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Sac State students put skills to work at shelter for women and children

Sacramento State’s Career Counseling students are putting their counseling skills to the test for social service agencies struggling through tough economic times. A case in point is St. John's Shelter for Women and Children, where Sac State students Jaisha White, Keturah Kirk and Tinelle Evans Reno are serving the community.

White and Kirk have been conducting their field study/internship activities at St. John's since September. They've counseled clients individually and in groups during the fall and spring semesters, frequently in the evenings and on Saturdays. Evans Reno has just begun counseling clients at St. John's; another Sac State student, Julie McGilvray, was already employed at St. John's before she began the master’s program working on career development issues with women at the shelter.

“This is a unique situation because the focus of the counseling is on overcoming barriers to employment, which is obviously much needed for homeless women but quite uncommon,” says Professor Al Levin, Department of Counselor Education.

Interns from Sacramento State’s Career Counseling master’s program assist in the Career Education and Placement center. They provide counseling and job readiness assistance to the women of St. John's, one-on-one and in groups. Topics include overcoming barriers to employment, balancing work and life, career assessments, identifying strengths, resume development, interviewing skills and educational opportunities.

“This is where our students can be more effective,” Levin notes. Previously, Sac State students received much of their experience through the Career Practicum. But Levin believes them to be better-suited for places like St John’s, where students can have the greatest impact on low-income and homeless women and children.

Field Study in Counseling (EDC 480) is a supervised placement occurring both on and off campus. The field experience familiarizes students with settings similar to those of their potential fields of employment. It affords the students an opportunity to direct patient counseling and/or consultation.
“In the current economy with high unemployment, single women, especially homeless women with children, have been hit especially hard,” Levin says. Sac State students are providing a helping hand to those who want to help themselves.

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