

# VISIONS

READY FOR

RESEARCH

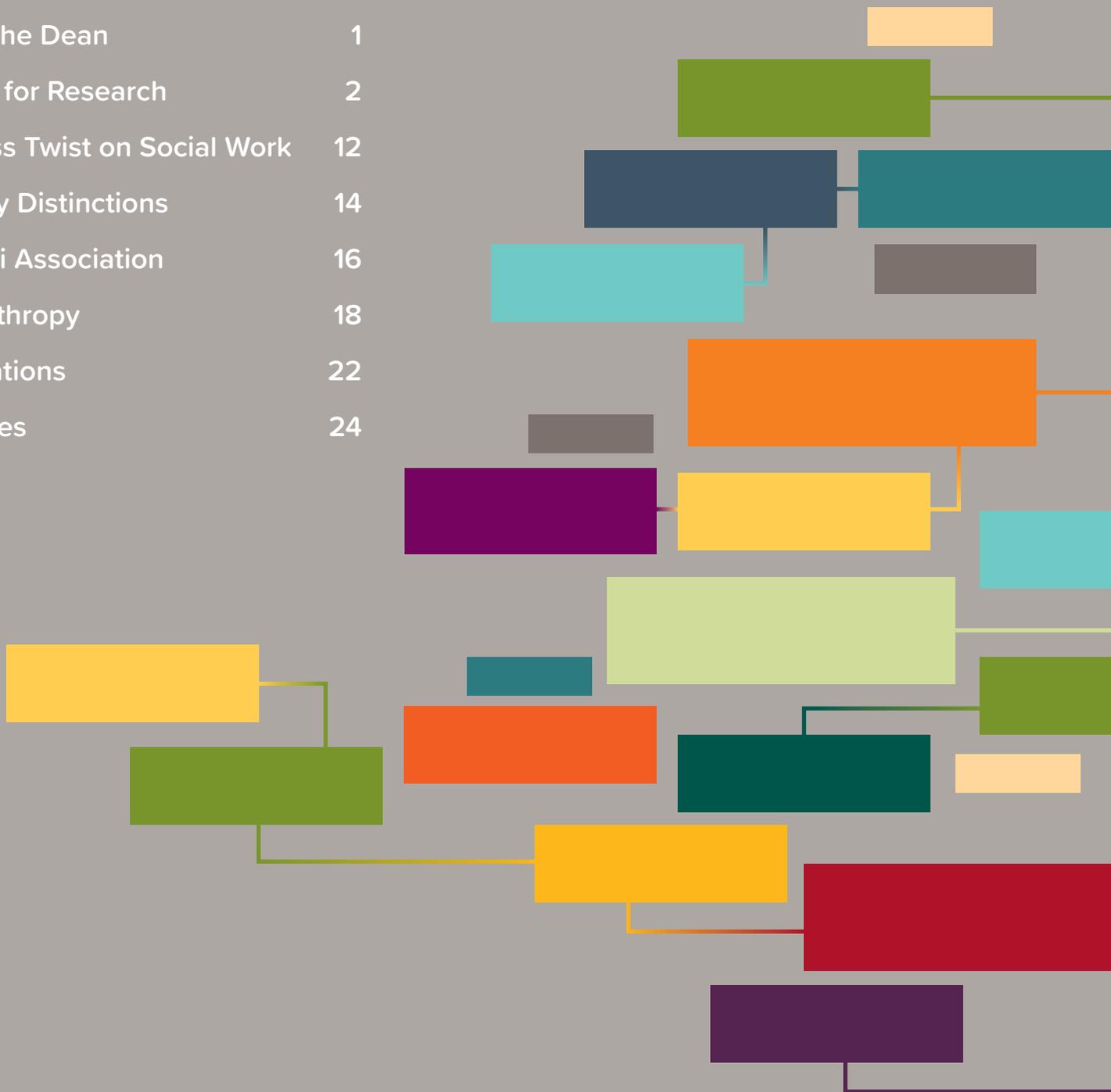
Student-faculty collaborators  
prepare and inspire the  
next generation of scholars

2018



WAYNE STATE  
School of Social Work

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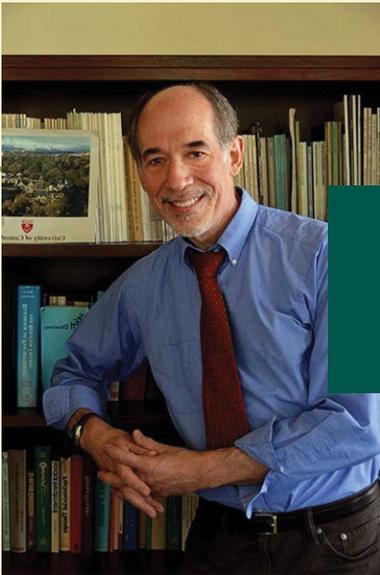
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# FROM THE DEAN

Classroom instruction and field education have rightly been considered essential components of social work education, through which knowledge, values and skills are transmuted and internalized, and students are socialized into the profession. The Wayne State School of Social Work considers these curricular elements essential to the preparation of competent social workers, and prides itself on the excellence of its faculty, its curriculum, and its partnerships with hundreds of field education agencies across the region. But increasingly, our school views a third educational component as critical to the training of tomorrow's social workers: research.

