# Community Well-Being Ph.D.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES

# SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL of EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



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## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### PURPOSE & GOALS

The **vision** of the program in Community Well-Being (CWB) is to be a hub for engaged scholarship in community well-being and social change.

The **mission** of the program is to produce community-engaged scholars who promote individual, relational, and collective well-being through community-based research and action.

The program in CWB trains community-engaged action-researchers committed to promoting social justice through rigorous theoretical analysis and community-based research. The program is grounded in the discipline of community psychology, and focuses on community-engaged scholarship that involves the researcher in a mutually beneficial partnership with the community.

# CAREER OUTCOMES

The program prepares scholars for careers in:

- Academia
- Research
- Public Policy



### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### The CWB Program is for full time students only. Outside employment outside the university during the academic semesters is generally not permitted unless it is directly linked to the student's program of research.

- a. Research training with faculty advisor
- b. Teaching
- c. Required Coursework: 60 credits. Up to 30 credits may be transferred from a master's program
- d. Qualifying Exam
- e. Advancement to Candidacy
- f. Dissertation
- g. CWB Forum

### **PROGRAM TIMELINE**

- Approved Program of Study Spring Year 1
- Qualifying Exam proposal meeting Summer Year 2
- Qualifying Exam completed and Admission to Candidacy Fall Year 3
- Dissertation Proposal Spring Year 3
- Dissertation Defended Spring Year 4

### **A. RESEARCH TRAINING**

The primary focus of doctoral study for CWB students is research training, which takes place in the context of apprenticeship with a research advisor and supported by coursework in research methodology. This research experience is designed to provide the student training with respect to varied aspects of the research process such as conducting literature reviews, developing research designs, building relationships with community members and partners, collecting data, conducting analyses, and writing papers and articles. In addition to participating in the advisor's research program, students also receive mentorship on developing their own ideas in order to develop their Qualifying Exam, Dissertation, and ultimately an independent program of research. Students are also expected each year to submit abstracts for presentation at conferences and other relevant settings such as the UM research forum, SCRA Biennial, SCRA Eco conferences, APA, and others.

### **B. RESEARCH ADVISOR**

A research advisor is assigned to each admitted student in the letter of admission, based on fit with research interests as determined during the admissions process. The research advisor must be a member of the CWB faculty. The research advisor will serve as the student's research mentor, and as the Chair of the student's Supervisory Committee and Qualifying Examination Committee. In order to be in good standing in the CWB program all students must have a research advisor. If a transition to a different advisor becomes necessary, the student may take no longer than one semester or the summer to identify a new advisor.

Upon completing the Qualifying Examination, and prior to advancement to candidacy the student must specify who will chair their dissertation committee. Students, who wish to change research advisors while in the program, should consult the SEHD Handbook for guidance about choosing advisors and the change of advisor form.

The program director will serve as the academic advisor for all CWB students, whose role is to help students develop their program of study.

### **C. TEACHING**

In order to prepare for academic positions students are required to receive training in teaching. All students are expected to serve as a teaching assistant at least once during the first two years of training. Students in this role are expected to engage in a variety of teaching related activities including attending the class in which they are assisting, developing a rubric for an assignment, grading, and as appropriate guest lecturing.

### D. REQUIRED COURSEWORK

To obtain the PhD students are required to complete 60 credits of coursework and 12 credits of dissertation research. Of the 60 credits required for the PhD, 30 are foundational courses at the master's level. These courses are offered in the EPS Department's Community and Social Change Program. Students who have completed a master's program in community psychology are likely to have taken most of these courses and may transfer in the credits. Students who have not completed a master's in community psychology are required to take these courses or equivalents. Students may substitute these master's level courses with equivalents at the doctoral level. For example, EPS 628 Managing Community Organizations in the Professional Skills category may be substituted by a course concerned with professional development relevant to doctoral students. The EPS626 Multicultural Communities in a Globalized Society requirement in the Foundations category could be fulfilled by a doctoral level course that a) addresses issues of multiculturalism; b) includes some consideration of community issues; and c) includes application of multicultural concerns to practice or research. Students are also encouraged to develop independent study opportunities to apprentice with faculty on research related to these topics that can lead to manuscripts suitable for publication in academic journals. Students will discuss these options with their advisor and the program director director as they develop a Program of Study, subject to approval by the advisory committee.

