Sofia University has gone through many changes in the past year and we will continue to evolve. We have recently begun using the term “Sofia 2.0” to remind ourselves that our goal is continuous improvement in all aspects of our school—from development of new programs to more efficient administration to improvements in teaching.

Sofia University has faced many challenges this past year. We are now a for-profit corporation with new senior management and a new Board. We have also maintained the not-for-profit ITP Board to administer grants we have received and hope to receive in the future.

Some faculty and staff have left, for a wide variety of reasons. They are not replaceable. Now, we are working hard to build the team with equally competent and dedicated people. It is heartening to report that, even with all the changes we have experienced, our current students say that their coursework at Sofia continues to challenge and inspire them, as it has for the last 40 years.

We have developed three new programs this past year - an MS in Computer Science (MSCS), an MBA degree, and an MA in Transformative Education (MATE). Our MSCS has been approved by WASC and we are currently admitting new students. The MBA and MATE program proposals have been submitted to WASC and we hope to offer these programs starting this coming fall at the latest.

It is an exciting challenge to integrate lively transpersonal elements into each of these programs. We want students in all programs to experience profound personal development at Sofia, in addition to their academic studies and professional training. We are planning to have all students study Aikido and a variety of transpersonal concepts, combining study with experiential practice of transpersonal principles. They will also take more theoretical transpersonal courses. In addition, we are seeking to improve the transpersonal aspects of all current programs.

Converging transpersonal psychology, computer science, management & leadership and education will help our students develop greater creativity, consciousness, and mindfulness as scientists, educators, managers and leaders.

Major Silicon Valley companies are now providing a variety of meditation and self-development classes to their employees. These corporations are embracing the principles of “Conscious Business” (a term developed by Fred Kofman, who is now a senior vice president at LinkedIn). We are well positioned.

In our new MATE program we will apply what we have learned in the last 40 years to bring transpersonal theories to education, a field which everyone agrees needs it badly. Our faculty will include Sofia alumni who have been applying transpersonal theories in education for decades. Our goal is to inspire new teachers who will go on to inspire thousands of their own students. We know this works, so now we just have to do it!

Our Sofia future is bright, especially if we continue to do our best to bring our wonderful past fully into our present and future endeavors.
Welcome These Bright and Shining Stars to the Sofia Family!

With the birth of Sofia 2.0, 2014 and 2015 have been witness to what feels like monumental Pluto inspired transformation and rebirth scenarios that found many staff and faculty making big moves in their personal lives. Some of those moves provided space for former alumni to venture forward and add their unique touch to Sofia, while two “new” faces with experience outside the Sofia family added their support. We also were thrilled to see one faculty member take on a greater role in shaping our MATP program. If you are on campus, please take a moment to say hello to these wonderful additions to our faculty and staff roster.

Barbara Hecker, Ph.D. – Dean of Faculty.
Dr. Hecker has been with California State University East Bay as a Professor for the past 23 years, and was the chair of the Mathematics and Computer Science Department for four years. With over 25 years of experience in higher education, Dr. Hecker will be responsible for leading the academic departments and collaborating in achieving teaching excellence and fulfilling the vision and mission of the university.

Shoshana Lev, Psy.D. – Associate Director of CCHW.
Shoshana is a recent ITP/Sofia graduate who has chosen to return to Sofia and bring her expertise to a worthy center.

Shani Robins, Psy.D. – Clinical Coordinator of the Psy D and MACP programs.
Shani has returned to Sofia University and resumed his position as Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology. In addition, he has taken on added responsibilities for the coordination of the practicum requirements for our masters in counseling and doctoral level clinical students.

Edward Lam – Chief Financial Officer (CFO).
Edward has already been a valued contributor to Sofia as one of our Board of Trustees, and has recently chosen to use his extensive knowledge in finance to represent the school as our CFO.

