American Psychological Association Supports USU Master’s Students with Fellowships

Hillary Fruge

"Under the fellowship, I will serve minorities in a counseling capacity providing additional resources. Many of my students are culturally diverse, immigrants, refugees, and even foster children."
- Alexa Pliego, STAY Fellowship Recipient

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Three graduate students in the Utah State Psychology Department Professional School Counselor (MEd) Program were awarded fellowships from the American Psychological Association (APA). The Services for Transition Age Youth (STAY) Fellowship is funded through the Minority Fellowship Program, which is a training program for ethnic and racial minority researchers and service providers. The fellowship supports students in a terminal master’s program in mental health fields with training to provide counseling services to transition-aged youth, ages 16 to 25, and their families.

“I started this program knowing that I wanted to work in schools and help students be successful,” said Alexa Pliego, a STAY Fellowship recipient in USU’s Psychology Department. “Through the program, I have learned that I can use my privilege to be an advocate for minority populations in the education setting and provide additional resources to students who may not have otherwise made it to college.”

Pliego says this opportunity has allowed her to work with low income and first-generation students as well as culturally diverse students, immigrants, refugees, and children from foster programs. The MEd program qualifies graduates for professional licensure in school counseling and trains students specifically for positions in K-12 public and private schools.

“Our current education system is not equitable, there are many strides that need to be made before higher education is just as attainable to minority populations as it is for the majority,” says Pliego. “I am glad that the MEd program touches on this subject in almost every class, because it shows me that the problem is being recognized and addressed.”

Recipients of the STAY Fellowship are awarded financial support of up to $10,000 for one year, gifted a one-year associate membership to APA, and offered travel support to visit Washington, D.C. for specialized training during the Psychology Summer Institute hosted by APA. The STAY Fellowship provides recipients with additional training and enrichment experiences to build skills in the areas of minority populations, trauma, social justice, immigrant and refugee populations, and promoting intergenerational impact.

Source: https://www.apa.org/pi/mfp/psychology/stay