Many Changes are Happening at the CASD!!!

We have some bad news, but we also have much to smile about in spite of it. First, the bad news, and then I will discuss the ramifications and the good news. Future directions follow.

**Bad News**
Dr. Mark Dixon and Dr. Ruth Anne Rehfeldt have left SIU for positions elsewhere. They will be greatly missed! In their stead I, Dr. Michelle Kibby, have become Director of the CASD. I have very big ‘shoes to fill’ but am striving diligently to do so.

**Ramifications**
SIU and Hope Clinical Care (HCC) are working towards establishing The Autism Clinic (TAC) at the CASD to provide ABA services. HCC is providing the BCBA supervisor – a full-time hire who will be supervising SIUC’s BAT students, who, in turn, will be providing services as part of their coursework/internships. To cover this hire and RBTs that HCC will hire, much of the CASD’s TAP funding has been removed/transferred to HCC. The HCC hire will be none other than SIUC’s own Kirsten Schaper!

Dr. Valerie Boyer will continue the Speech and Language Clinic. She now is the PI on the TAP grant as well, which funds the screening, diagnostic, SLP, and clinical psychology services. Further, SLP students, along with BAT students, are helping with the ASD screenings, providing great training to both groups of students.
**Good News**

Services at the CASD have expanded. ABA services are expected to resume early next semester; in-person SLP services are being provided despite COVID with many precautions in place; and clinical psychology services are starting, although remotely at first due to COVID.

In terms of clinical psychology, two services are starting: one in pediatric psychology supervised by Dr. Karla Fehr, and one in child clinical psychology supervised by Dr. Michelle Kibby. Dr. Fehr’s clinic is the Behavioral Health Consultation Clinic. It offers consultation and brief interventions to children with ASD and their parents on topics such as sleep difficulties, toilet training, and picky eating. I am supervising the Child Clinical Psychology Clinic which is providing group therapy, including those on social skills, parent management, anxiety, and sibling support. Some of the groups are for parents; some are for high functioning teens and college students with ASD; and one is for siblings.

**Future Directions/Director Goals**

My goals are to further expand the CASD. In so doing, I seek to expand the clinical services offered, as well as the research conducted, at the center. In terms of the first goal, I will be working in conjunction with programs that are part of the new College of Health and Human Sciences to add additional units/services to the center. Within the new college there are several health occupations represented, and I will be approaching them to see how we might work together to better serve children/adolescents with ASD and their families. Donations are needed to meet this initiative, as it is not paid for by the TAP grant.

I also seek to grow the research conducted at the center, both intra-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary. The CASD seeks to resume its status as a leader in ASD research. To this end, I will be focusing on developing inter-disciplinary research between the current services, as well as those added to the center. Once pilot data is attained, the goal is then to seek extramural funding to foster further research. Donations are needed to begin pilot data collection.

Another, equally important, goal to me is to connect with CASD alumni! I seek to understand how the CASD has impacted you, as well as to keep you better informed as to what is happening at the CASD. Be on the lookout for an alumni satisfaction questionnaire in the coming months!

Finally, due to State funding cuts and other related issues, the CASD is mandated to be 100% self-sufficient in terms of funding. The TAP grant is a wonderful source of support for some clinical services, as noted above, but more support is needed in light of State funding being precarious at times, as well as to grow the center in the areas noted above. Please consider donating today!
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The Autism Program of Illinois
TAP