

Student is enthusiastic over local Crisis Hotline

By PATRICIA FLINT
Staff Writer

It's hard to believe that there was a time when Melaney Linton, a senior psychology major and coordinator of Crisis Hotline, considered herself a failure. "I hadn't really failed," she said. "Maybe I just felt like I had."

At 24, Linton has been through a tough time in her life, an unhappy marriage and jobs she didn't like, now she is able to help other people meet the problems in their lives. Linton is comfortable with herself, her past and where she's heading, and is, therefore, quite candid. "If somebody can learn from my experience, then I want to share it," she said.

Linton, as chairman, runs Crisis Hotline along with an advisory board. Everyone associated with the hotline is a volunteer. Linton came to college three-and-a-half years after her high school graduation. During that time, she worked in banking, then in real estate. "The money was good," she said. "The money was there, but I didn't enjoy it."

She decided she needed a higher education in order to do something she would enjoy. Today she's applying to graduate schools, looking toward getting a doctorate in clinical psychology and eventually opening up her own practice. "I think it's important to find something you really like and then make it your life's work because being stuck in something you don't like is hell. It doesn't matter how much money you make. What's the point?"

The Crisis Hotline in Brazos County is the only one between here and Houston, serving seven counties and occasionally one or two others. The people who answer the phones are not counselors, but trained volunteers, Linton said.

"We don't tell them (callers) what to do," she said. "We don't suggest what to do. We don't give

our opinions what to do because we want them to find the solutions to their problem that best fits the individual.

"Sometimes it's easier to talk to strangers about your problems than someone you know, especially if that stranger can't recognize you on the street," she said. Crisis Hotline is strictly a confidential telephone service, but acts also as a referral service, directing people to specialty hotlines and service agencies.

In addition to her school work and her hotline work, Linton is secretary of the Psi Chi/Psychology Club and works in the athletic ticket office. She is also doing research under psychology professor Charlene Muehlenhard on date rape — sexual aggression on dates. She is looking into the personality

Melaney Linton, a senior psychology major said Crisis Hotline doesn't tell callers what to do because the service wants them to help them find their own solutions.

attributes of women to see if certain characteristics put a woman at risk.

Most people think that psychology students walk around and analyze everybody, but they don't, Linton said.

"I think maybe more than trying to analyze everybody, I try to understand people more than I used to," she said. "I think one thing psychology does teach you is to accept people's differences because everybody is unique; just accept them for who they are. It's like, not only are individual differences OK, they're a part of life. That's how life is supposed to be."

For Linton, going to college was a new beginning; it gave her the opportunity to be successful on her own terms.

"For me it was like a second chance at making something out

of myself," she said. "In a way it was a chance for me to learn exactly what my limits are."

"So far, I haven't found any." Linton said college gave her the chance to find out what her opportunities and capabilities are.

"For most people college is just something you do when you get out of high school," she said. "I had to give up a job where I was making quite a bit of money. Even though I didn't like the job it was hard to give up that financial stability to become a poor student."

Linton said she wouldn't have taken her education seriously if she had gone to college right out of high school. Her marriage and her work experience were an education in themselves, she said. "I think I got married in the first place because I didn't know what I wanted to do," she said. "I don't think I was happy with myself as a person because I was lazy, because I didn't know what I wanted to do with myself."

"What I've learned is that I'll never be happy with another person until I'm happy with myself. I'm happy right now — not because I've reached all my goals, but because I'm working towards them."

She is a strong supporter of women's rights and said it is not true that all men are bigger and stronger than all women. The variability within the sexes is greater than the variability between them, she said.

Linton said her classes taught her to understand, refine and substantiate a lot of her beliefs.

Linton came to Texas A&M because she said she wanted to experience first-hand Aggie spirit and the bond between Aggies, about which she had heard so much.

But she disagrees with some of the attitudes and opinions at A&M.

