



# The Graduate Column

MARCH 2011

## Welcome to the Spring 2011 issue of TCNJ'S Graduate Column Newsletter!

*In this issue, we are pleased to share: an alumni spotlight on the Principal of West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South; an overview of changes to the GRE; information regarding the upcoming registration period; interviews with several outstanding graduate students; thoughts on how to be a happy graduate student; a reminder on how to check your academic progress; and important upcoming calendar dates and reminders for students!*

*On behalf of the Office of Graduate Studies, best wishes for an enjoyable spring. We look forward to seeing you on campus!*

**Susan Hydro, Assistant Dean –Office of Graduate Studies**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

GRE Changes	1
Psychology of Happiness	4
Alumni Spotlight	6
Meet Your Fellow Graduate Students	7
Did You Know?	11
Check Your Academic Progress	12
Mark Your Calendar!	13

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## The GRE is CHANGING:

### What to expect for the newly revised test in 2011...

On August 1<sup>st</sup> 2011, the GRE will change...dramatically. If you are thinking of applying to graduate school, the GRE might be in your future. If you are applying for matriculation to a graduate program at TCNJ, please be sure to check our GRE waiver criteria. In anticipation of the new test revisions, we wanted to give you a heads up about what is coming, help you determine what test you should (or can) take, and give you an idea of the general timeline for the future.

#### **So What is Changing?**

Literally every aspect of the test will be overhauled in some way. The type of test, the timing, the types of questions, the scoring scale noted and how often you can test will be changed. Here is a list of the 6 biggest changes to the GRE as noted at [www.ets.org/gre/testtakernews](http://www.ets.org/gre/testtakernews).

#### **Change #1: CAT MST**

The current GRE is a CAT, or computer-adaptive test, meaning the test adapts to your performance at the individual question level. However, the revised GRE is an MST, or multi-stage test. You will still take it on a computer, but it adapts to your performance only after you've answered a section of Quantitative or Verbal questions. Answer the majority of questions in a section correctly, and the next section will be harder—but your score band will probably be higher. Get most of the questions wrong and you'll move on to an easier section ... but you'll have a harder time scoring as high.

“The flexibility is a definite plus—imagine being able to go back in time and change your answer.”

### *What does this mean for you?*

Just like there are certain best practices to follow when taking a computer-adaptive test (knowing when to guess, focusing on the first few questions ...), there will be new best practices to follow when taking a multi-stage test. If you're taking the new test, taking lots of practice MSTs before Test Day is critical so you're comfortable with the new format.

### Change #2: **A Test-Taker Friendly Design**

The test is designed to offer a more flexible test-taking experience- giving you the freedom to use more of your own personal test taking strategies. Some of the new features include:

New preview and review capabilities within a section

Edit or change your answers within a section

“Mark and review” feature to tag questions so you can skip and return later within a timed section

Use an on-screen calculator for help with the Quantitative reasoning section\*

\*For those taking the paper-based GRE revised General Test, calculators will be provided at the test center during the test.

### *What does this mean for you?*

The flexibility is a definite plus—imagine being able to go back in time and change your answer. But it can introduce new challenges: a lot more second-guessing, pacing issues, and a bigger risk of leaving questions unanswered, which is heavily penalized in the GRE.

And while a calculator may come in handy, GRE success is about more than numbers—it can't replace prep that teaches the content and strategies that will ensure your success on the math sections. The addition of the calculator also means that the math content will be more complex. And don't forget: There are many problems that can be solved using the calculator, but would be solved much more quickly and efficiently without one.

### Change #3: **Timing**

The test will take about 4 hours to complete (This is about an hour *longer* than the current GRE)

### *What does this mean for you?*

The new GRE is more of a test of your endurance, pacing and ability to handle stress.

### Change #4: **Scoring Scale and Score**

The scoring scale is now from 130-170 in one-point increments—a big change from the current scoring scale, 200-800 in 10-point increments.

With the current GRE, when taken on a computer, unofficial scores for the Quantitative and Verbal section are available immediately after you finish the test. Your official scores, including your essay score, are available to graduate schools about two to three weeks after. But when the revised GRE takes effect, your scores will not be available right away—in fact, for the first several months after the launch there will be no scores available, period. That's right: scores for the revised GRE, which starts on August 1st, 2011, will not be available until late November 2011.

Why? The test maker can't statistically assign test score data until a lot of people take the new test.

### *What does this mean for you?*

If you plan to apply to graduate school next fall (Fall 2011), in order to being a program in Spring 2012, you may need to take the current GRE or you will miss application deadlines because your scores will not be available in time. For example, the deadline to apply for spring 2012 matriculation into TCNJ's counselor education programs is October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Change #5: **You Will Not Be Able To Take the GRE as Frequently**

With the new GRE, you will only be able to test every 60 days. Currently, you may test once every calendar month.

