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Adler Graduate School

Fall 2026 Newsletter

Commencement Issue

Adler Graduate School Newsletter

Welcome back to the Adler Graduate School newsletter! We publish the newsletter quarterly to share Adler Graduate School news and community updates.

Newsletter Content
In this issue, we're marking a presidential transition, celebrating commencement, and reviewing assessment and strategic planning.

Newsletter Contributions
We welcome your contributions! Please reach out to us with your updates, events, contributions to social interest, professional conferences, and Adler-related items.

Newsletter Naming Contest
Announcing a contest to give our newsletter a name! We're looking for something that reflects Adlerian values and a sense of belonging and community.
Enter by emailing nikki.marchand@alfredadler.edu

We look forward to engaging with the Adler community today and into the future.



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Nikki Marchand, Editor
Dean of Student Affairs
Adler Graduate School
Email: nikki.marchand@alfredadler.edu

President's Message

Dr. Solange Ribeiro



Hello and welcome to the new and improved Fall 2026 edition of our newsletter, after an extended break in the last couple of years.

During this newsletter break, the Adler Graduate School (AGS) community has continued to do what we do well: educate future and current mental health professionals and exemplify and expand social interest in action. In this period, we solidified the work started in 2020 toward creating an organization that functions horizontally, where everyone has a voice and all voices count, and implemented a strategic plan directly related to our four foundational values of quality education, Adlerian principles, social justice, and institutional sustainability.

BEAD Initiative and Strategic Plan

In the last newsletter published (Spring 2024), I spoke of a project that was just being conceptualized, our BEAD (belonging, equity, accessibility, and diversity) initiative, and invited you to share your thoughts by participating in a survey designed to help us identify areas in which we could improve. True to our Adlerian identity, students, faculty, staff, and board of directors rose to the occasion and contributed not only by helping us identify blind spots but also by offering ideas for improvement. The survey results informed a plan to foster a sense of belonging through curriculum and instruction analysis and development, and to provide a learning and working environment where every stakeholder can function at their best. The full four-year plan was incorporated into our 2026-2030 strategic plan, which can be found on our website, and I am happy to say that the plan is being successfully implemented. **View the strategic plan.**

Targeted Improvements

Examples of improvements already made include but are not limited to:

- improving the quality of education by integrating service-learning activities into the curriculum, one course at a time;
- making significant strides toward expanding career services and resources available to students and alumni, and toward engaging and supporting alumni;
- engaging in a grant-funded joint project between AGS and the Epilepsy Foundation, to support their clients through art therapy;
- increasing the frequency and quality of interactions between faculty and students, by increasing advisor support to advisees' portfolio development, by creating opportunities for faculty and students to meet on campus, and by regularly scheduling opportunities for students to meet online with AGS's president;

President's Message

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- updating the accommodation process, and developing and implementing a process for temporary accommodations;
- developing a suite of accessibility tools, available to all students;
- promoting inclusion and accessibility in the counseling profession by establishing a collaborative relationship with a university to promote an easy transition from undergraduate to graduate education for their students, and by creating additional opportunities for counseling professionals to obtain clinical supervision education through the Adler Institute of Continuing Education;
- updating administrative practices with an eye to promoting equity and inclusion.

And all of this happened while continuing our regular activities in the classroom, and in faculty and administrative offices (virtual and brick-and-mortar).

Presidential Transition

As you can see, I am proud of being part of the AGS community. This year, however, marks an important transition for me: At the end of the calendar year, I will be retiring from AGS, and I am happy to tell you that Dr. Rashida Fisher will assume the interim presidency starting in January 2027.

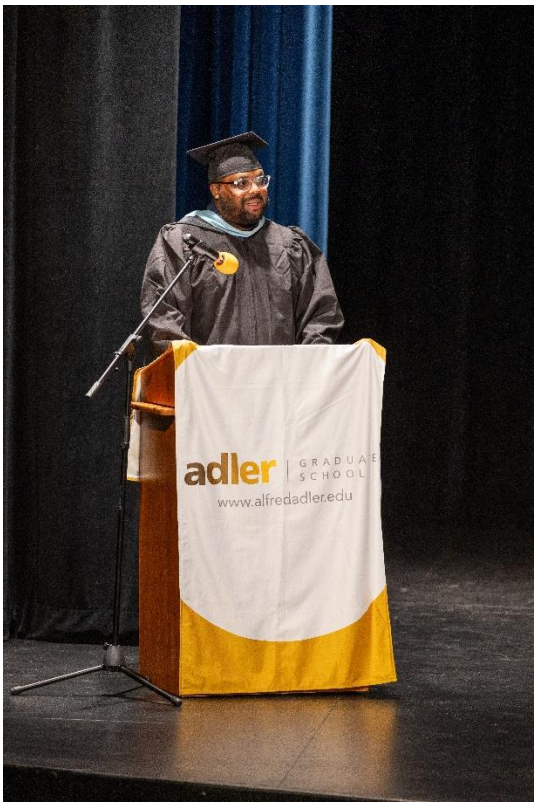
As most of you know, Dr. Fisher is our Vice President for Academic Affairs. However, she is and has been much more than that since joining us in 2014: Not only has she served as field experience coordinator, faculty member, and Academic Dean, but she has also been an integral part of the group leading the BEAD initiative and has participated in all important decisions made during my tenure as president. In addition to her professional competence, Dr. Fisher walks the Adlerian talk and has an incredible ability to listen for meaning and feelings and to incorporate what she hears into her problem-solving strategies. Her knowledge and understanding of AGS and its culture, combined with her personal characteristics and skillset, makes her ideal for leading AGS's next chapter.