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# COURSE SEQUENCE PLAN

	CREDITS
FOUNDATIONAL COURSES	
<b>EPS 622 /</b> Community Well-being and Change: Theory and Practice	3
<b>EPS 623</b> / Development and Change in Community Organizations	3
<b>EPS 624</b> /Essentials of Research in Social and Behavioral Sciences	3
EPS 625 / Program Evaluation	3
<b>EPS 626 /</b> Multicultural Communities in a Globalized Society	3
EPS 628 / Social Change Praxis	3
EPS 629/ Seminar in Community and Social Change	3
EPS 700/ Quantitative Methods I	3
Elective (EPS 6XX)	3
Elective (EPS 6XX)	3
	Tot. 30
CORE COURSES	
EPS 725/ Seminar in Community Wellbeing	6
<b>EPS 731</b> / Theories of Community Research and Action	3
<b>EPS 732</b> / Community Based Participatory Action Research	3
SOC 601 / Classical Sociological Theory	3
	Tot. 15
RESEARCH COMPETENCIES	3
EPS701/ Introduction to Research Methods	3
EPS702/ Quantitative Methods II	3
EPS703 or EPS 708/ Applied Multivariate Statistics or	
Structural Equation Modeling or other advanced statistics course	3
EPS714/ Qualitative Research Methods I	3
	Tot. 15
DISSERTATION	
EPS830/ Pre-Candidacy Dissertation Research	6
EPS840/ Post-Candidacy Dissertation Research	6
	Tot. 12

These courses are offered in the Community and Social Change master's program and are required for CWB students. This requirement may be met by taking these courses at UM or transferring credits in from a prior master's program. If taken at UM, faculty may augment assignments to be better suited for research-oriented doctoral level work. Students may appeal to substitute these courses with a doctoral level course at UM that is functionally equivalent.

### **E. QUALIFYING EXAM**

The primary purpose of the CWB Qualifying Examination is to determine the candidate's potential and readiness for completing the doctorate in Community Well-Being. The exam is designed to assess the students' competencies in Community Psychology. The exam is a portfolio of the students' work with 4 components:

1. Critical Review of empirical literature relevant to the students' emerging program of research. The review should identify an existing empirical literature on the topic of interest to the student and critique it, applying a theoretical lens rooted in Community Psychology.

2. Research Report on an empirical study written in the traditional form of a research report in APA style. The report should include a literature review, methods, results, and discussions sections. Students can build data available through the research advisor's ongoing research or collected by the student.

**3.** Research and Career Statement and CV. The statement should describe the students' professional research biography and identity.

**4.** Statement of Teaching Philosophy. Students will be asked to submit a Teaching Philosophy Statement written formally, in the format expected in academic job applications

### F. ADVANCEMENT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDACY

After finishing most required courses and passing the qualifying examination, the CWB Program Faculty reviews the students' overall progress in the program to consider advancement to doctoral candidacy.

### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

#### **G. DISSERTATION**

**EPS 830/** Pre-Candidacy Dissertation Research **EPS 840/** Post-Candidacy Dissertation Research

The Dissertation is a comprehensive APA-style report of original research that contributes to existing theory and knowledge in community psychology. The dissertation proposal is to be completed within one year of the successful passing of the qualifying examination. The purpose of the dissertation is for the student to demonstrate scholarly expertise in a chosen research area and competence in independent scholarship with respect to developing a review of the literature, articulating a research question, designing a study to answer the question, collecting data, conducting analyses, reporting and interpreting the findings.