Information for GRE article taken from :

[www.ets.org/gre/testtakernews](http://www.ets.org/gre/testtakernews)

and

[http://](http://www.kaptest.com/GRE/Home/gre-test-change.html)

[www.kaptest.com/GRE/Home/gre-test-change.html](http://www.kaptest.com/GRE/Home/gre-test-change.html)

*What does this mean for you?*

You can't assume that you'll be able to easily make up a bad GRE score in time. If you're on a tight deadline and don't get the scores you want or need the first time, you'll need to wait two months until you can test again, which might put you past application deadlines.

**Change #6: New Types of Questions**

**Analytical Writing:** The allotted time for the "issue" essay is reduced by 15 minutes. Also, the essay prompts are more focused, making it harder to provide pre-prepared answers.

**Verbal Reasoning:** No more antonyms, analogies and sentence completion questions- they are gone. There's a greater focus on reading passages, both short and long. Two new question types, Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence, have been added to this section to test vocabulary in context, as well as strengthening/weakening questions (which are familiar to anyone who's taken the GMAT). New answer formats, such as highlighting a sentence in a passage or checking multiple correct answer choices are also available.

**Quantitative Reasoning:** There are more data interpretation questions using graphs and tables. Numeric Entry questions don't have answer choices—you need to supply the correct one. There are also questions where you need to select *all* of the correct answers.

*What does this mean for you?*

*Prep and practice are essential.* Recognizing the question types, knowing section directions ahead of time, and possessing strategies and skills that make for accurate and efficient work will be essential to getting your best possible score.

**Information to Help You Prepare:**

Get free, official test preparation materials at [www.ets.org/gre/revised/prepare](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised/prepare)

Learn more about the GRE revised General Test at [www.ets.org/gre/excitingchanges](http://www.ets.org/gre/excitingchanges)

Read the Kaplan GRE blog at <http://www.kaptest.com/GRE/Explore-the-GRE/blogs.html>.

Check out the Princeton Review Q&A at <http://www.princetonreview.com/grad/gre-changes.aspx>.

Sign up to get news and information about the GRE revised General Test at [www.ets.org/gre/testtakernews](http://www.ets.org/gre/testtakernews)

**Important Dates:**

March 15, 2011- Registration opens for the GRE revised General Test

August 1, 2011- First day of testing for the GRE revised General Test

August 1 – September 30, 2011- *Save 50% on your test fee*; if you test during this period, your scores will be sent by mid-November

October – November, 2011- If you test in October or November, check the score reporting schedule at [www.ets.org/gre/scoreschedule](http://www.ets.org/gre/scoreschedule) to know when your scores will be sent.

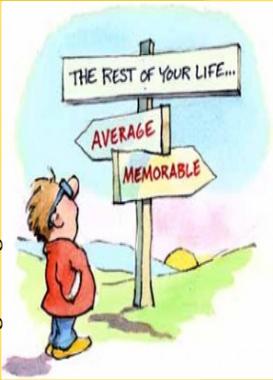
December 2011- Normal score reporting resumes. Score reports will be sent 10 to 15 days after your test date. (6 weeks for paper-based testing)

Information taken from [www.ets.org/gre/testtakernews](http://www.ets.org/gre/testtakernews) and <http://www.kaptest.com/GRE/Home/gre-test-change.html>



# The Psychology of Happiness & How to be a Happy Grad Student

Google Images



On Wednesday, February 9th at 4:30 pm in the Library Auditorium, an event called the “Young Alumni Lecture Series” was sponsored by the Honors Program. The presenter was Ms. Emily Barranco, a 2008 TCNJ Philosophy alumna and a current Ph.D student in Philosophy at University of California, Davis. She offered a formal discussion about her current experiences as a graduate student as well as her current research on happiness. The Office of Graduate Studies conducted a Q&A session with Ms. Barranco so she could provide TCNJ graduate students with a sneak peak of her happiness secrets.

**Q: What made you decide to come back across the country, more specifically to TCNJ, to present this material?**

A: I came back to NJ to network with some east-coast philosophers at CUNY and Rutgers, but it was an exciting bonus to give a talk at my alma mater. I had such an amazing time at TCNJ and am totally in love with the campus (I still have dreams about going for late night walks to the science complex courtyard). Having been an honors student myself, and someone who attended many a talk in the beautiful library auditorium, I was excited to be on the other side of the podium. It was kind of unreal being there as a speaker after spending so much time as a student, but it was a fun kind of unreal.

**Q: What was the set-up of your presentation?**

A: The talk had two parts. First, I gave advice on graduate school- how to prepare, how to get in, and how to thrive once you get there. Second, I talked about my research on the psychology of happiness. The talk went for about 45 minutes and then we ended with a question/answer session. My favorite question was about dating fellow graduate students in your department. I had mentioned that my fiancé is also a philosopher at Davis, so I couldn't give the standard line that you should avoid it all costs! I tried to give them a straight answer: it definitely happens and sometimes leads to amazing results... but most of the time it just leads to drama and very uncomfortable situations. Only date someone in your department if you feel so strongly about them that you can't even help it. Just be willing to deal with the consequences if things go badly!