I go with a lot of mixed feelings, including immense gratitude for having had the privilege of working with such good and talented students, staff, and faculty, and the opportunity to lead AGS in the last four and a half years; confidence that all of you can and will continue and strengthen our tradition of providing great education and a positive and productive work environment; the awareness that although I am excited about this next stage in my life I will miss being and working with you; and the certainty that you will be in excellent hands, as Dr. Fisher leads the expansion of AGS's impact in our small and large communities. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your lives.

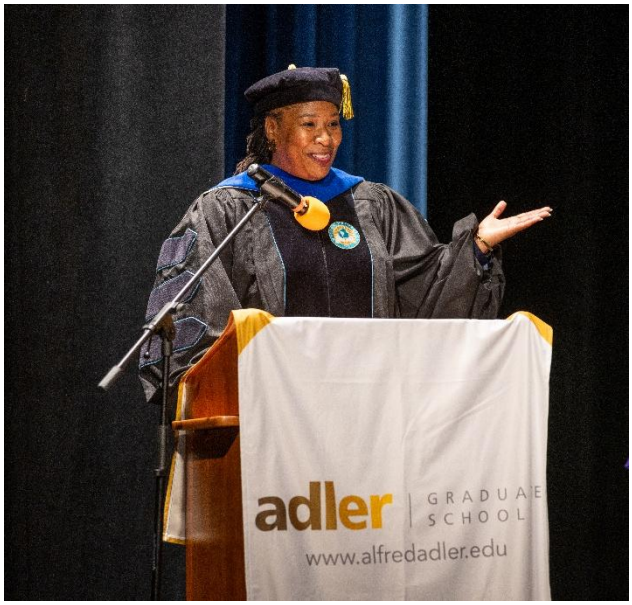
Solange

Adler Graduate School Commencement

Adler Graduate School joined in community on September 26, 2026, at Eisenhower Community Center for the 2026 Commencement Ceremony. **Congratulations to the Class of 2026!**



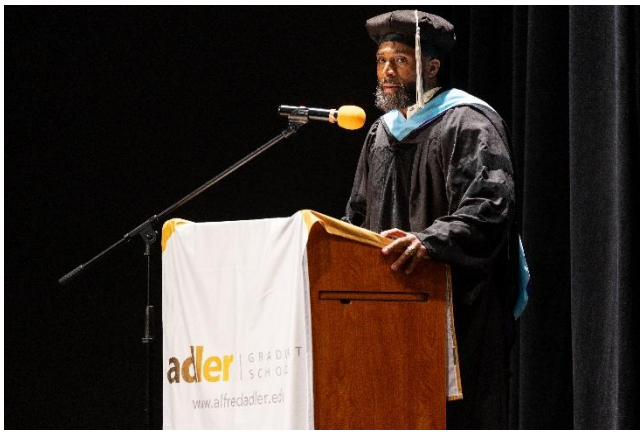
Board Chair Brandon Jones, MA welcomes the graduates and audience.



Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Rashida Fisher.



Assistant Professor Dr. Kyle Ritten gives the faculty address.



Dr. Kasim Abdur Razzaq delivers a community address.

Adler Graduate School Commencement



2026 Adler Graduate School graduating class commencement ceremony attendees.



2026 graduate and commencement speaker Sumona Das, MA.

