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Werner Institute Newsletter

Werner Institute Students Assist with Conversations on Sustainability Conference

By Liz Shanahan

Students from the Werner Institute recently facilitated discussions at the Conversations Conferences on Nebraska Environment and Sustainability, held at Creighton University. The four students were: **Christine Basque Malloy, Liz Shanahan, Justin Stone and Elizabeth Troyer-Miller.**



The purpose of the conference was to create a space for open dialogue about key environmental sustainability issues with the hope of achieving greater

awareness of the issues throughout Nebraska. Similar conferences will occur over the next year; the next will be in Lincoln, followed by Grand Island and finally Scottsbluff. This conference drew nearly 120 participants from Omaha and the surrounding area. Participants had backgrounds in city planning, energy usage, food

service, or general interest in the environment and sustainability.

Participants were divided into five groups to discuss key sustainability usage issues: Land, Water, Energy, Food and Materials. Participants previously engaged in an online discussion forum prior to attending the conference. They were then tasked to talk about the particular issue during the allotted time at each group. In case people had questions, each station included two experts in that particular area. Participants remained at one station for 45 minutes before moving to another station of their choosing. There were no strict guidelines on what needed to be discussed, allowing participants the freedom to decide what to speak about. Breaks between sessions were purposefully long to allow participants time to network with other participants, particularly if something in the discussion spurred ideas.

It was the job of the Werner students to help facilitate the discussions in their group. In particular, they had to help keep the dialogue flowing, assist in making sure all voices in the group were heard and record the "big ideas" the group had. They would then record those ideas on a board so that when the next group came, they could use what the group before them had discussed as a jumping off point.

As with any experience, the participants and Werner

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The Werner Institute for Negotiation & Dispute Resolution

Creighton University's School of Law

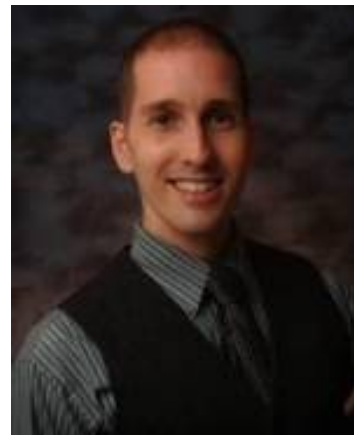
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The Werner Institute Welcomes new Full-time Faculty Robert Witheridge to the Team



Robert J. Witheridge, PhD

Robert J. Witheridge is our new Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution within the Werner Institute at Creighton University. Robert received his Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from Nova Southeastern University, where he also taught several graduate courses across the conflict resolution curriculum.

Robert completed his dissertation entitled, *Organizational Development, Enrichment, and Equality: A Trait-based Examination of Psychological and Psychosomatic Responses to Conflict*, wherein he explored several dimensions of workplace conflict within organizational systems, and conducted his research within the framework of both quantitative and qualitative research traditions.

Linking theory to the execution of scientific research and organizational conflict resolution practices, Robert has served as a Research Scientist for the New Jersey Division of Mental Health Services, and as an HR Mediator for global labor relations in Copenhagen, Denmark. Furthermore, Robert has provided organizational counsel within the framework of effective performance management, strategic talent development, and executive succession planning within the corporate sector. In tandem with his academic and corporate experience,

Robert has developed a host of community workshops, focusing on the constructs of collaborative dialogue, reflective listening, group facilitation, individual empowerment, and peaceful conflict resolution strategies.

Robert maintains an active research platform within the framework of organizational conflict, systems design, curriculum development, corporate law, mediation, negotiation, and the teaching and training of conflict resolution. In addition, Robert has extensive experience guiding student research projects and cultivating the growth of students through the enrichment of their research, writing, and communication skills.

Prior to joining the Creighton team, Robert taught within the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, at Nova Southeastern University, the Nathan Weiss College of Graduate Studies, at Kean University, and within the Graduate School of Educational Psychology at Rutgers: The State University of New Jersey.