**Q: What does the “psychology of happiness” mean? Discuss some of your research on happiness.**

A: The psychology of happiness is just what it sounds like, it is the psychological study of happiness, well-being and positive mental states. It's also called “Positive Psychology” in much of the literature. This movement to study happiness, research its correlates and gain a greater understanding of its causal factors, began in the 1980's with Ed Diener. At this time, psychologists were focused almost exclusively on identifying psychological problems and treating them. This new movement focused on the positive psychological states we experience and how to achieve them.

My own research focuses on the methodology of these positive psychologists. I argue, in particular, that conceptual disambiguation is needed at the data collection level of research. In many cases confusing uses of “happiness” and other well-being related terms can (and does) lead to data which is unusable and unreliable. I recommend incorporating theoretical work in the process of creating surveys and collecting information, so that psychologists can avoid this potential pitfall and gather more accurate and reliable data.

This is conceptual work that needs to be done. It is incredibly important for accuracy in the positive psychology movement but it has other applications as well. In philosophy, an empirically informed analysis of happiness would be of interest, not only to those studying the inner workings of the mind, but also to those working in ethics, where debate on the nature of happiness still thrives. In economics and political science, happiness also plays a crucial role. It is even beginning to affect global policy decisions, as we use measures of happiness to compare nations and inform policies to increase the happiness of the world's citizens.

**Q: Explain your experiences in graduate school.**

A: I have to say that I love being in grad school. It's really a privilege to get to go to school and teach. I run discussion sections during the school year and over the summer I get to design and teach my own undergraduate courses. It's really exciting to have full creative control of your own class and it's really fulfilling to see your students grasp new concepts and make intellectual progress.

There is also something wonderful about being around so many intelligent peers who are interested in the same topics that you are. It's been a fun ride so far and I look forward to finishing it up now that I am getting slightly closer to the finish line. Most of all, it's been a huge opportunity for intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social growth. I've learned so much that had nothing to do with my classes. Just being in an environment where you are constantly challenged to learn, grow and expand your view of the world can change so much about a person. But then, if you don't view it as that kind of opportunity, it might not have that affect on you.

“There is also something wonderful about being around so many intelligent peers who are interested in the same topics that you are.”



### Q: What made you move to California to study happiness?

A: I knew I wanted to go to grad school for philosophy after my first semester as a philosophy major. The interest in happiness research came later. When I started my grad school search, I spent a lot of time thinking about what kind of school I wanted to go to. I started with one simple principle: I want to live someplace warmer than NJ. I knew that weather had a huge impact on my mood, health and productivity, so I narrowed down my options to places without the long cold winter.

I mentioned this in my talk. Students need to think carefully about their life preferences when they pick a school. Weather, local culture, population density - these might seem unimportant when you compare them to the school's prestige, but when you have to live somewhere for 5, 6, 7 years, you will be glad you took it into consideration. Those things make a HUGE difference. You are going to need to live there for quite some time, make friends, and stay sane. For me, it's a lot easier to do all that when the sun is shining.

### Q: Why are you choosing to study happiness?

A: I've always been interested in people, how they feel, and how they relate to the world. When I stumbled across some interesting research coming out of the positive psychology movement, my attention was instantly grabbed. I wanted to know more about happiness. I wanted to see if the data they presented had any interesting implications in philosophy. As I began to dig deeper, I also began to question the methods being used to gather this data. Soon, my project had shifted from a study of happiness, to a study of studying happiness! This intrigued me even more. What I love the most about this particular project is how applicable it is to so many things, including my own life. I get to immerse myself in research on happiness and apply it to my own life. I think I've made more progress as an individual through this time, than in any other period of my life. Best of all, I get to share that with my friends and family. Still, it's not all about personal fulfillment. I really believe that this work is needed in the field. People care about happiness. They are spending time, money and effort trying to become happier. I can't think of anything I would rather spend my life doing than helping people become happier. Understanding the factors that contribute to happiness is an important step to that goal.

### Q: Do you know of any good books on happiness (i.e. *The Happiness Project* by Gretchen Rubin)? Do you consult these in your research?

A: There are so many popular books out on happiness right now! It's exciting to see that so many people are interested in the topic (although it's hard for me to imagine anyone not caring about happiness). Some of these books are excellent and great sources to start with. If you are looking for a fun read with lots of surprising conclusions, I would check out *Stumbling on Happiness* by Daniel Gilbert. This is the book that really jump-started my interest in happiness research. Although I don't agree with all of his conclusions, it's a great starting point. If you're looking for research-based advice about happiness, you should try the book *Flow* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. It's a classic, so the research isn't as new and shiny as Gilbert's but it has a depth that resounds with a lot of readers.

### Q: What are some things/strategies that graduate students can do to become happy/maintain their happiness in their current programs and lives?

