A warm welcome to our new faculty and staff!

Sanjay Adhikari, programmer intermediate working at the Center on Aging

Orchid Ballester, patient services manager of the clinical practice

Ronald Berkowsky, Ph.D., post-doctoral fellow at the Center on Aging

Victoria Castro, development officer for major gifts

Maggy De Tullio, M.B.A., sr. project manager department administration

Elisa Diaz, Psy.D., post-doctoral fellow at The Healing Place

Sindy García, HR generalist, HR transactions

Lynnette Goldich, HR client services manager, main point of contact for HR matters

Daniel Jimenez, Ph.D., assistant professor conducting research on elderly Hispanics

Andrea Santo, program manager for the residency training program

Best of luck to our departing group!

Anzhelika Engel, M.D., sr. research associate, starting residency at the U. of Tennessee

David Green, development officer, now assistant vp of advancement at the Arsht Center

Cherie O’Neil, program manager for residency training, retiring after 23 years

Jean Sherman, Ed.D., R.N., assistant professor, retiring from MAGEC after 20 years

A Message from the Chairman

Although space constraints preclude documentation of all of the remarkable goings-on in the Department, we highlight a few of the major initiatives. Last month, we closed the fiscal year ahead of budget; took part in the Miller School of Medicine graduation; recruited a superb new group of 13 first year psychiatry residents and new fellows in child psychiatry, geriatric psychiatry, forensic psychiatry, substance abuse, and psychosomatic medicine. These young psychiatrists in training join us from a broad representation of U.S. medical schools and select international programs.

The newly constructed Med-Psych Unit at the University of Miami Hospital (UMH), specializing in patients with both medical and psychiatric disorders--the first in south Florida--is set to open. Our relationship with the Jackson Health System is now in its 25th year. The Advisory Board is also planning a number of educational and fund raising events for the coming year. We are particularly proud of the accolades received by our faculty and residents. These include their continued service with National Institute of Health (NIH) Grant Review Committees (Dr.s. Izenwasser, Salloum, Wahlstedt, Harvey, Craja, Loewenstein, Nemeroff and others), and recognition by their peers for their remarkable scientific discoveries.

In 2013 Sara J. Craja, Ph.D. and other CREATE investigators were awarded the 2013 Jack Kraft Award for Innovation from the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society. She also received the Social Impact Award from the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM), Special Interest Group for Human Computer Interaction (SIGCHI) and was named President of Division 20 (Adult Development and Aging) American Psychological Association (2013-2016).

Philip Harvey, Ph.D., received the 2014 Barnwell Prize, the highest and most prestigious award by the Department of Veterans Affairs for research nationwide. He also received the Schizophrenia Research Award from the Schizophrenia International Research Society.

Several members of the faculty were elected to membership in the prestigious American College of Psychiatrists (ACP) including Beatrix Currier, M.D., Associate Professor and Chief, Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry; and Jon Shaw, M.D., Professor and Chief, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Pedro Ruiz, M.D., Executive Vice Chair for Clinical Programs will complete his tenure as President of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA). I was honored to be appointed by the American Psychiatric Association to the Council of Research and as Chairman of both the Research Colloquium for Young Investigators and the workgroup on Diagnostic Biomarkers and Treatment. I also received the Gold Medal Award from the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in 2013 and was the 2013 Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry Visiting Professor.

Sanjib Sabbag, M.D., assistant professor, has been awarded an NIH training grant to participate in the Geriatric Psychiatry Summer School at UCLA. Several faculty have been asked to take on additional roles at the Miller School of Medicine. These include Ingrid Vauclair-Feltes, M.D., M.B.A., the new Miller School of Medicine’s Chief Patient Safety and Compliance Officer; and myself, appointed Associate Director of the M.D./Ph.D. Program. Finally, last but not least, this is first issue of BrainStorms, our departmental newsletter, which will be published at regular intervals to inform our faculty, staff and friends in the community about the department. We have a number of very exciting new initiatives planned for the coming year. My best wishes to all of you for a happy and healthy summer.
Mini Pulse was the inaugural employee engagement effort to collect feedback from all employees to guide the strategic objectives of the University, school, and our department. It was clear from the survey results that our faculty and staff had some very favorable feelings about our department. Specifically, our employees are proud to work for UM, understand how their responsibilities fit into the goals of the U and are always willing to go the extra mile to help UM succeed. The full results can be found at: https://umshare.miami.edu/web/wdb/psychiatry/2013Mini_PulsePsych.pdf. As a result of your feedback, the leadership of the department is taking action to create a culture of open and ongoing communication. A few initiatives we will focus on include:

- Launch of the BrainStorms Newsletter
- Ongoing Feedback Loops
- Employee and Faculty Recognition

Our goal is to continue improving the culture and work environment. Some new ways for you to participate:

- Read the newsletter and stay informed about exciting departmental and UMMSM activities.
- Nominate Faculty for the Faculty Spotlight to PsychBrainstorms-DL@med.miami.edu
- Nominate Staff Stars to PsychBrainstorms-DL@med.miami.edu
- Submit comments to PsychBrainstorms-DL@med.miami.edu
- Want to be anonymous? Submit comments via fax to 305-355-9076

Dr. Crocco is Chief of Geriatric Psychiatry services for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or related disorders and their families. As a clinical scientist, she participates in research on caregiving and the development of measures to diagnosis MCI and PRE-MCI.

This evening we are heading to the San Juan Bosco Student Clinic where she works as a Clinical Faculty Mentor for the Department of Community Service (DOCCS). This is a fully student-run community outreach program of the UMMSM. She provides clinical care, mentorship and supervision one evening per month for underserved psychiatric patients, allowing students the opportunity to provide clinical care, while providing screening services and health education. As part of the DOCCS programs, she has been the primary supervisor at the mental health station at the Key West health fair since 2011, providing annual screenings. This reporter needs to sign off; tomorrow is an early day. Dr. Crocco needs to prepare for the UMMSM Admissions Committee. From reviewing applicant files, interviewing candidates and attending multiple committee meetings, the responsibilities are many.

Currently an assistant professor, Dr. Crocco has been part of the UM family for 17 years, completing her fellowship in geriatric psychiatry at University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital in 1997. She truly represents the high caliber and dedication of our faculty and staff; the PIs and a flurry of participants arriving for the schizophrenic, Alz Dis, MCI, technology intervention and caregivers studies. In between, she will be checking with various colleagues across the community, preparing the next four upcoming grants and making sure they contain the appropriate budget, science, data, and RFA requirements.

Though not quite reaching the exact mileage definition of 26.2 miles for a marathon, Chin Chin was in her element throughout her studies. She has had a very successful career integrating her engineering training (BS and MS in Industrial Engineering) and public health background (MPH), her interest is in the application of technology to support health care delivery and services for older populations, especially older SES minority population. All trophies brought different at the end of a race. hers is a snapshot of numerous successful grant submissions. Her bibliography includes 10 books, book chapters, and 12 articles in scientific journals. A quote from Dr. Sara J. Czaja sums it all: “Chin Chin is extremely dedicated to the goals and projects of the COA and always willing to go the next step and put in extra effort. She brings a fresh eye to our projects and wonderful enthusiasm. She is also wonderful with our older adult participants and is a terrific presence in the community. We are very lucky to have her as part of our team.” She is definitely the marathon winner of our first “Staff Star” in the Department of Psychiatry. Congratulations on all your accomplishments Chin Chin! You symbolize the meaning of best practices and professionalism at the University of Miami.