"I think the conservativeness, the unwillingness to change bothers me more than anything," she said. "I think there is such an aversion at this school to change. Somehow, if you want to change anything, it makes you a bad Ag, a two-percenter."

A&M specialist named official in Ag Extention

By ANN BRIMBERRY
Reporter

Dr. Milo J. Shult, a wildlife and fisheries specialist with Texas A&M, has been named associate director for the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. His appointment became effective Nov. 5.

The Texas Agricultural Extension System is part of the Texas A&M University System working within a three part land grant operation. This includes the Extension Service, the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, and the College of Agriculture.

"We needed to extend that information beyond the Texas A&M University campus," Shult said, "so we took a three pronged approach to the utilization of research findings by people within the state, by the student body, and through the extension programs."

Shult said the Texas Agriculture Extension Service is now quite involved in a four year major program planning effort which coincides with the Federal Extension Service.

"This has given us a real opportunity to look at some key areas that we are devoting a lot of resources in," Shult said.

"Our major program effort was initiated one year ago as a planning component. We hope that by initiating and maintaining long term planning efforts, we will be able to do a better job of responding to clientele across the state."

Shult said Texas is a dynamic state now.

"When we look at the people who are moving to the state and the population increase, we must look at what we are capable of producing," he said. "As a result, a real challenge is ahead of us to make sure all the different clientele are aware of each others needs."

The major efforts of the Extension Service have been, and continue to be, strong involvement of people at the local level, he said.

"We are an educational agency," Shult said. "People helping people is exactly what we are about in the sense that we do provide the re-



Dr. Milo J. Shult

search base information to people to help them solve their problems."

Shult said he does not plan to make any changes in the program initially.

"One of the things we hope to do is to strengthen even further the ties with A&M through the College of Agriculture in order to build on and enhance those programs we have recently identified," he said.

The future challenge for the Extension Service is to continue to serve the old audiences, and be imaginative and use their resources to reach the new audiences, Shult said.

"Our real emphasis must be in the role of education," Shult said. "With Extension providing the research base and alternatives, the people in the state of Texas will be better able to make these decisions themselves."

Counseling available for faculty

By LYNN RAE POVEC
Staff Writer

Administrators involved with the Faculty Assistance Program stress one reason for the program's success ... confidentiality.

The Faculty Assistance Program is Texas A&M's means of providing counseling for faculty and staff members who may have problems, said Dr. Candida Lutes, dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

Lutes served on the committee of faculty members and administrators that created the program more than a year ago. She said a conflict with a colleague or spouse, or a dependence on drugs or alcohol, are examples of problems A&M's faculty and staff may face.

"If someone were to become alcoholic, their classes would go downhill, and we really didn't have any means to handle that," Lutes said.

The Faculty Assistance Program is

a professional consultation service located off campus at the Metro Centre, 3833 Texas Avenue, in Bryan. The service's off campus location helps those who use the service maintain anonymity, Lutes said.

The University keeps psychologist Sara Jones on retainer for 10 hours a week, and she provides A&M faculty and staff with advice and counseling, or referrals, as needed.

Dr. Clint Phillips, dean of faculties and associate provost, also served on the committee that created the program.

He said the committee recommended Jones because she is familiar with A&M through several means: she has taught psychology here and has counseled students in A&M's College of Medicine.

"We felt that Sara could do an excellent job since she had an understanding of the University," Phillips said.

He, too, cited confidentiality as the reason for the program's success.

A&M gives Jones a list of those eligible to receive her services. Thus, she can verify eligibility without consulting the University and maintain anonymity.

A&M will fund a maximum of six visits per employee per year. Those visits are paid for with funds other than University insurance program funds.

The program can help individuals with problems including, but not limited to, depression; alcohol or other drug dependency; conflict with colleagues, superiors or subordinates; medical difficulties that result from emotional problems; and anxiety from other sources that may interfere with attention to one's job.

Jones makes no reports to the University as to who uses her services. Appointments can be made by calling 846-4361.

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