

Marshall, Quilpa write top essays in graduate student competitions

Kellyn Marshall of Walden University and Christine Marie Quilpa of the University of Virginia were judged to have submitted the grand-prize-winning essays in respective 2015 ACA Foundation Graduate Student Essay competitions.

ACA student members competed for prizes in two essay competitions, the Future School Counselors Essay Competition (sponsored by the Roland and Dorothy Ross Trust) and the Graduate Student Essay Competition (sponsored by Gerald and Marianne Corey and Allen and Mary Bradford Ivey).

As the grand prize winners, Marshall and Quilpa each received a \$1,000 grant, free registration to the ACA 2015 Conference & Expo, a \$250 ACAeGift certificate and publication of their essays in *Counseling Today*. Formal recognition of the winning essayists took place at the ACA Conference & Expo in Orlando, Florida, in March.

Gerald and Marianne Corey and Allen and Mary Bradford Ivey Graduate Student Essay Competition

Grand prize winner

Kellyn Marshall, Walden University

Runners-up

- Lisa Factor, Lenoir-Rhyne University
- Vanessa Matossian, Grand Canyon University
- Darryl J. Schafer, Missouri State University
- Whitney White, Walden University
- Christopher Woodside, Monmouth University

Honorable mention

- Karen Elizabeth Cohen, National Louis University
- Prairie Conlon, Liberty University
- Emily Donald, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- Kelly Helton, Carson-Newman University
- Tavonda Hudson, Mercer University
- Travis R. Moore, Southern Methodist University
- Rebecca Pence, University of Texas at Austin
- Jennifer Schermerhorn, Lenoir-Rhyne University
- Stacy Solsaa, University of South Dakota
- Rebecca Vazquez, Regent University

Roland and Dorothy Ross Trust Graduate Student Essay Competition for Future School Counselors

Grand prize winner

- Christine Marie Quilpa, University of Virginia

Runners-up

- Shea Daniels, Ohio University-Chillicothe
- Natalie Simone Diggs, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
- Kara Hiltz, The College at Brockport, State University of New York
- Aaron Mandel, New Jersey City University
- Matthew Nice, Marywood University

Kellyn Marshall Walden University

Question: ACA recently approved a significant revision to its Code of Ethics. State your belief as to the fundamental purpose of ethical standards in the counseling profession and how they can be more effectively communicated to the membership and the profession.

“Action ... is the sole medium of expression for ethics.” — Jane Addams

Ethical standards inspire excellence within the counseling profession. The *ACA Code of Ethics* sets standards for appropriate professional conduct and guides counselors to act with integrity, respect, and compassion. This Code instructs counselors to perform their duties in alignment with the client's best interests, and to consider the client's wellbeing as the top priority of the counseling relationship. By adopting the ideals of the profession, counselors create constructive environments for healing, expression, and transformation. Ethical standards also define behaviors and expectations for counselors as members of an organized profession. Counselors committed to ethical practice agree to continue their education and skill development, to contribute to the profession as researchers and advisors, and to seek support and guidance when necessary. When counselors uphold professional values, they represent themselves as trustworthy and skillful advocates, teachers, consultants, and colleagues. The *ACA Code of Ethics* helps counselors act in ways that reflect positively on themselves, the art and science of counseling, and the counseling community.

In the 21st century, technology is a key method for communicating ethical standards to ACA members and others within the profession. More and more, counselors are moving to online marketing and scheduling platforms; an inexpensive, easy-to-use web-based scheduling tool would be enthusiastically welcomed by counselors, agencies, and clients. This online scheduling platform would feature ethical content, such as a “tip of the week,” key-point summaries; and links to case studies, interactive quizzes, and other informational resources. Different content will appear on counselors’ and clients’ screens when they interact with the system, such as upon logging in and with system-generated appointment reminders that are texted or emailed to clients. Counselors, who are often pressed for time, will appreciate brief summaries and key points as reminders of current best ethical practices. Counselors who are new to the profession will benefit from case studies and quizzes that clarify and interpret topics and language in the ACA Code. Consumer-directed content will educate clients about the ethics of the counseling profession and encourage open discussion on ethical topics between clients and their counselors. ACA members, including students, can participate further by writing and researching ethics content. Providing information in a convenient and timely electronic format will increase interest, generate conversation, and promote deeper understanding of ethical principles and the latest revisions to the *ACA Code of Ethics*.

Christine Marie Quilpa
University of Virginia

Question: ACA recently approved a significant revision to its Code of Ethics. State your belief as to the fundamental purpose of ethical standards in the counseling profession and how they can be more effectively communicated to the membership and the profession.

While counseling provides many support services to people and communities in need, it can also involve many risks. We counselors and counselors-in-training strive to provide hope, comfort, guidance, and direction to clients who have faced any difficulties in their lives, and when clients let their guards down and open up to us about very serious, personal issues, it is important that we treat all of them fairly and equally, not cause harm, promote their welfare, remain trustworthy, and maintain confidentiality. Therefore, I personally believe that the fundamental purpose of ethical standards in the counseling profession is to provide a framework to build a strong, transparent community of trust and accountability.

Trust can take time, especially if we are working with clients who have experienced injustice, pain, suffering, and other issues that have affected their ability to become open to and confident in others. If we apply ethical standards, especially confidentiality and privacy, and take the time to listen to them and to understand their individual needs, we can better gain their trust and become more caring and more competent professionals. As an aspiring school counselor, I think

that gaining the trust of children and their adult guardians is essential for maintaining an effective professional relationship. Without that foundation of trust and reliability, there is loss of respect for the counseling profession.

Accountability is also important to ensure that we keep ourselves responsible for our actions and do what is best to serve our clients. As a future school counselor, I believe that collecting and analyzing student data, especially through surveys and tests, is important in maintaining accountability because data can help us see, in a fairly straightforward manner, what problems there are in areas such as academic performance and school climate. Without accountability to back up our actions, we can lose clients’ sense of trust in us.

Promoting trust and accountability could be greatly enhanced if we continue to rely on technology in order to communicate to fellow ACA members and other counseling professionals. As our society is becoming more technologically advanced, it is important that ACA continues to rely on technology and social media. This can be achieved especially by using the ACA website, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Youtube, and other social media platforms to show groundbreaking research in counseling that can help future and current professionals, and to show recognition to professionals who have maintained those ethical standards with the highest sense of professionalism. In doing so, we can provide information to future and current counselors in creative, innovative ways, as well as provide ourselves with role models we can aspire to become. ♦

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