A: If you want to be a happy grad student, you need to remember to be a happy person, and there are a few things that always correlate highly with happiness.

1. The number one best way to be happy is to have a strong social network. The research backs this up over and over again. If you have friends, you will be a whole lot happier, so when you get to grad school, make it a priority to get socially involved. Find ways to make your studying social. Get reading groups together. Go out for drinks after class. Bond with your classmates.

2. A great way to do this is to get involved in volunteer work. I started volunteering for an annual music and environmental awareness festival on my campus (The Whole Earth Festival) and it led to a huge group of friends and a whole lot of fulfillment. It sounds pretty cheesy but the research backs this up. The only strong correlates with high levels of happiness so far, are strong social networks, volunteer work, and exercise. People who report those activities have the highest levels of happiness. So, if you want to be happy, that is an easy place to start.

3. Another proven technique for keeping up a good attitude is keeping physically active and getting in some outdoor time. Try living close to campus and biking. This will add activity to your day even if you tend to get lazy and never go to the gym.

### Q: Any further advice for graduate students?

A: A final note on being happy in grad school... keep an eye on yourself. We have a lot of stress as academics, and that can manifest in a lot of different ways. Those at the highest levels of academia tend to have high levels of stress related disorders, and we often isolate ourselves in attempts to work harder. But, that is not to say that being a happy grad student is impossible. It's all about taking care of yourself. In my junior year at TCNJ I almost dropped out of school. I was feeling sick and disoriented the majority of the time. My heart was racing. My body ached. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out what was wrong with me when I was finally diagnosed with a chronic generalized anxiety disorder. As it turned out, my brain had been pumping my body full of "fight or flight" chemicals and it was wrecking havoc on entire life. It took a lot of work to push through the rest of undergrad. I tried several medications before finding one that helped balance my unique (and uncomfortable) brain chemistry. I've spent a lot of time learning to relax my body and mediate stress. I've learned to exercise more and make my health and well-being a priority. As academics, we need to be open about the challenges we face. Stress is not just a feeling you get. It affects your entire body and causes life altering and often life-threatening conditions. So as obvious as this sounds, keep asking yourself whether you are happy, and if you're not...if you're overwhelmed, stressed, sick, or feel like you are in over your head, talk to someone about it. It's pretty normal. Don't be afraid to ask for help. You might need it to get where you want to go.

## Alumni Spotlight: Roseann Bonino



Roseann Bonino

*“I think that if the students feel that you genuinely like them, and genuinely care about them, then they don’t want to disappoint you.”*



The newly appointed principal of West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South, Ms. Roseann Bonino, is also an alumna of one TCNJ masters and one certification program. She earned a Master of Education in ESL/Bilingual and a principal certification through the Educational Leadership certification program. Ms. Bonino spent many successful years teaching and working to master the art of classroom management. Teachers would informally come to her asking about her secrets to managing student attitudes and behavioral issues in the classroom. Ms. Bonino’s #1 secret is to make every student feel like they are your favorite student. She states, “I think that if the students feel that you genuinely like them, and genuinely care about them, then they don’t want to disappoint you. There are kids that intrinsically are motivated to achieve, however there will always be a population of students that are often disengaged and unmotivated.” The challenge often becomes how you both engage these students in learning and manage their behaviors. The motivation will usually take a bit longer to spark, but Ms. Bonino believes that if you

make the learning authentic, engage the students as much as possible and make the material meaningful, the students will then be driven to achieve and learn. However, when all else failed, Ms. Bonino used the “Italian Mother Guilt Syndrome,” in which she would be so disappointed and look so hurt that the student who did not do his or her homework would feel such remorse that they would do it for her eventually. “It’s all about showing the students that you really care. I’ve come to find that if you believe in a student, more often than not they genuinely do not want to disappoint you.”

After many years teaching, Ms. Bonino reached a point where she wanted to make a greater impact on a larger number of students and thought she would head in the direction of a slight career change. “I felt I did a great job reaching the students I had, however in some ways it was very limited. I had a lot to offer in terms of educational leadership and I wanted to make a larger impact on a larger number of students.” Ms. Bonino then made the decision to begin TCNJ’s Master of Education in Educa-

tional Leadership: Principal which she found to be both academically rigorous and rewarding. “It was frankly much more work than I had anticipated,” stated Ms. Bonino. “However, TCNJ does a very good job at supervising the academic rigor of the program while also making it manageable for people such as myself, as I was working full time and raising two small children.” She also appreciated the support from the Offices of Graduate Studies and certification, as the staff was always helpful in terms of making sure she had the proper coursework and made the certification process a breeze. In terms of her coursework, the most useful and intense class Ms. Bonino encountered in the program was School Law. The coursework had her basically memorizing case law, which was grueling but definitely helpful out in the field. Her book from the course is highlighted from front to back and is a reference staple on her bookshelf at West Windsor-Plainsboro South.