CWB students are expected to conduct an empirical study, including primary data collection. In some situations, secondary analysis may be appropriate. Approval by the University of Miami IRB is required.

The dissertation should follow the standard format, with chapters covering Introduction, Review of the Literature, Methods, Results, and Discussion. Students are expected to have a proposal and a defense meeting.

### **H. CWB FORUM**

CWB students are encouraged to attend and participate in the CWB Forum [held 4-8 times per year], and attendance is mandatory during their first 3 years in the program. The Forum is a gathering of CWB faculty, students, and other interested faculty and students from other departments and programs where they present on their research and discuss community psychology theories, research and practice.

# FACULTY

CWB core and affiliated faculty conduct research in local community organizations, schools, networks and coalitions, neighborhoods and other national and international settings. Examples of current communityengaged research include adaptation and acculturation among immigrant and refugee populations, cultural coping strategies in Black and Latino communities, organizational change in CBO's, the promotion of personal, organizational, and community well-being through digital platforms, and theoretical and / empirical connections among wellness, fairness, and mattering. CWB doctoral student will work with one of these faculty members as their primary research mentor.

**DINA BIRMAN**, Ph.D., Professor of Educational and Psychological Studies

SCOT EVANS, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Educational and Psychological Studies

LAURA KOHN-WOOD, Ph.D., Dean of School of Education and Human Development, Professor of Educational and Psychological Studies

**ISAAC PRILLELTENSKY,** Ph.D., Erwin and Barbara Mautner Chair in Community Well-Being, Professor of Educational and Psychological Studies

TODD WARNER, Ph.D., Lecturer, Educational and Psychological Studies

Students in the CWB program may receive financial support in the form of a graduate or research assistantship that require a commitment of up to 20 hours per week. Students receiving the Kurtz Family Community Well Being Fellowship stipends are expected to apprentice with their research advisor and CWB faculty for up to 20 hours per week. Fellowship activities may include actively participating in research, assisting in teaching or serving as instructor of an undergraduate course in the Human and Social Development (HSD) program. Students are expected to be in residence at the University of Miami to receive the fellowship funding.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q: What is Community Well-Being?**

A: Community well-being is the idea that communities, organizations, schools, and other settings can be structured to support social and psychological well-being of all members. Our program is grounded in the discipline of community psychology and focuses on community-engaged scholarship that involves the researcher in a mutually beneficial partnership with the community. We train students to use community research and action to understand and promote community well-being. The website scra27.org has a lot of information about our field, including educational programs.

# Q: Community psychology sounds interesting, but I have never heard of it or taken a class in it. Can I apply?

A: If you are interested and meet the other qualifications (research experience and interested in being a scholar) then we would welcome your application. Please take a look at scra.27.org website and see if it's a good fit for you. Consider searching online and looking at a community psychology textbook. Also make sure you search for information on faculty members and review some of our publications.

# Q: I have a master's degree in social work (or public health or counseling psychology), is this program a good fit for me? Can I apply?

A: Community psychology is very well aligned with some of these other disciplines such as social work, public health, and some subdisciplines in psychology. Within this set of disciplines, our emphasis is on research involving social issues and marginalized communities through an engaged community involvement process.

### Q: I don't have a master's degree,/can I apply?

A: Yes. We are open to admitting students who do not have a master's degree and have had several such students in our program. Students without a master's degree need to take more courses for a total of 60 credits, and this may require more time.

### Q: I have a master's degree and work as a community engaged professional. I am now interested in raising my qualifications and pursuing a doctorate. Is this program a good fit for me?

A: It depends on your career goals. If you are interested in pursuing a new career path to become a researcher/ scholar then this program could be a good fit for you. If you are interested in continuing to do the work you are now doing in the community, then a practice-oriented program or a professional doctoral degree would be a better fit for you.

