



A Message from the Program Director



I am excited to bring you the first MMFT Program Newsletter. It has only been two years since

I moved to Winnipeg from Montreal and became the MMFT Program Director. I said “only” because it feels like way longer than that. There were things that I expected coming in; and there were things that I did not expect at all. I did not expect to occupy five different offices in my first year. Many of you saw me sitting in at least one of those offices surrounded by boxes. I did not expect that running the Program that was operating on its own for a long time meant that there were things that nobody knew how to do. I did not expect the amount of work involved in the COAMFTE accreditation pursuit. After many months of sleepless nights, my body and brain are still suspicious when I try to go to bed at a decent time. On the other hand, there were things that far exceeded my expectations. The support that I have been getting at all levels from students to University administration is beyond what I had ever received in my career in academia. The Program’s quality of education and training

is another thing that exceeded my expectations. As someone from outside who has seen many MFT programs, I applaud everybody involved in developing the Program and maintaining its high standards. You set the bar high, and we are going to raise it even higher.

When I first joined the Program, I began a visibility campaign hoping to raise awareness within the University as well as within the community of the amazing work that is happening in the Program. As I continue the visibility campaign, we are facing the challenge of the MMFT Program being recognized separately from Aurora. I hear people referring to the Program as the “Aurora Program.” Given the history, this is understandable. However, as the Program grows and Aurora expands, I believe it is important that we be recognized within the University and the community as two distinct units that work very closely.

In the coming academic year, the priority is to increase students’ competency for working with Indigenous individuals, families and communities. Indigenization is one of the University’s strategic directions, and I will describe more about the plans in the “We heard you!” section. Additionally, I plan to introduce some research activities and start fostering a research environment by involving people

who are interested in research. The MMFT degree is a clinical degree, but it is extremely important that we, as MFTs, engage in research and show scientific evidence of the effectiveness of our MFT work.

As we wait to hear from COAMFTE about their decision, I am hoping this new academic year will be a big celebration year. I have been discussing with the Deans about some of the ways for the Program to increase its stability and grow. By “grow,” I do not mean more students. I mean the kind of growth that people experience when they enter into new relationships, overcome their fears, take up on new challenges, etc. In Japanese, a crisis is 危機 (kiki). The first Chinese character means danger, and the second means opportunity. This Program went through some crises in recent years, and we certainly turned them into opportunities. Opportunities are here, and now is our chance to seize them!

-- Narumi Taniguchi, Ph.D.

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Welcome New Students

The MMFT Program welcomes 17 new students who are eager to begin their studies in September. This cohort includes one international student from Kenya, and one out-of-the-province student. They all come with interesting and valuable knowledge and experiences.

Welcome to the MMFT Program and to the MMFT Community!



Congratulations; you are (finally and really) done!

The following students completed all master's degree requirements (i.e., 63 credit hours and 500 clinical hours) during 2016-17 academic year:



(Right to Left)
Noah Star
Sarah Picken
Ryan Blackman
Elan Jury
Carolin Vesely
Amber Grewal
Stewart Hubbard (February, 2017)
Kia Kirzinger (Not Pictured)
Liz Pruden-Skiba (Not Pictured)

Congratulations, everyone!
Please keep in touch and let us know where your journey takes you.

COAMFTE Madness

We incorporated all COAMFTE standards (version 12) into the Program throughout the 2015-16 academic year, in addition to the components already in place in previous years. We submitted our Self Study (over 1,000 pages) in October, 2016. We then submitted an addendum (over 200 pages) in February, 2017 in response to the COAMFTE's review. We welcomed a mock site visitor in March. The real site visitors came in May. We received the Site Visit Report in June, and finally sent the Program's responses (over 150 pages) in July.

The next COAMFTE meeting is scheduled for November 3-4, 2017. That is when they will make the accreditation decision. They will send us their action letter within 30 days of the meeting.

Huge thanks to those of you who helped with this process in various ways.

And for now, we wait. Just wait...

We Heard You!

Over the past year, the MMFT Program sought feedback from the communities of interest through informal conversation, an Annual Program Survey, evaluations of teaching/supervision, and practicum site evaluation. There are two main areas of concerns expressed by many communities of interest: lack of Indigenous focus, and lack of consistency in supervision quality.