Instructing students within both our residential and online environments, Robert teaches several of our courses within the Werner Institute, including Systems Design (NDR 604), Negotiation (NDR 615), and Foundations II (NDR 717). Outside of the classroom, Robert facilitates conflict resolution workshops and serves on discussion panels as a representative of the Werner Institute team. In the 2010-2011 academic year, Robert is looking forward to building out a curriculum for Research Methods in Conflict Resolution, fostering the multi-faceted growth of our students, and exploring the relationship between the fields of conflict resolution and cognitive neuroscience. Robert's office is located within the Werner Institute, in Room 223-B. ∞

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ADRHub.com provides great resource for ADR practitioners, academics, and students

The Werner Institute launched the ADRHub last April and since then we have seen it grow to become a great resource for all involved in the field of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). To date we have over 550 members that interact with the site via discussion forums, webinars, and the video and photo upload features. Many more people use the site to listen to podcasts, read the latest blogs, look at job postings, watch the archived webinars, or to read about the current topics that are being discussed in the world of ADR.

One exciting opportunity the Werner Institute had over the fall was to host an international conference in an entirely virtual format via the ADRHub. Cyberweek 2010, which ran live October 25 -29th was focused on the topic of Online Dispute Resolution (ODR). There were over 500 registered participants across the English and Spanish websites prior to the week. This initial interest led to an amazing amount of activity. The English site had over 2000 visits and 12000 page views throughout the week. This energy really made the forums and webinars a lively, interactive and educational experience for all involved.

Throughout the week there were simulations of ODR platforms, discussion forums regarding important topics in ODR, daily webinars, and contests for participants to take part in. One of the most beneficial aspect of this conference format is that it is completely archived and available for viewing at the homepage for the conference: <http://adrhub.com/forum/topics/cyberweek-2010-homepage>.

We'd like to invite you to take advantage of ADRHub to its fullest extent. We hope you'll consider seeing this platform as one of your homes on the web. Do you have something you want to share with the ADR world? Click one button, and you can write your own blog post. Heard of an employment or study prospect? Share it with the community by posting it to ADRHub's bulletin boards. Do you belong to a group of ADR-colleagues who are looking for a place where they



ADRhub.com
Bringing The ADR Community Together

can keep in touch and share ideas? Would you like to start a group around a particular topic or geographic location? Check out the Groups feature to get started.

One area that has been very popular and has gained lots of momentum is our monthly webinar series. These webinars are always free to participate. If you happen to miss one, you can stream the archive at any time. We have experts in the field present each month and the list of archives can be viewed here: <http://adrhub.com/forum/topics/full-list-of-archived>.

This month Bill Warters from Wayne State University presents on the topic of conflict Resolution in educational institutions. It will take place December 21st at 5pm est/ 4pm cst. You can find out more about this event and register by visiting this page: http://adrhub.com/forum/topics/adrhub-december-webinar?xg_source=activity.

We are always interested in input regarding our ADRHub webinars. Please share with us any feedback you can provide about the webinars. What topics would you like to see discussed in the upcoming months? Would you like to lead a webinar discussion? We are developing our calendar for 2011 and anyone who would like the chance to present, or share a topic of interest, please reach out to: bryanhanson@creighton.edu.



Finally, I want to acknowledge the wonderful work Jeff Thompson has done in expanding the podcast series. I hope you had a chance to listen to them. They are short, yet substantial. If you have yet to check them out please do so as you will not be disappointed. If you have an interest in taking part in a podcast, please contact Jeff at: mediator.jeff@gmail.com.

