Get to Know: Katrina Meyers

What is your role in the School?
I am the SBIRT Collaborative Program Assistant.

Have you always lived in Oklahoma? Or, are you a transplant? Tell us more!
I am a transplant to Oklahoma; however, I have lived here almost 20 years, and that basically means I am an Okie, right? I was born in California, then my family moved to Colorado, and then we moved to Arizona. I spent my elementary years in Arizona, then we moved to Edmond, and the rest is history.

Where did you go to school?
I attended the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) for my undergraduate degree. I spent many years trying to decide between majoring in Music, Nursing, Pre-med, PA pre-requisites, and Psychology. After taking classes from every "College" at UCO except business, I took an intro to social work course and fell in love with the NASW Code of Ethics during an assignment to review the code of ethics LCSWs follow. I am not particularly religious; however, the code of ethics really struck me as the right way to treat people and to expect to be treated. This was when I decided I wanted to be an MSW. I spent the next years finishing my degree in General Studies. I minored in Spanish and intended on minoring in Substance Abuse Studies, but due to some scheduling mishaps I was one class away from the minor. I spent my final 3 of 9 undergraduate years with the intention of applying to the MSW program. I am proud to say that I completed my MSW at OU - social work is the only area of study I have followed through to completion.

What are some of your favorite places you’ve worked, work you’ve done?
My favorite place to work, aside from here at OU, was at UCO during my final extended practicum. I was a part of the Health field unit and officially at UCO through the OU Physicians UCO clinic as a behavioral health intern. However, I was provided additional learning opportunities through the Center for Counseling and Well-Being (CCWB). Between the wonderful and diverse clinicians at the CCWB (led by the one and only, Julia Reed) and the PA and her team in the health clinic, I gained not only an incredible amount of professional growth and practical hands-on experience, but I had the opportunity to thrive in an incredibly innovative culture which I knew valued me, each other, and the students we served.
Why do you like working at OU?
I love working at OU! My official title is the OU SBIRT Collaborative Project Assistant, but I have experienced so many opportunities here at OU for professional growth and development as well as space to collaborate with entities closely linked to SBIRT within the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work and the Center for Social Work in Healthcare. OU has provided me with a dynamic learning environment within my employment which I strongly value.

What goals do you have for your time here at OU?
My goals are for SBIRT to be widely adapted by the medical community in Oklahoma. We are constantly hearing about the opioid epidemic and the increase in DUls in our state. I truly believe the SBIRT model provides a patient-centered early intervention and prevention approach for healthcare practitioners (including social workers) to utilize within the relationships they develop with their patients. In my opinion, misuse, abuse, and dependency to chemicals does not happen overnight, but is a gradual process and this is why SBIRT has the potential to be so meaningful to improving the quality of life, safety, health, and well-being of the people of the state of Oklahoma.

What is your favorite thing about social work – or what surprised you about social work?
Some self-disclosure here, I experienced early contact with "social workers" as a child. I never wanted to be a social worker. I wanted to grow up and have a strong career and make money. That being said, the thing I love about social work is the incredibly diverse opportunities - we are needed everywhere! And we can engage in so many different settings and types of work. I also love the opportunity for growth and education - I never want to stop learning!

Do you have any hobbies? Please tell us about one?
I play chess. I play Clarinet and received a scholarship to UCO - during my first few years there I played in their Wind Symphony and Orchestra. I also figure skated for a brief period of time and competed. I love being out on the ice and will go ice skating any time possible! I feel much more comfortable out on the ice than walking on solid ground. I love teaching people and helping others gain their balance and facilitating their kiddos having fun! One of my coaches intended for me to teach ice skating to pay my way through college; unfortunately this didn’t happen, but the up side is I don’t charge for my services! ;)

Tell us an interesting fact about yourself that few people know or that would surprise people?
I experience chronic pain. So sometimes my face may look mad - but I am not! =) This has motivated me to investigate behavioral health positions in pain management settings. I also look at models developed and currently used in the eastern U.S. for treatment of chronic pain. I notice the stark differences to how we treat chronic pain and I look forward to Oklahoma growing and developing in this area.

Anything else?
Fun fact, I spent 10 years serving and bartending!