Ms. Bonino graduated from the Educational Leadership program in May of 2007. She then worked as an assistant principal of West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South

**Continued on pg. 7**

for three years before being promoted to principal in fall of 2010. Every day Ms. Bonino does something she likes to call her “morning walk,” in which her goal is to make it to every single teacher’s classroom, even if she only spends fifteen to twenty minutes in there. “I do it just to get a taste of all the disciplines, the teaching styles and to get to know the curriculum. I want to know what an AP Chemistry class, a freshman English class and a college preparation course looks like. I get to see the teachers teaching and the students learning- there’s nothing better than that!” She always spends time going to afterschool activities as well, such as varsity sports games, band activities, spring plays and musicals and the sports banquets (to name a few). Ms. Bonino loves to see the students in a different context because she gets to see them celebrating their talents outside the classroom. How-

ever, there is a downside to every job and Ms. Bonino’s least favorite aspect of hers is e-mail. “I hate e-mail the most! The amount of daily e-mails I get...I could sit at my desk all day long and never be done checking e-mails. At the end of most days, I’ll have seventy-five e-mails I haven’t even answered yet. So I’ll either sit down and work really late, or go home, grab a bite to eat and then spend three hours answering the e-mails. It’s very labor intensive.”

Outside of the school setting, Ms. Bonino loves to exercise and enjoys going to the beach. As the proud owner of a sweet tooth, she also loves to bake in her spare time. But most of all, she loves to spend time with her family. Her son and daughter are both away at Penn State for college, so she cherishes the time with them when they’re home. Even with such a busy and fulfilling schedule, Ms. Bonino

encourages all graduate students to not hesitate to go for what they want and keep plugging along if they’ve already taken the leap. “I spent a lot of time laboring over the decision to attend grad school for the second time and I was fearful over whether I’d be able to do it. But I think in life you can’t wait until you are ready...you just have to dive in and figure it out as you go along. I did one course at a time and there were definitely times where I thought I might never finish. However, you should enjoy the learning, the magic of the journey and the fulfillment it will give you once you finish!” Congratulations Ms. Bonino! We wish you well and best of luck at West Windsor-Plainsboro South!

## Meet Your Fellow Graduate Students

The College of New Jersey offers many different and interesting degree and certificate programs for which students can apply. In order to learn more about the exemplary graduate students in these programs, the Office of Graduate Studies sought recommendations from program coordinators for outstanding students to interview.

Each student graciously volunteered time to provide a peak into the life of a TCNJ graduate student. The Office of Graduate Studies is honored to highlight these three students in our Spring 2011 issue of the Graduate Column.

### **Dr. Rachel Adler Master of Science in Nursing: Family Nurse Practitioner**

Dr. Rachel Adler is currently a student in TCNJ’s Master of Science in Nursing: Family Nurse Practitioner program (NURS\_MSN01), as well as an associate professor in the department of sociology and anthropology since fall of 2001. Although Rachel maintains a career as an anthropologist, she earned a BSN and then was admitted to TCNJ’s nurse practitioner program to become involved in primary care. Rachel has already completed the first year as a part-time student and is currently taking this year off to get some clinical experience. She will be joining the student population again in the fall to resume her studies. With just about

two years left in the program, Rachel is excited to graduate in Spring of 2013 and hopefully use her license to bring primary care to the people of Trenton.

Pharmacology was by far Rachel’s most challenging class. However, she enjoyed it because it encompassed information she will be using in practice. In order to prescribe medications, the nurse practitioner must know everything about those medications, particularly concerning their interactions with other medications and effects on the body. She also enjoyed a class that focused on family and community nursing, as it used social science perspectives (such as race, gender and health disparities) to deliver nursing care.

**Continued on pg. 8**

## Meet Fellow...Students, contd. from page 7.



*“Rachel also appreciates that TCNJ values a teacher-scholar model...professors who are teaching are teaching active scholarship. They have an ongoing relationship with both their teaching and their research.”*

Rachel finds that working with the TCNJ students as both a professor and a fellow student is the most rewarding aspect of being at TCNJ. “I like the students. As a professor, I find that they are engaged, serious and smart. It is very rewarding working with them.” Rachel also appreciates that TCNJ values a teacher-scholar model. Rachel explains that the teacher-scholar model means that, “professors who are teaching are teaching active scholarship. They have a current and ongoing relationship with both their teaching and their research. I’ve found the opportunities to combine my research with my teaching to be invaluable and a wonderful way for students to apply the learning.”

Rachel has her Ph.D. in anthropology and tends to focus her research on people in urban settings. Her work inspired an NJ.com article entitled, “How Chambersburg’s changes inspired professor” in which she compiled an extensive ethnography and oral history of Chambersburg with the help of the TCNJ students she taught. She became interested in Chambersburg because it was a neighborhood that had transitioned into a Latino community, a population she had studied extensively. Because of this project, Rachel took a sabbatical to join TCNJ’s graduate community and become a nurse, so her research can be more clinically applied and she can give back to the community.