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Practicum Spotlight

Werner Student provides Nebraska Legislature with Insights into how Mediation can Assist in Conservatorships Guardianship Cases

By AJ Steele, MS '10

For my practicum project I really wanted something that challenged me personally and professionally. I wanted something that would take me outside of my comfort zone and challenge the way I do things. I am happy to say that I found a practicum project that was both challenging and rewarding at the same time. Bryan Hanson from the Werner Institute put me in contact with Debora Brownyard, Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution. Debora was selected to be part of a group of attorneys, accountants, judges, and other professionals looking at Conservatorships and Guardianship cases in Nebraska. Debora asked me to write a research paper and explore the possibility of using Mediation (or other forms of ADR) in conservatorship and guardianship matters.



AJ Steele, MS '10

I work full-time at First National Bank in the Trust Department and deal with Conservatorships and Guardianships and I saw this as a unique opportunity to work on something that can bring my Werner Institute ADR skills together with my professional life. I fully believed that mediation/ADR would be

a very useful tool in conservatorship and guardianship matters, if used correctly. I set out to look for ways in which mediation could be used to help the court system in Nebraska.

First, I looked at the current process for conservatorship and guardianship matters in Nebraska and outlined areas where mediation could be used to help reduce or resolve conflict. I walked through the process step-by-step and gave specific examples how mediation could help for the conservator/guardian, the court system, the family of the protected person, and even the protected person themselves. After I gave examples of what could be done in Nebraska to help conservatorship and guardianship matters, I explored and researched other jurisdictions in the United States that were using mediation in conservatorship and guardianship matters. I looked at other states that are using mediation as part of their conservatorship and guardianship cases. I researched how those states came to use mediation, how the mediation process was used, and the success rate of the states using mediation.

The final portion of my research paper outlines how Nebraska could implement a mediation process. I outline programs such as "Generations Around The Table," a program that is offered at the Concord Center in Omaha. I spoke about the numerous mediation centers covering all Nebraska. I presented information suggesting more education needs to be done to inform the public, attorneys, and care professionals about the uses of mediation. I felt my research paper

(Practicum Spotlight Continued on page 5)

(Practicum Spotlight Continued from page 4)

made a strong argument for the use of mediation in conservatorship and guardianship matter in the state of Nebraska. I was extremely honored when the Nebraska Supreme Court's Joint Review Committee on the Status of Adult Guardianships and Conservatorships referenced my research paper in their final report.

My practicum project gave me the opportunity to bring my new skills and knowledge from the Werner Institute into my professional life. I was very fortunate to work with Debora Brownyard at the Office of Dispute Resolution. Debora was a great influence for me, helping me to focus the lessons I learned in the

classroom and see how they could be applied outside of school in very important situations. Debora challenged me to "think like a conflict specialist" and look for new and collaborative ways to approach conflict. I had the opportunity to speak with attorneys, judges, and other conflict professionals while doing research for my paper and I found that an overall sense of excitement and optimism surrounds discussions about using mediation and other forms of ADR. I thoroughly enjoyed my practicum experience. I feel that the Werner Institute gave me the skills and confidence to take on such a difficult and elaborate project. I feel that the lessons that I learn at the Werner Institute are lesson for dealing with life, in all its forms. ∞

Werner Student Teaches Non-Violence in Prison through the Organization Alternative to Violence Project (AVPUSA)

By Andrew Venrick, MS '10

In John Lennon's "Watching the Wheels" he sings, "Ah, people asking questions lost in confusion, well I tell them there's no problem, only solutions." Now, as a graduate of the Werner Institute, these words particularly resonate with me as I reflect on my graduate school experience. To me, Lennon's lyrics summarize the perspective I gained upon the completion of this master's degree in Negotiation and Dispute Resolution. Over the course of my 18



Andrew Venrick, MS '10

months on campus, I was faced with thoughts and topics, theories and ideas I never knew existed. My entire outlook on life, the world, people and problems, was altered. The Werner Institute taught me that tragedy and trouble can be turned into progress and growth. It opened my eyes and brought to my attention the opportunities conflict offers to learn and improve. I now find a sense of enjoyment in the challenge of trying to create a solution rather than being a part of the problem.