You are concerned about very few courses addressing Indigenous cultures, not having Indigenous supervisors or instructors. We have a few supervisors who are well connected with Indigenous communities and/or have extensive experiences working with Indigenous families and communities. However, the MMFT Program acknowledges that we have a long way to go. Indigenization is one of the University of Winnipeg's strategic directions, and the MMFT Program at the University of Winnipeg has a responsibility to educate and train future MFTs who are able to connect and work effectively with Indigenous clients. Here is the summary of actions that the MMFT Program has taken so far to address the two concerns:

1. Lack of Indigenous focus

- a. Instructors have been asked to incorporate Indigenous contents in their course.
- b. The Program Director consulted with the Director of the Master's in Development Practice: Indigenous Development.
- c. The Program Director is in touch with one faculty member who is teaching Indigenous healing courses within the University.

d. The Program Director contacted a few graduates with Indigenous background about their supervision/teaching interests and possibilities.

e. The Program began offering practicum at Metis Child, Family, and Community Services.

f. The Program and Aurora connected with the UW Aboriginal Student Services Centre, and ASSC began referring the students and/or their family members to Aurora.

2. Lack of consistency in supervision quality across practicum groups

a. Supervision Improvement Committee was formed, and they surveyed all supervisors about their supervision structure.

b. Student Evaluation of Supervision has been made available online. Supervisors receive an aggregated summary and comments every year after the practicum is over and grades are posted so that they can utilize students' feedback to improve their work.

c. Aurora administration and the MMFT Program Director conducted formal evaluations of Aurora supervisors. This process included each supervisor reflecting on their work and showing their video-recorded supervision session to the evaluation committee.

d. All Aurora supervisor positions for 2017-18 were posted for public competition.

e. Monthly supervisors' meeting includes time allocated to the self-of-the-supervisor conversation.

f. Practicum Site Evaluation (online) was developed and will be conducted every year after practicum is over and grades are posted.

The MMFT Program conducts an Annual Program Survey in October. Please let us know how we are doing and offer any suggestions that you may have for Program improvement.

Goodbye Sparling Hall

Monday, December 7, 2015 was the last day that the MMFT Program and Aurora operated from there. The ceiling of one of the offices had collapsed over the weekend. Luckily, nobody was in the room when it happened.

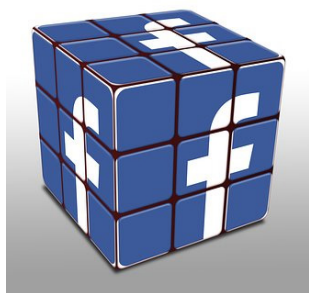


Ceiling damage was found in some other offices as well. Three days later, students were already seeing clients in Ashdown Hall. With the help of students, staff, supervisors, instructors, and their family members, we packed Sparling Hall offices in February, and moved into the Rice Centre building on March 1, 2016.

Since then, Sparling Hall has been inaccessible. We do not know what plans the University has for the building. Our history and memories are there, but unfortunately we did not have a chance to properly say goodbye. Sparling Hall, thank you for many years of service to the MMFT Program!

Questions?

The MMFT Program joined the Faculty of Education in September of 2015. Aurora Family Therapy Centre remains as a non-profit organization within the University of Winnipeg, and is a primary practicum site for the MMFT Program. Due to this separation, responsibilities of the Program Director and Aurora Administration have shifted a little. Any questions and concerns related to academic aspects of the Program (e.g., admission, registration, courses, teaching, degree requirements, practicum placements, external practicum site approval, graduation, etc.) should be directed to the Program Director (Dr. Narumi Taniguchi) or the Program Assistant (Kari McCluskey). Questions that pertain to one practicum site only should be directed to the appropriate person at the practicum site. This includes Aurora Family Therapy Centre.



Last But Not Least

The MMFT Program has a public Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/University-of-Winnipeg-Marriage-and-Family-Therapy-Program-495615600605834/>). If you have job opportunities, workshop or other announcements for current MMFT students and/or graduates, please forward them to Kari McCluskey (mftinfo@uwinnipeg.ca). We will post the announcements on our Facebook page.

If you would like to unsubscribe from the MMFT Program Newsletter, please reply to this email with “unsubscribe” in the subject line.

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