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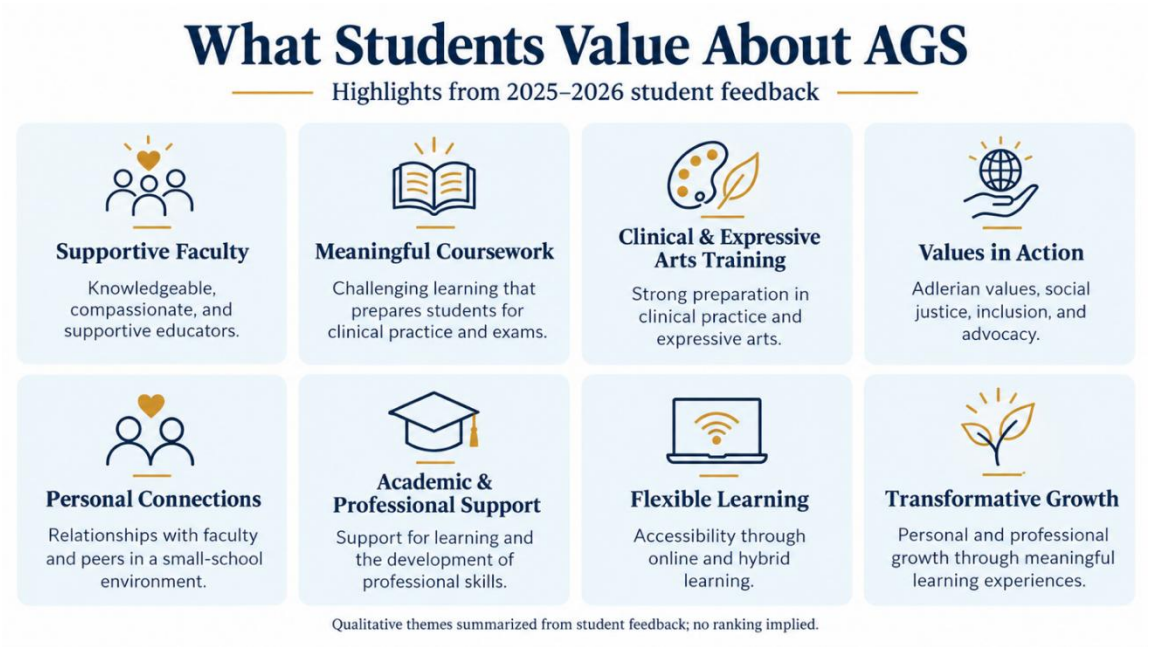


Adler Graduate School board, faculty, and community speaker.

Student Success at AGS:
2025–2026 Assessment Highlights

Adler Graduate School's annual assessment review highlights strong student learning, positive student experiences, and successful transitions into professional practice. Course assessments and feedback from students, field supervisors, employers, and alumni help us recognize strengths and guide continued improvement.

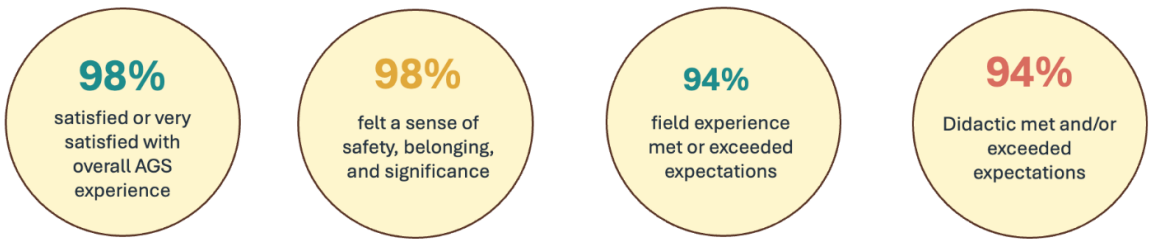
Below are qualitative themes summarized from student feedback about their experience at AGS.



Strong Learning and Student Experiences

All assessed counseling key performance indicators exceeded the 90% proficiency benchmark, with results ranging from 95% to 100%. Art Therapy assessments also showed strong outcomes, with 100% of assessed students demonstrating proficient or advanced performance.

Among 50 exit student survey respondents, **96% felt well or very well prepared overall**, **98% were satisfied or very satisfied with their AGS experience**, and **94% reported that field experience met or exceeded expectations**.



2025–2026 Assessment Highlights

Employment Outcomes and Employer Feedback

AGS students are making the transition into professional practice before graduation. Among 21 alumni survey respondents, **86% reported being hired during internship**. Additionally, **96% of responding field supervisors indicated they would hire an AGS student**.

Employer feedback reinforces these positive outcomes. Among 13 responding employers, **92% were satisfied or very satisfied with graduates' preparation**. All agreed that AGS graduates **make valuable contributions and use ethical judgment**, while 92% agreed that graduates conduct appropriate interventions and assessments and engage in self-reflection.

Employers identified relational skills, self-awareness, teamwork, and work ethic as leading hiring priorities. These findings highlight the value of AGS's emphasis on professional relationships, ethical practice, and personal growth in preparing graduates for employment.