Rachel is also an avid cyclist and has done many “tours,” (long rides). She has completed two centuries, which are one-hundred mile rides, in Pennsyl-

Perseverance is the key to Rachel’s success in graduate school. She wishes to stress the importance of perseverance to all current and future graduate students. “As a graduate student you have lots of other demands, however if you have a goal and you stick to it, you will finish. The journey might not move as fast as you would like, but you will finish. Simply persevere and don’t lose sight of your goals!” We would like to wish Rachel the best of luck in her future studies and research!

The NJ.com full article about Dr. Rachel Adler’s research may be found here: [http://www.nj.com/mercercorner/index.ssf/2010/12/how\\_chambersburgs\\_changes\\_insp.html](http://www.nj.com/mercercorner/index.ssf/2010/12/how_chambersburgs_changes_insp.html)

### **Sinead Mallon Master of Arts in Counselor Education: School Counseling**

Sinead Mallon is currently in her first year as a full time student in TCNJ’s Master of Arts in Counselor Education program in School Counseling. During her senior year of undergraduate studies at The University of Pittsburgh, she came to the realization that she wanted to become a high school counselor or collegiate advisor. “To be honest, I feel as if I almost fell into school counseling as my program and career choice, a concept known as ‘planned happenstance’ in the field.” She interned with the Advising Center at Pittsburgh and fell in love with the atmosphere of the job. She obtained bachelors degrees in English Literature, English Writing and Art History with the knowledge that she would attend graduate school directly upon their completion.

However, as her first year of study comes to a close,

she is transitioning well from theory to practice. Her favorite class is one in which she is currently enrolled, COUN 670: Counseling Theory. Sinead states, “Theory sounded so intimidating and abstract, but the reality of the course, even though we are only a few weeks into the semester, is that the concepts are alive, tangible and thought-provoking. I feel as though I am leaving a successful counseling session each time we leave class.”

Sinead will compete her internship for the program next year (Fall 2011 – Spring 2012) at Hopewell Valley Central High School. She is very much looking forward to applying all that she has learned and having the opportunity to experience the role of a school counselor first hand. Sinead also works as a Graduate Assistant within the TCNJ Tutoring Center. She has found her work in the Math/Science department of the tutoring center to be rewarding, as it has been another opportunity for her to see education and learning in action.

Although Sinead has a deep-seated passion for the city of Pittsburgh, she wanted to return to her home in Newtown, PA to compete her master’s degree. She explored many graduate programs, but TCNJ was the lone, standout program, and therefore the only one she applied to. Sinead states that, “relief was my first feeling upon receiving my acceptance letter... and then came the excitement.” The professors are Sinead’s favorite aspect of the program. Every professor she has encountered has been a tremendous resource and wellspring of encouragement. “They have been able to continuously grow my excitement, curiosity and passion for school counseling!”

Sinead is most looking forward to working after

**Continued on pg. 9**

## Meet Fellow...Students, contd. from page 8.



**Sinead Mallon**

graduation as she has a desire to work and feel the victory of her first real paycheck. She is hopeful that she will be able to obtain a school counseling job for the school year following the completion of the program, as she is flexible in terms of location. "This is probably the most exciting part for me as I feel like I could end up anywhere! I am originally from Toronto, Ontario and have lived in Buffalo, NY and Newtown, PA along with Pittsburgh for my college years, so I am willing and able to follow a job that presents itself."

As a competitive Irish dancer for seventeen years, Sinead has always been very active and dedicated to being in good physical condition. Even though she has hung up her dancing shoes, she has continued her dedication to physical wellness in the form of working towards a personal training certificate through the National Academy of Sports Medicine. She should be able to call herself a Certified Personal Trainer (CPT) before the semester is through.

Sinead wants to remind not only the counseling graduate students, but also the entire TCNJ community to enjoy life and live for your passions. This idea is best exemplified in a poem taken from one of her counseling

textbooks, *Career Development Interventions in the 21st Century*;

Be patient toward all that is unresolved in your heart.

Try to love the questions themselves.

Do not seek the answers which cannot be given,

Because you would not be able to live them.

And the point is to live everything.

Live the questions now.

Perhaps you will then gradually without noticing it,

Live along some distant day into the answers.

-Rainer Marie Rilke

Best of luck with the rest of your studies and in the future, Sinead!

**Benica Buluran  
5 year Bachelor of Arts:  
Elementary/Special Ed.  
and  
Master of Arts:  
Teaching Special Education**

Benica earned her Associates Degree in Professional Studies Education from Bergen Community College before coming to TCNJ to enter our five year, combined Bachelor of Arts in Special/Elementary Education and Master of Arts in Teaching Special Education (SPEC\_MAT02). This version of the MAT Special Education program is only available to graduates of TCNJ's undergraduate portion of the program. Benica thoroughly enjoyed her experience within the program, particularly the internship work she has had the opportunity to complete.

