

Figley Accepts Tulane University Kurzweg Chair in Disaster Mental Health

Internationally celebrated trauma expert, Dr. Charles R. Figley, a professor in the Florida State University College of Social Work and Director of the award-winning FSU Traumatology Institute, will assume the Tulane University Paul Henry Kurzweg, MD Distinguished Chair (Disaster Mental Health) beginning in the fall semester of 2008. Professor Figley will be based in the Graduate School of Social Work who has a leading role in Tulane University's mission of rebuilding New Orleans and recovering psychologically and socially from the worst single natural disaster in American history.

The Graduate School is a unique, clinical-community relationship-centered program within the international and multicultural city of New Orleans. It is also the oldest graduate program of its kind in the South.

Professor Figley will be the first professor to occupy the Kurzweg Chair. The Chair was established in 2006 to be held by an eminent senior scholar with both a national and international record of outstanding publication, prominent leadership roles in professional organizations, and creative ideas for educating both undergraduate and graduate students. Tulane University selected Dr. Figley because he meets or exceeds these requirements.

Figley has been a full professor since 1983 (first at Purdue University where he had appointments both in psychology and family therapy). He came to Florida State University to lead their Ph.D. Program in Marriage and the Family. In addition to directing the FSU Traumatology Institute, he is Editor of the international journal, *Traumatology* (Sage Publications), and Editor of the oldest trauma book series, the

Routledge Psychosocial Stress Book Series. He will bring these entities with him to Tulane.

Figley has authored over 200 scholarly works, including 20 books. He has published 98 refereed journal articles, 41 chapters, 19 reviews published in refereed journals and numerous other publications, which accounts for why he is one of most cited scholars in the fields of trauma and disaster mental health.

According to Professor Ray Scurfield, Director of the Katrina Research Center at Southern Mississippi University, a university, like Tulane, was dramatically affected by Hurricane Katrina, noted about Dr. Figley joining Tulane:

Dr Figley has evidenced outstanding contributions in this area since at least 1990 (earthquake victims). This includes his being the Director of Green Cross Projects (1995-1999), initial President of the Green Cross Academy of Traumatology (1997-2006), Editorial Board of the *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health* (1998-present), and numerous publications. Dr. Figley's organizational leadership of the Green Cross Academy of Traumatology deserves special recognition and is illustrative of the organizational skills that will be required in the endowed chair at Tulane University. My direct experience of Dr. Figley in this regard confirms the extremely strong fit of his multi-faceted skill and knowledge set with the endowed chair at Tulane University.

Tulane School of Social Work, Dean Ron Marks notes that Figley is a perfect choice as the first holder of the Kurzweg Chair: "The holder will recognize the unique opportunity in the post Katrina landscape of New Orleans and the region and be able to contribute to the development of scholarship related to disaster mental health issues

and to support the growth of programs within this domain. Professor Figley, we hope, will maintain an active leadership role with the School through his teaching and engagement with the student body and through leadership activities with the faculty and the local and broader community.”

“I am happy and pleased to be a member of the Tulane University community at this time of renewal in its proud history, said Figley. “My wife, Kathy and I will be proud to live and thrive in such a wonderful, world-class city as New Orleans.”

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