Continuing to Improve

Faculty and staff reviewed these findings during the recent strategic planning session to inform priorities for stronger licensure preparation, consistent course information, and student advising and support.

These outcomes reflect the contributions of our faculty, staff, and community partners. The full presentation and all **annual reports can be found on AGS's Educational Excellence webpage.** We invite all members of the AGS community to explore the findings.

Any questions or feedback can be directed to Dr. Nicole Randick, VP of Institutional Effectiveness at Nicole.randick@alfredadler.edu.

Faculty Updates

The Fragrance Paradox: Why the Scents We Love May Be Harming Us — and What Adlerian Psychology Reveals About Our Need to Belong



Walk into any home, office, or store and you'll notice it immediately: the air is scented. Fresh linen laundry detergent. Vanilla candles. Citrus cleaning sprays. Perfumes promising confidence, romance, or success. Fragrance has become so woven into daily life that many people barely notice it — until their bodies do.

Across the globe, millions report headaches, breathing problems, dizziness, brain fog, or migraines triggered by fragranced products. Yet many of these same people say they love the way these products smell. This tension, attraction mixed with discomfort, is what researchers now call the fragrance paradox.

But the story isn't just about chemistry or consumer habits. It's also about belonging, identity, and our deep human need to feel connected. And that's where Alfred Adler's psychology offers a powerful lens.

Read the full article here.

Dr. Teresa Graye



Congratulations to Dr. Letitia Browne-James on being selected as the recipient of the **2026 Cultural Impact Clinician Award**!

AGS and Briar Cliff University Launch New 3+2 Bridge Program



Adler Graduate School is pleased to announce a new 3+2 pathway partnership with Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, Iowa. This bridge program gives Briar Cliff undergraduates a clear, intentional pathway into the counseling profession, allowing students to earn both their bachelor's and master's degrees in about five years.

This partnership is a crucial step in addressing the ongoing mental health workforce shortage. As demand for counseling services continues to outpace the number of trained providers, programs like this one help close the gap by bringing well-prepared, compassionate clinicians into the field sooner. By shortening the time to degree and removing barriers to graduate study, the pathway makes a career in counseling more accessible to students who are called to this work. The program also reflects a shared commitment to growing a skilled and diverse workforce of helping professionals, and it extends the reach of the Adlerian approach, which emphasizes community, belonging, and social interest, values that align well with Briar Cliff's mission of service.

We are grateful to the faculty and leadership at both institutions for their collaboration, which made this pathway possible. The first cohort is predicted to begin in Fall 2027.

Dr. Rashida Fisher

Adler Graduate School Student Earns NBCC Fellowship

Adler Graduate School Co-Occurring Disorders & Addiction Counseling student **Fednise Stark** was selected as one of the National Board for Certified Counselors Minority Fellowship Program Masters in Addictions Counseling Fellows for 2026.

The NBCCF Minority Fellowship Program provides financial support to master's- and doctoral-level counseling students who commit to serving underserved populations, including, but not limited to, youth, older adults, rural or inner-city communities, and military-connected communities.

Minority Fellowship Program
The National Board for Certified Counselors

Congratulations, Fednise!

Alumna and Adjunct Faculty Member Earns Fellowship

Chalice Nelson, LPC, NCC, CPCS, Expressive Arts Therapist **was awarded a Global Arts in Medicine Fellowship.**
Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Management Track
2026 GAIMF, United States of America



Chalice Nelson, LPC, NCC, CPCS is a licensed professional counselor with over a decade of clinical and leadership experience in behavioral health and the founder of Chalice Nelson, LLC, a strengths-based psychotherapy and consulting practice serving clients across Georgia and Florida, as well as organizations globally. She specializes in working with creatives and entrepreneurs, using an eclectic therapeutic approach that blends Narrative Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and Solution-Focused Brief Therapy.

Chalice holds a BS in Psychology (Summa Cum Laude) from Florida A&M University, an MS in Mental Health Counseling from St. John Fisher University, and a postgraduate certification in Expressive Arts Therapy from Adler Graduate School.

She is a sought-after speaker and has presented at major conferences, including the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association International Conference, the North American Society of Adlerian Psychology Annual Conference, and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Services' System of Care Academy Conference, addressing topics such as multicultural counseling and the role of creativity in Black wellness. In 2024, she was named among Black Female Therapists' Top 25 in Mental Health.

Congratulations, Chalice!

NASAP Conference 2026



Attendees gather at Adler Graduate School for a reception during the 2026 NASAP conference.



We were delighted to gather with alumni, students, faculty, staff, and distinguished NASAP presenters and attendees in May 2026. Several Adler Graduate School faculty members and students presented at the conference.

Adler Institute Events