Carol Haefner, Ph.D. – NEW Chair of the MATP program
Dr. Carol Haefner will join Mark Gonnerman, Chair of the Global and Residential PhD programs and Nancy Rowe, Chair of the Global MATP, as Chair of the Residential MATP program. Carol will also continue to serve as Director of the Writing Lab and of the Dissertation Office. Carol describes what excites her about being at Sofia and offers some hints about what she hopes to accomplish in her new role.

What keeps you excited about being at Sofia University?
The students keep me excited about being at Sofia University. I feel blessed to be able to serve students in a new way in this role.

What are you looking forward to accomplishing in your new position?
I look forward to continuing the work that Mark was doing with the MATP program. At this time I do not have enough information to give specific goals, but one thing I hope to do is to create excitement and bring new energy to the program. I will be reaching out to everyone who has been intimately involved with the program, including students and faculty, in order to solicit input about future direction. I do already have some ideas that I am very excited about, but it would be premature to share those at this time.

K’Ailsa Rowan – NEW Chair of the MACP Program
Kaye-Ailsa (K’Ailsa) Rowan, who is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and a working clinician-educator, came to this position by recommendation of the Interim Chair of the MACP, Anne Huffman, and has already begun the transition process with Anne as of March 1st. However, she will not take the reins officially until April 1st. If her name seems familiar, you may have had classes with K’Ailsa (Kel-sa) as she has been an instructor, as she has been an Instructor with Sofia University/ITP since 2010, and not long after was promoted to Adjunct Core Faculty in 2013. K’Ailsa had this to share about moving into the new position and what drew her to Sofia.
Matthew Metzger – NEW Director of the CCHW

Matthew is a licensed psychologist and former ITP graduate. His therapeutic orientation is psychoanalytic with an emphasis in Intensive Short-Term Dynamic Psychotherapy (ISTDP). He has already begun adding his presence to the CCHW offices. Matthew shared a few of his thoughts with us to help the Sofia community get to know him better.

What drew you to become a part of the Sofia Community once again?
I returned to Sofia University as an adjunct faculty member in 2014 after graduating from the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in 2011. My decision to continue on as an instructor and play a more integral role in the Clinical Psy.D. Program was based on my classroom experience with Sofia students; they are simply remarkable people and a continued source of inspiration. It is really these extraordinary students that have been the staple of this university for more than 35 years. As for the faculty, working at Sofia University would not have been possible had I not been given the opportunities afforded to me by individuals such as Dr. Fred Luskin and Dr. Eric FitzMedrud, both of whom I express my heartfelt gratitude. It is important to have people believe in you, and they believed in me.

What are you looking forward to accomplishing in your new position?
As the new Executive Director of Community Center for Health & Wellness (CCHW) I have been granted an extraordinary opportunity. In my time working as a program manager and clinical supervisor at Goodwill Wellness Center in San Jose, I have developed models of training and supervision that serve to meet the unique demands of both trainees and clientele. I am excited and moved by the opportunity to continue this work with our Sofia community and I intend to do so with the same rigor and thoughtfulness that has become the hallmark of my approach to training burgeoning psychotherapists. In my capacity at CCHW, I would like to impart a method of instruction and interaction where students feel understood, supported, and guided toward increased competency in their clinical work. I believe that in our work with patients, there are many paths to health and wellness and the development of our professional identities, respectively; it will be my job to steer the ship toward a sensible horizon, while encouraging my students to explore where that horizon is for them.

Baby on Board: Sofia Welcomes C-Space – The New Sofia Incubator

Introduced at the Silicon Valley Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum (SVIEF) event on Saturday, March 7, 2015, Sofia University is happy to announce the Sofia Incubator C-Space: Where start-ups go to grow! Taking advantage of the space in the 1069 building, this innovative think tank has a mission to inspire social entrepreneurs to turn vision into action. Offering resources to nourish companies in their infancy, C-Space provides an environment where intentional collisions of intelligent people converging in the fields of psychology, business, technology and science can come together in collaborative and creative ways. Sound exciting? To learn more about the project, you can contact Jesse Cai at Jesse.Cai@Sofia.edu.