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Graduate Profile: Becoming the Best Version of You

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Graduate Profile: Becoming the Best Version of You

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You are not just training to become an effective therapist for your future clients, you are learning to become the best version of yourself for yourself.

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It had been more than a decade since Jennifer Young had earned her bachelor's degree in psychology at another university when the Chicago

native discovered [Governors State University](#) was where she needed to be to make her dreams a reality.

Now graduating with her [Master of Arts in Counseling](#) with a concentration in Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling, Young has the world ahead of her including offers from several clinical positions, a newly published children's book, and her recent acceptance into Governors State's [Doctor of Education in Counselor Education and Supervision](#).

Despite always having an interest in counseling couples and families, Young could never find the right program for her and held off pursuing her dream for over 10 years. After speaking with a friend in the field about her passion and dream, she suggested GSU

“I researched the program and it seemed to be a perfect fit,” Young recalls.

Thinking back to her time spent at the university, some of her highlights include making new and lasting friendships with other students in the program, being able to develop professional relationships with the faculty and staff, and being inducted into [Chi Sigma Iota](#), international honor society of counseling. She also studied abroad and thinks fondly of the [multi-cultural counseling experience in Thailand](#), crediting Dr. Sonya Lorelle and Dr. Katherine Atkins Wix for “opening my eyes to a world of possibilities.”

Even in the midst of classes and interning, Young continued to pursue her personal goals as well.

“During my time as a student, I was also able to publish my first children's book entitled [Olivia's Brook](#),” Young said.

Thinking back to her early days in the program, she recalls her first professor, Tracey Kim Snow.

“Connecting with her helped relieve me of the fears I had regarding the program and profession and eased my anxiety about this uncertain territory I was beginning to explore,” Young Said.

Professor Kimanne Foraker-Koons taught her how to assess for trauma and to service clients from a trauma informed lens as well as the importance of play therapy and that play is the natural language for children.

Besides strengthening her development of treatment plans and objectives, Dr. Kimberly Melton Lechner emotionally supported Young during her academic journey.

“She pushed me when I wanted to give up. She saw greatness and potential in me when I could no longer see it in myself,” Young said.

Dr. Ileana Ungureanu led her on a path to discovering her theoretical lens and provided unwavering support throughout her journey as well.

Now having graduated, Young has been offered several clinical positions and plans to continue her educational pursuit at GSU. Recently, she was admitted into the doctoral program for counselor education and supervision which she will begin fall of 2021.

When thinking of future and current Governors State students, Young hopes they enjoy the journey as much as she did.

“Some courses and semesters will be more demanding than others,” Young admits.
“However, whenever possible, stop and realize you are on a journey of a lifetime.”

She encourages students to make friends and lean on each other.

“Embrace asking for help, provide help to others when you can, and give yourself some grace.”

To Young, the training at GSU has changed her forever.

“You are not just training to become an effective therapist for your future clients, you are learning to become the best version of yourself for yourself.”