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### Q: I am interested in research because in the future I may want to start a school (run a nonprofit agency, create a new intervention program for high-risk youth) and I want to be able to conduct program evaluations to improve my program/ school/agency. Is this program a good fit for me?

A: It sounds like you are interested in learning research skills that can enhance your work as a practitioner. While we work with many schools and non-profits and provide many opportunities to learn about and engage in program evaluation, our emphasis is on the creation and the dissemination of knowledge.

### Q: I have studied psychology and have worked in a psychology research Tab. I am interested in research and considered a clinical or counseling PhD to become a scientist-practitioner. However, I decided that I would rather make an impact on well-being more broadly in the community.

A: It sounds like this program may be a great fit for you, particularly if your focus is on becoming a community engaged scholar/researcher.

### Q: Where are there jobs for someone with a Ph.D. in Community Well Being?

A: There are a variety of jobs for which our program prepares students. They include academic positions in Psychology Departments, Schools of Education, Schools of Public Health, and Institutes within Medical Schools focusing on specific populations (e.g., adolescents) or issues (e.g. LGBTQ services). Often, a first step toward an academic career after graduation is a one- to two-year post-doctoral training fellowship in a specific area of interest. While our hope is that students will choose academic or research institute careers to maximize their impact, some of our graduates have taken positions with community-based organizations involving applied research, program development, and program evaluation. Students could also pursue administrative positions with local or national governmental agencies that fund research or programs that address social issues, such as immigration or HIV/AIDS. We collectively have extensive professional networks in a wide variety of local, state, and national organizations to aid in this process.

### Q: Do you require GRE?

A: NO

# **Q:** I am looking at other programs in community psychology and related fields. What is unique about yours?

A: We offer a particular emphasis on developing critical and ecological perspectives on community wellbeing and collaborate with many local community-based organizations working with multicultural communities, youth, and refugees in particular. Our faculty include international experts in critical community psychology, immigration, community-engaged action research, community organizations and coalitions, mattering, the relationship between wellness and fairness, and multidimensional well-being. The Miami area is itself a distinct ecology providing unique opportunities for learning from and contributing to diverse communities and intersecting community issues such as climate resilience and racial justice.

# Q: I'm interested but need to get a better sense of my fit with specific program goals and faculty. What should I do next?

A: Please feel free to contact any of our faculty to talk about your interests and their current work, philosophy of mentoring, etc. If you have general program questions, contact Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky at isaac@miami.edu.

# **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### WHO APPLIES?

The CWB Program admission process is highly selective. We admit a small number of students (2-4) in each admission cycle. We are particularly dedicated to increasing the number of under-represented minorities in the profession. Qualified applicants to our program have research and practical experiences relevant to a career in community psychology. Applicants with master's degrees in Community Psychology are especially encouraged to apply. A master's degree is not required, but students applying without a master's degree will have to take more courses and should expect more time to graduation. Specifically, qualified applicants are able to demonstrate in their applications:

- An excellent academic record
- An interest in becoming a scholar/researcher and seeking an academic position upon graduation. This interest should be informed by prior research experience.
- Familiarity with the field of community psychology
- A fit with a CWB faculty members' research program in terms of background and interest

### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Admission to the Ph.D. in CWB is based on the following:

- An undergraduate and graduate grade point average of 3.0 or better.
- Three letters of recommendation (at least 2 academic and 1 can be from a practitioner/community member).
- A personal statement describing the following:
- Reasons for applying to the program;
- Previous research experience
- Previous experience with community-based work
- Specific ideas for developing a research program
- Fit with at least one CWB faculty members' research program and interest in working with in terms of background and interests. To be considered, applicants must identify a CWB faculty member they are interested in working with.
- Goals upon graduation.
- Current Resume

Qualified students will be invited for an interview.

#### For full consideration complete applications are due by January 1st

### **DR. ISAAC PRILLELTENSKY**

**Program Director** 

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### **APPLICANT JOURNEY REPRESENTATIVE**

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