

A helper at heart: counselor cares beyond the classroom

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SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

“Always look for the helpers. There will always be helpers,” Mr. Rogers said in an interview with the Archive of American Television.

That’s exactly what Savannah Cormier, director of the Play Therapy Education and Research Center at Arkansas State University, is providing.

“I feel like we’re the helpers,” Cormier, who is also an associate professor of counseling, said.

Cormier is entering her seventh year as a faculty member at A-State. She’s from Arnaudville, Louisiana and attended the University of Louisiana at Lafayette for her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology.

Following that, she earned her Master’s degree in Counseling with an emphasis in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Play Therapy.

“I wanted to make a bigger impact, and so I went back to school for my PhD so I could train people to expand the impact that we can make on the world,” Cormier said.

She earned her PhD at the University of Northern Colorado. Cormier started

her job at A-State in the summer of 2019 and has held that position since.

She said she attributes her leadership skills to her education and life experiences, such as formerly teaching at the preschool level. Cormier said she is a service-oriented leader and keeps the code of ethics at the center of all her leadership endeavors.

Weston Sandusky said Cormier is an amazing leader.

“She is able to not only focus on what is required of running a mental health clinic, but also give some of that responsibility to students so they are able to learn about their future careers in ways that are not always available to them,” Sandusky said.

He works with Cormier in the Counseling Program and helps supervise students in the Lupine Wellness Center.

“I believe in my team and I can get amazing things from them by motivating them, helping them feel cared for and supported,” Cormier said.

Cormier teaches individual counseling, group counseling and play therapy. She also serves on a variety of committees that help serve the university, such as



PHOTO COURTESY OF SAVANNAH CORMIER'S INSTAGRAM @ DR_CORMIER

Savannah Cormier, director of the Play Therapy Education and Research Center at Arkansas State University, holds a model of a brain.

supervising the Lupine Center.

During this time, she oversees graduate students in counseling sessions.

“As the Lupine director, Dr. Cormier always puts students experience and learning opportunities at the forefront of decisions made regarding Lupine,” Sandusky said.

Cormier said she gives graduate students the ability to express and test their own ideas. She said she believes the

best way for students to learn is to step out of the classroom.

Emma Adams, a senior psychology major from Harrisburg, Arkansas, said she agreed and would want someone she could relate with.

The Lupine Center offers a wide variety of counseling, including the less traditional practices.

Recently, the clinic provided psychoeducation training to a few elementary schools in the area. They also

hold workshops and partner with A-State’s Transition Program to help students with learning disabilities.

Because the clinic doesn’t work with insurance, they have fewer limitations than most mental health clinics.

“We do it based on a mental health professional perspective tailored to your client,” Cormier said.

She said because the clinic doubles as a research facility, they’re able to improve constantly and meet the needs of the community. Students pay for counseling services as part of their tuition. The clinic is also available to the public on a sliding-scale fee.

Graduate students receive feedback from a PhD-level counselor and their peers, totaling about five hours of supervision per week. Faculty put these measures in place to ensure clients are receiving quality services.

“We want to make sure they’re protected as graduate students, and that our clients are almost receiving a team treatment approach,” Cormier said.

With Cormier’s heavy workload, she said balancing her life is a family endeavor. She’s

married and has a six-year-old son. To prevent burnout, she said she sets appropriate boundaries between her professional and personal life.

She said her team of colleagues has also made it easier for her.

“I have a lot of supportive colleagues that we all work so great together. I don’t think things could function as well as they do if I didn’t have Dr. Sandusky or even Dean Hux in our college,”

Cormier said. “I do highly recommend any student, faculty, or staff who is needing some help to reach out to the Lupine service center to schedule an intake.”

Like Mr. Rogers would say, there’s always help available, especially from Cormier and her team.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LUPINE WELLNESS CENTER

Student Speaks: “It’s the end of the year! What is your favorite moment from this past year?”



PHOTO COURTESY OF TESS BROOKS

Tess Brooks is a first-year radiology major from South Wilmington, Illinois.

“Definitely my surprise birthday party that my friends threw me.”



Photo by Ahtzirly Zuñiga | Staff Writer

Nonce Calhoun is a sophomore sports management major from West Helena, Arkansas.

“I don’t know if y’all remember, but it was a fair outside. That was definitely my favorite. Just a whole lot of friends, a lot of people having so much experience with friends and other things, it was pretty cool.”

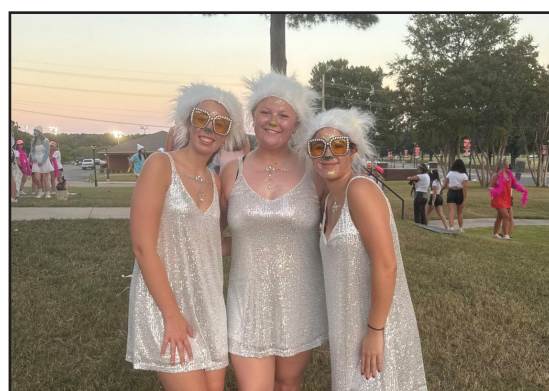


PHOTO COURTESY OF TRISTAN CALHOUN-HACKLER

Tristan Griffeth-Hackler is a first-year radiology major from Melbourne, Arkansas.

“Delta Zeta Big-Little Reveal!”

Students go wild at Aux Cord Wars

EVIE ELLIS

STAFF WRITER

The crowd cheered for fellow students as they battled it out on the Centennial Hall stage Thursday night for the Student Activities Board Aux Cord Wars game show, featuring surprise guest Conceited from “Wild ‘N Out.”

Aux Cord Wars, hosted previously in the fall semester, turned students into DJs and gave the audience the chance to decide winners.

Evan McKinney, a first-year strategic communications major from Little Rock, took part in the Aux Cord Wars firsthand.

McKinney not only participated in the planned DJ rounds, but also stepped into an impromptu rap battle on stage. He said the experience pushed him out of his comfort zone.

“The rap battle was super fun,” McKinney said. “I was a little nervous, but you got to have confidence going into things like that. You can’t talk a big game without backing it up.”

McKinney said the atmosphere of the event was unforgettable, making it easy for students to engage, even those who did not originally plan on participating.

“The energy was definitely 100 out of 10, I’d come back tomorrow if they did



Photo by Evie Ellis | Staff Writer

Students compete against each other at the Student Activities Board hosted Aux Cord Wars game show. Contestants were tasked with finding the perfect songs to match the given theme.

it again,” McKinney said.

Contestants tried finding songs to match themes ranging from “college party anthems” to “gospel music,” in an attempt to hype up the crowd and keep their momentum going.

Each round depended on how well contestants could read the room and choose tracks students wanted to hear. The event blended a game show with an old-school DJ competition vibe, according to SAB.

This theme matched the arrival of a surprise guest from the 2000s TV series “Wild ‘N Out,” Conceited.

Kelsey Clay, a first-year creative media production major from Little Rock,

said seeing him in person after growing up watching him was like seeing an idol.

“I used to watch it with my mom and my stepdad a lot, to see him in person, like, my gosh, that’s crazy,” Clay said.

Alaysha Russell, a first-year criminology major from Eudora, Arkansas, said she had no idea she would end up on stage.

“Oh my God, I felt like a celebrity,” Russell said. “I feel like I won the lottery.”

After winning her round, Russell said the moment felt overwhelming in the best way. She said she hopes the event returns in the future.