Conflict is a reality we all must face. Becoming comfortable with conflict has allowed me to become comfortable with myself both internally and externally in foreign settings. I find my Werner Institute education applies itself to my personal life's toughest challenges the most. I face the inevitable with an element of optimism and faith knowing that I am now equipped with tools and resources thanks to Werner and its excellent staff.

I remember enrolling in the Werner Institute asking myself how I was going to employ an M.S. in the field of ADR. It's a question I have since stopped asking and simply started doing. Whether or not I ever practice mediation or someday become a certified arbitrator, my education from the Werner Institute has made me a better question asker, a better listener, a better empathizer, a better networker and also a much better organizer. Not to mention, I am able to make deeper connections with other humans and I am more ready for leadership positions. The Werner Institute deepened my spirit of inquiry, made me a better storyteller and even exposed me to deficiencies I never knew I had. As a result, I can now conduct more capable business, focus on my strengths and negotiate smoother transactions.

Not only did my education at Werner improve my ticket scalping skills, it has also translated into more meaningful roles such as a better friend, a more thoughtful brother, and a considerate son. Additionally, it advanced my capacity to direct and coordinate, and nearly instantly catapulted my professional career into management positions.

(AVP Project Continued on page 8)

Werner Institute Plays Large Role in Nebraska Mediation Association

This year saw the creation of a statewide association for those interested in mediation here in Nebraska. The group is appropriately named the Nebraska Mediation Association (NMA) and officially launched in April 2010. The Nebraska Mediation Association lists their mission on their website (www.nemediation.org) as follows:

The Nebraska Mediation Association's mission is to be a statewide network of mediators which develops, implements, and sustains quality conflict resolution, mediation, and consensus building. The NMA promotes mediation, and supports and provides training and educational opportunities for all mediators in the State of Nebraska. Through this member network, NMA provides links, resources, and enhanced opportunities among mediation professionals.



The benefits for NMA members include:

- *Improve your practice of mediation*
- *Collaborate with mediators in your field*
- *Meet Continuing Mediator Education (CME) requirements*
- *Obtain discounts to CME events*
- *Obtain written resources to help your practice*

The Werner Institute plays a large role in this association through various levels of engagement. For one, **Mary Lee Brock**, *Instructor & Chair of Clinical Programs* at the Werner Institute, and long time leader in the mediation scene in Nebraska participated on a six member steering committee in charge of the creation and transition to this overarching association for Nebraska Mediators. This initial work resulted in over 150 members registering for the association prior to the first annual meeting. Along with this effort, Mary Lee also coordinated the balloting process to elect the inaugural Board of Directors and facilitated the first meeting of the Board of Directors.



Mary Lee Brock



Following the official launch of the NMA **Bryan Hanson**, *Assistant Director* of the Werner Institute, was named the first President of the Board. This is a great opportunity for the Werner Institute to make a lasting impression on the mediation field in Nebraska. In his role, Bryan facilitates the Board meetings and provides leadership and direction as they progress through the first year. Bryan's goals as President of the Board are to increase the reach of continuing education opportunities throughout the state, utilizing technology to increase networking opportunities for Nebraska mediators, and to create a foundational understanding of the importance of mediation and appropriate conflict engagement throughout Nebraska.

Bryan Hanson

The contributions of the Werner Institute do not stop there. **Ran Kuttner**, *Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution* for the Werner Institute has taken on a role within the Continuing Ed Committee for the NMA. Within this role he has advocated for the use of webinars to provide continuing education and took it upon himself to provide the very first MCE approved webinar on the topic of the reflective practitioner. This webinar is available for streaming by following this link: <http://vimeo.com/16482229>.