Benica states, "The internships are an opportunity to get your hands "dirty." You get straight to the core of what you entered the field of education for: the opportunity to teach students, to hopefully

as citizens. I liked how I shared knowledge with the students I taught. They also taught me many things like patience, understanding and that teaching is really fun!" She has been assigned to various schools, each over a four month period for her practicum experience. A particular internship she enjoyed was in a third grade classroom at Henry Stokes Elementary School for a reading and literacy course. She spent the entire semester tutoring a student, trying to improve his reading skills through assessments that were actually utilized in the classroom.

In terms of coursework, Dr. Petroff's class about teaching students with severe disabilities was extremely interesting to Benica. There are four different special education tracks: Reading and Literacy, Visually Impaired, ED, and the Severe Disabilities track. Benica is on the Severe Disabilities track and had little prior experience with that population when she enrolled in the class. "I discovered interest for it back in community college when I read about the IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for a project." Benica was hired for the summer as a functional skills tutor for a twenty-six year old woman with Down Syndrome. Benica taught her student home skills, how to read (as she was completely non-verbal), and worked to improve her physical skills. "We would go out in the yard and do sensory activities. For example, I would say 'this is a leaf... this is how a leaf feels... the bark of the tree is rough...etc.' I would ask her questions and she would point them out. Her mom really wanted me to increase her daughter's sense of the world and possibly a grasp of language. I worked with her every day. This experience made me realize that special education should be the work for me."

**Continued on pg. 10**

*"Inspired by what she had learned, Benica was hired for the summer as a functional skills teacher for a twenty-six year old woman with Autism."*

## Meet Fellow...Students, contd. from page 9.

Benica also works at the Village Learning Center in Pennington part-time. "I'm handling after-school Kindergarten and Pre-K classrooms right now. I teach them how to conduct themselves in public, how to speak to elders and peers, and general skills."

Benica was born in the Philippines and lived there for sixteen years before moving to the United States. The experiences she has had learning about and working within special education here in The States is much different from what she would have seen in the Philippines. "Back in the Philippines, when I was growing up, we had a more segregated view of education. That is based on my perspective when I was in secondary school. I don't think I was ever in a classroom that we would call 'inclusive'." Once Benica graduates she wants to work to gain more experience in the field of special education, and then eventually form an organization or foundation for special education students in the Philippines. "Sometimes money can be an issue in terms of getting students what they need to learn, but it's not everything. There are so many things one can do that can help students learn. We don't need to just rely on high levels and expensive brands of technology to be successful in the classroom."

When she's not teaching or attending classes, Benica enjoys cooking. "I really started last year as my mom finally let me into the kitchen. I was able to whip up a macaroni casserole the other day, and when I'm not quite sure what to do...well there's always the recipe book! It's a science experiment every time I cook." She also enjoys photography and with a bit of training, she hopes to teach it one day. "It goes with advanced technology not being totally necessary to do something you love or learn something new.

I make due with a point and shoot camera. You don't need to have the nicest and biggest things right away, but I believe you should start small when you are learning something."

Benica believes that to pursue graduate studies, one must have, not only an interest, but also a passion for the desired field. "I believe graduate school is really important because it gives you that extra edge: In a physical sense when you put it on a resume and also in terms of having more knowledge and experience in a field. It's time consuming and it does take work, but if you're interested, you will enjoy it!" We want to wish Benica the best of luck in her last semester at TCNJ!



Benica Buluran



"I believe graduate school is really important because it gives you that extra edge: In a physical sense when you put it on a resume and also in terms of having more knowledge and experience in a field."

## Did You Know That?, . . .

### All TCNJ Graduate students may park in any faculty/staff lot after 4:30 pm.

- Simply swipe in with your TCNJ I.D. Must have a valid Graduate Commuter decal.
- Faculty lots are 2A, 10-20, and designated spaces in lots 8 and 9B.

### Graduate students have their own group study room in the library?

- Room 413. Library group study policies may be found here: (<http://www.tcnj.edu/~library/info/policy-group.html>)

### Graduate students are eligible to compete and play in TCNJ intramural sports.

- All you need is to be in good physical condition, covered by the school insurance or personal insurance, and to have paid a student activity fee. *For more information visit [www.tcnj.edu/~intramur/](http://www.tcnj.edu/~intramur/)*

### TCNJ Graduate students may use the Physical Enhancement Center, participate in T/W Fitness Center classes and swim in the Packer Hall swimming pool during open hours.

