase population size.

Not all birds have been lucky during Covid-19, because volunteers who mark nesting sights, such as those protecting the Snowy Plover, were forced to stay home. With many of the volunteers and staff who monitor the nesting sites unavailable, and more people going outside, trespassing on nests become more common during Covid. This affects not only the Snowy Plover, but other birds who nest on the dunes. An article by the Audubon society, "With Monitoring Limited, Someone Drove Through a Snowy Plover Nesting Site," recounts the unfortunate scenario.

Even without Covid, migration is a challenging time for birds. They must travel long distances, deal with predation, and lack of food or water. Dropping temperatures also take a toll. There are also modern obstacles,



such as communication towers and tall buildings. Authors at All about bird.org, part of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, explain "Many species are attracted to the lights of tall buildings and millions are killed each year in collisions with the structures."

And with fall starting, the effect of the pandemic on this year's migration will soon become clear. Everyone can help. According to Abcbirds.org, some of the best ways to help birds in their migration include: reducing plastic use, buying bird friendly coffee, and adding birdbaths or feeders to help birds re-fuel. And, keep those cats under control, the experts remind pet owners.



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