Ran Kuttner

If you have an interest in getting involved in the work the NMA is doing, or would like to become a member you may visit their site for more information at: www.nemediation.com. You may also direct any questions regarding the NMA to Kelly Riley at Kelly@nemediation.org. ∞

Publication & Presentation Highlights from the Werner Institute Team

Noam Ebner, Assistant Professor and Online Program Chair has co-authored six chapters in *Venturing Beyond the Classroom*, the second book in the series dedicated to the Second Generation Negotiation Project. Three of the book chapters he has written for this project have recently been reprinted in multiple venues, including the Hamline Journal of Law and Public Policy, training material disseminated by the World Bank, and a new negotiation training textbook series edited by Manon Schonewille & Felix Merks, published in the Netherlands and in Belgium. In addition, a report he has co-authored for the European Commission, on ADR development in Israel, was summarized by Giuseppe DePalo and Mary Trevor in the March edition of CPR's journal *Alternatives*.



Noam Ebner

Jackie Font-Guzmán, Assistant Professor & Associate Director of the Werner Institute, visited Spain this summer to present on court-annexed mediation systems, at the invitation of the Spanish Supreme Court Judicial Council for Continuous



Jackie Font-Guzman

Education for Judges. The three day colloquium was organized by the Spain Supreme Court ("*Consejo General del Poder Judicial Servicio de Formación Continua*") and the Law Faculty of the Carlos III University in Madrid. In addition, she gave two lectures to law students and faculty at the Law Faculty of the Carlos III University in Madrid, Spain.

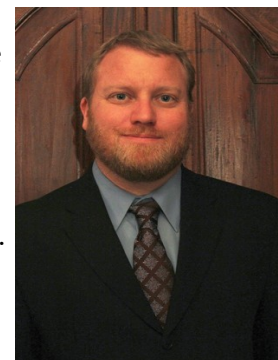


Ran Kuttner

Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution **Ran Kuttner** of the Werner Institute recently had an article published in the Nevada Law Review 10 (2), a special issue (symposium) on "Mindfulness,

Emotions, and Ethics in Law and Dispute Resolution. " The title of the article was "What Does it Mean to Do the Right Thing?"

Bryan Hanson, Assistant Director of the Werner Institute, traveled to Washington DC this semester to participate in the first annual USIP - OPSCON. This event entailed the authoring of an open source simulation regarding Northern Ireland for conflict



Bryan Hanson

resolution training. The event was sponsored by and held at the United Institute of Peace. You can find more information about the USIP OSP at the following link: <http://www.usip.org/programs/projects/the-usip-open-simulation-platform-usip-osp>.

(AVP Project Continued from page 5)

One particular course that distinctly shaped my Werner time was my practicum experience. For that final 3-credit hour lap, I was looking for a capstone project that truly practiced all these theories and thoughts professors and conflict gurus alike had taught me. Conversations with our assistant director Bryan Hanson introduced me to the idea of working under the supervision of Sister Maureen Connolly in conjunction with the Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) she spearheads here in Omaha. For my practicum experience, I facilitated non-violence prison workshops amongst inmates inside the Omaha Correctional Center.



I say this truthfully: growing up I always wanted to go to prison. I loved watching “Scared Straight” on MTV and Alcatraz starring Clint Eastwood. I wanted to see what life was truthfully like on the “inside.” I always wondered what prisoners in prison thought about, how they passed the time, what it was like to sleep in a cell, and how the food tasted. Needless to say, my practicum experience with AVP of Omaha answered a lot of these questions while completely altering my worldview for the better.

I ate lunch with a “lifer” and laughed with a rapist. I saw a bank robber cry because he wasn’t able to provide for his dying mother. The majority of my practicum with AVP was spent within the walls of the OCC, listening to inmates share stories about their struggles. I learned about the identity of these people and walked away pondering the systematic issues of our prison system and the structural complexities of its foundation. Why are so many inmates returning to serve second or third, sometimes fifth sentences? What is wrong with the homes these people are raised in? Is our country finding the balance between restoring and rehabbing the incarcerated while simultaneously punishing and prohibiting? It brought to my attention that many of these problems are deeply rooted in the history of this country, intertwined within the individuality of our existence.