- **PEC:** Simply show your student I.D. and try out the free weights, cardio and resistance training equipment in the Physical Enhancement Center as a different type of study break. Or sign up at the front desk with one of the PEC's free certified personal trainers. Receive up to 3 one-hour sessions where the trainer can help create a personalized exercise for you and show you how to use the equipment. Questions? Ask a desk attendant in person or over the phone (x2014) or e-mail them at [pec@tcnj.edu](mailto:pec@tcnj.edu).
- **T/W Fitness Center:** Fitness classes are offered in the TW link workout room during the fall and spring. Classes have included yoga, Zumba, core strength, belly dancing, Pilates & ballet fusion, cardio kickboxing, dance cardio, and strength training sessions. The cost is only \$15 for unlimited classes for the fall semester (\$25 for the full year).
- **Swimming Pool:** The open swim pool hours may be found here: (<http://www.tcnj.edu/~aquatics/>)

### Graduate Students may make appointments with Student Health Services, Planned Parenthood and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

- You don't need to have Student Health Insurance to be seen at Health Services! All offices are located in Eickhoff Hall 107. Student Health Services and CAPS are open Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays: 8:30a.m. to 6:00p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays: 8:30a.m. to 4:30p.m. during the fall and spring semester.
- **Student Health Services:** Call the office at 609-771-2483 or schedule your appointment online using a link on the main Student Health Services' web page. (<http://www.tcnj.edu/~sa/health/index.html>)
- **CAPS:** To make a first appointment, visit the office in Eickhoff Hall 107. To fill out a Request for Services Form or to find out more information visit: (<http://www.tcnj.edu/~sa/counseling/index.html>)

### Graduate Students may attend all student activities on campus.

- Visit (<http://www.tcnjstudentactivities.com/>) for more information on upcoming concerts, speakers, performers and other events.

### Graduate students may utilize Career Services and the services they provide.

- Career Services has drop-in Resume review hours: Monday 1:30-3:30; Tuesday 3:30-5:30; Thursday 1:30 - 3:30; Friday 10-12.
- Educational Interview Days - <http://www.tcnj.edu/~career/eid/>
- LionsLink can help you find internships and participate in Educational Interview Days.

# How to Check Your Academic Progress on PAWS

The screenshot displays the PAWS Student Center interface. On the left is a 'Menu' with a search bar and various service categories. The main content area is titled 'Student Center' and includes an 'ID:' field. Under the 'Academics' section, a dropdown menu is open, showing options like 'Academic Planner', 'Academic Requirements', and 'Apply for graduation'. A purple arrow points to 'Academic Requirements'. Below this, there are informational messages: 'You are not enrolled in classes.' and 'You have no outstanding charges at this time.' The right sidebar contains sections for 'Holds', 'To Do List', 'Enrollment Dates', 'TCNJ Quick Links', and 'TCNJ Administrative Services'. The browser's address bar shows the URL: https://paws.tcnj.edu/psp/paws/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/SA\_LEARNER\_SERVICES.SSS\_STUDENT\_CENTER.GBL?PORTALP.

Please run your *Academic Advising Report* to ensure you are on track for graduation!

To get started, choose Academic Requirements from the Academics drop-down box in your Student Center and click the round arrow button.



## Spring 2011, Fall 2011

### Mark Your Calendar!

Visit [www.tcnj.edu/recreg/calenders](http://www.tcnj.edu/recreg/calenders)  
for more details

#### Commencement:

Friday May 13th, 2011

For more information, contact  
[commence@tcnj.edu](mailto:commence@tcnj.edu) or see  
[www.tcnj.edu/~commence](http://www.tcnj.edu/~commence).

#### Graduation Notice:

If you are planning to graduate in May or  
August, but have not yet applied to do so,  
please contact Records and Registration at:

609-771-2141

A \$35 late fee will apply.

**Tuesday, April 5th to Friday, April 15th:**  
Fall Registration Window

**Friday, May 6th:**  
Last day of Graduate Classes

**Monday, May 9th:**  
'Maymester' Classes Begin

**Friday, May 13th:**  
Commencement

**Tuesday, May 31st:**  
5 Week Session 'A' Classes Begin

**Tuesday, July 5th:**  
5 & 6 Week Session 'B' Classes Begin

## !! Important Reminders !!

### May or August Graduation Notes:

The deadline to apply for May 2011 Graduation was in January and the deadline for August 2011 graduation was in February. If you have not applied, please contact Records and Registration. The graduation application fee is \$100. Students who apply after the application deadline will be charged a late fee of \$35. If you have any questions regarding ability to graduate in May or August of 2011, please contact your program coordinator.

Students who, at the end of the spring 2011 semester, will have 7 or fewer credits to complete their program over the summer may participate in the commencement ceremony on May 13th and will graduate in August. (Please note there is no August ceremony). Students with more than 7 credits to complete following the end of the spring semester may participate in the May 2012 ceremony.

Commencement ceremonies are only held in the month of May.

### Electronic Billing and Email:

Students are reminded that all billing is completed electronically by using PAWS. Remember to check for E-mail notifications that are sent to your TCNJ account for any outstanding financial obligations because paper bills will NOT be sent. Students are expected to check their e-mail two times per week.



Pay billing electronically by using your  
PAWS account. Check for E-mail no-  
tifications!