

# School Counseling Program NEWSLETTER October 2024

## Mid-Semester Check In

We are halfway through Fall of 2024 and the leaves aren't the only things that are changing, our school counseling students are evolving in their identities as Professional School Counselors. Our first year cohort is acquiring knowledge and have already completed two counseling mock sessions thus far and are being supervised by Jorinna Tran and Dr. Gonzalez in lab. Our second year cohort is deep into their internship experiences and Dr. McKechnie has visited each school site and is happy to report all of our internship students are doing great! This year we have 3 students serving as interns at the elementary level, 1 at a middle school and 3 at the high school level. We also have one school counseling intern at the Diener School which specializes in serving students with disabilities.

## School Counseling Interns get recognized at 3rd Annual Educator Pinning Ceremony



On October 10th, the College of Education recognized our school counseling student interns' commitment to the field of Education. The ceremony included remarks from Dr. Michael Martirano, former superintendent and Dean Kimberly Griffin. Dr. Jessica McKechnie, Director of Field Placement, presented our students with their lapel pins. Congrats to our Interns!

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## First Ever School Counselor Speaker Series: Dr. Maureen Ponce

On October 15th, in recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month, the UMD School Counseling Program had the privilege of learning from Dr. Maureen Ponce, president of the Maryland School Counseling Association. Her presentation entitled "Empowering Latine Students: Navigating Intersectionality And Building Supportive Schools" explored ideas around individual superpower and how to harness this strength in supporting this community. The School Counseling Speaker Series happens once per semester; if you have any ideas about future speakers, please share with Dr. Ileana Gonzalez, Program Director.



## School Counseling Alumni Train Next Generation of School Counselors

Esme Pierzchala, UMD Class of '21, has been an elementary school counselor at Tulip Grove Elementary School since interning there in the Spring of her final year in the program. She is now supervising Meghan McLees, a current second year student. Esme shared how as a first year supervisor she has been able to model a collaborative supervisor-supervisee relationship.

Before she started on her masters journey, Esme worked with an Americorp program in D.C where she managed young adult Americorp members. Through this position, she found a love for mentoring not just K-12 students but also the next generation of educators working with this population. As she developed her school counselor identity at UMD, part of her purpose fostered into supporting the next generation of school counselors. Her previous school counseling supervisors have been a great model into the expectations of the role as well as how she can eventually evolve as a school counseling supervisor.



Esme has no exact formula in dividing up the work between the two counselors and instead follows the needs of her intern. The first thing she did to understand her new intern was to open the conversation around goals. By starting this relationship with open communication, Esme learned what her intern has practiced in the past and what she wants to further develop as a professional school counselor. “We keep the open lines of communication consistent by at least having weekly supervision meetings to go over the goals for the week, what the supervisor needs from the intern, what the intern needs to get accomplished, and depending on what was worked on the week prior, and identify areas of growth” Esme said.

When Esme is doing the indirect services of the program, Meghan is balancing it with the direct services, working together to build up the school counseling program at Tulip Grove Elementary. Esme stated “Interns are not going to learn everything there is to be, but give them the general overview of the profession. And then for interns, it is to take risks, your site is a place to learn and make mistakes. This is a chance for school counselors to grow and present yourself as a school counselor you want to be one day.” Congratulations to this dynamic duo for impacting the Tulip Grove Elementary community.

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**@umdschoolcounseling**

## Reminder: School Counseling Alumni Event

A reminder to all current and former UMD School Counseling students to RSVP for the annual School Counseling Alumni Event. This annual event brings together former and current school counseling students to share about their experiences in the profession, provide guidance on best practices and to deepen the Terp School Counseling community. This year's theme is "Get Cozy!" Come in your coziest fall clothes and enjoy some comfort food and reconnect with your community.



## UMD School Counseling Alumni Event

Let's Reconnect and Share Our Stories

 **WHERE?** 

0220 Benjamin Building

 **WHEN?** 

Tuesday  
November 12th,  
5:30pm

RSVP by November 1