I would encourage all Werner students in search of something real, something substantive, to strongly consider a practicum experience with AVP of Omaha. Sister Connolly made for a wonderful supervisor who taught me a ton about the importance of choosing to live non-violently in all facets of life. To all students interested in experiencing a truly unique and distinctive practicum, the Alternatives to Violence Project provided me with the platform to practice my facilitation and mediation skills, taught me about the struggles of making peace inside prisons and the difficulty many have of choosing to live a non-violent life. I feel much more competent in creating dialogue and progressing conversations, a few of the responsibilities I shared with Sister Connolly.

Following the weekend workshops inside the OCC, Sister Maureen and I would sit down for lunch and reflect on our experiences. We would talk about what we could have done differently as facilitators and leaders to guide particular exercises and participants in different directions, or how particular role-plays could have gone better. Much of my additional readings were supplemented from Ghandi’s autobiography, “The Story of My Experiments with Truth” where I learned about his journey and personal struggles as he lived a non-violent life by example in a quest for his country’s peace and resolution. Like Ghandi said, “We must be the change we wish to see.”

AVP is an international, volunteer based organization with chapters all over the world. I hope to be a part of AVP for life. I know AVP, thanks to the Werner Institute, will always be a part of mine.

Andrew Venrick holds a B.A. in American Studies from Creighton University. He graduated with his M.S. from the Werner Institute in August 2010 and currently resides in Culver City, CA where he manages earthbar, home to LA’s best smoothie, inside the Manhattan Beach Equinox fitness spa. Feel free to contact him with any questions surrounding his practicum experience at info@stayingwithconflict.com. ∞

If you have any questions about the practicum component of the Werner Institute’s program, or if you would like discuss utilizing students for a project in your organization, contact bryanhanson@creighton.edu

(Facilitation Project Continued from page 1)

students faced some challenges. For many participants, the open forum concept provided some challenges. Many had difficulty knowing where to start and with what topic. Others found it difficult to try and talk about all the issues in such a short period of time. A final challenge was a lack of structure that some participants needed, primarily those that wanted presentations on issues rather than small group dialogues. This was apparent to Troyer-Miller, "It seems that there is a certain kind of person who really thrives in this kind of learning format, though everyone has the potential to gain something from the experience. What it felt like was that participants wanted a bit more structure, maybe for some they were pushed beyond the brink of chaos."



The students were able to successfully assist with these challenges by helping to create some structure in the conversation and by summarizing

what the prior group had discussed. By summarizing the previous ideas, they were able to create a structure for the dialogue of that group. Unfortunately there are so many topics in sustainability that it was impossible to cover all of the issues during the daylong conference.

However, many participants voiced that they felt the major issues were covered and liked that they could follow-up on the online discussion boards in order to continue talking about the other issues.

Despite being able to help most participants, the students had their own set of challenges. They were tasked with having two roles during the dialogues. It was important for them to help the conversation and engage with participants, but the primary role they were given was to record the topics, both to record for historical purposes and as a jumping off point for the next group. This created the challenge of trying to record accurate notes along with actively following and listening to the conversation.

Training from the Werner Institute proved valuable to the students. "Because of my training in the Werner Institute, I was better able to enter into the experimental format of this conference than I would have been previously. Instead of trying to meet my own expectations for outcomes, I was able to focus on the needs of the discussion groups. In the end, I think the conference planners' objectives were met," said Basque Malloy. Certainly good listening, being attentive and effective summarizing was crucial to the conversation and flow of the conference.

Overall, the conference allowed the Werner students the opportunity to use their facilitation and listening skills. Participants were encouraged by the discussions and made meaningful contacts with others, and overall the conference was a success. ∞



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**The Werner Institute would like to thank
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