Research is the bedrock of social work practice, ensuring that individuals, families and communities receive the most effective, innovative, and culturally attuned interventions and treatments that social workers are able to provide. While all of the social sciences and allied health professions produce research of varying relevance to social work practice, there simply is no substitute for research conducted by social workers in social work practice settings, whether we are researching clinical processes in play therapy with a child who has experienced a trauma, or how an entire community grapples with an unjust policy decision.

Our cover story, "Ready for Research," profiles a dozen bachelor's, master's and doctoral students who are gaining exciting research experience with the help of our outstanding faculty, whose work is helping to advance clinical practice and social policy at the national and international levels. While some of our students' research experiences are coordinated by our Center for Social Work Research through its Social Work Student Research Community, which promotes student-faculty research collaborations on a range of issues, I am proud to say that

most are initiated by our faculty themselves. Eager to "pay forward" the mentoring they received as students and to prepare the next generation of social work researchers, they are reaching out to involve students who demonstrate interest and aptitude, often at the earliest stages of the formation of their professional social work identity.

We hope you enjoy reading about these student-faculty collaborations as well as the many other exciting initiatives underway at the School of Social Work. We think you'll find "collaboration" to be the theme of this entire issue of Visions, which introduces an exciting research and scholarly exchange between our school and social work faculty at Zurich University of Applied Sciences, our staging of lectures emphasizing synergies between anthropology and public health and social work, and our exciting foray into social entrepreneurship in the classroom and the community. As we work to confront society's most complex problems — those that may at times seem insoluble — we are constantly seeking the assistance of likeminded thinkers and disciplines to find promising approaches. We believe — indeed we have found — that solutions are often just a collaboration away.

Sincerely,

Jerrold Brandell  
Interim Dean and Distinguished Professor



READY FOR

# RESEARCH

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK FACULTY ARE COLLABORATING ON STUDIES WITH STUDENTS ACROSS DEGREE PROGRAMS TO IMPART ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND ENTHUSIASM TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF RESEARCHERS.

*Jessica Goletz, Carolyn Dayton and Nia Anderson*

“Pure joy. That’s how I feel about my work with students at Wayne State.”

Ask Carolyn Dayton, assistant social work professor and associate director of the Infant Mental Health Program at Wayne State’s Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute for Child and Family Development, why she involves students in her research endeavors and that is her response. After spending more than two decades in clinical practice with the families of infants and young children and contributing scores of research publications and presentations to the field of infant mental health,

Dayton has enviable expertise to transmit to the next generation of practitioners. But Dayton — who estimates at least 50 students from various university departments and degree programs have assisted with her “Baby On Board” study alone (see page 8) — insists she is motivated by delight and not duty to bring students into the lab.

“I have found that working with students is one of the highlights of my job,” she said.

Dayton is not alone. Across degree programs, Social Work faculty are actively pursuing research collaborations with students to advance knowledge and evidence-based interventions in a range of areas including healthy aging, children and families, health and behavioral health, interpersonal violence, and community, policy and program development. According to Joanne Sobeck, associate dean for research and director of Wayne State’s Center for Social Work Research, Social Work is prioritizing student involvement in research “as both a means and an end. We think it’s important not only to prepare our students for their future through research, but also to engage them in the present.”

Because social workers can practice at the B.S.W. and M.S.W. levels, saving research until the doctoral level means many social workers would end their training without experiencing and discovering an aptitude for research —

something which the bachelor’s and master’s students profiled here say has transformed their education and their career goals.

“We do not wait for them to act when they are done with their education at Wayne State,” Sobeck explained. “Rather, we want them to be engaged student scientists right now, giving them opportunities to be agents of their own learning. For this to happen, faculty support students’ learning as they experience the various steps of research and promote skills such as reviewing the literature, coordinating data collection, interviewing, and challenging assumptions that will help them develop and thrive in school and beyond.”

Faculty say the benefits of this mentoring are mutual. Says Assistant Professor Jamey Lister, who works with students on opioid misuse treatment research (see pages 6 and 10), “when students are motivated to build a résumé, open to training, and eager to develop news skills, they are a blessing to faculty. You can get great help mobilizing projects and moving them along efficiently.”

Assistant Professor Tam Perry, who has engaged students in her award-winning research on older adults’ responses to the Flint water crisis (see page 4), seeks out students “because they add energy and excitement to the work.”

“They also bring different perspectives, which makes both the end result and the process better,” she said. “I enjoy seeing students feel like they are being valued by the researcher and witness how to build research partners with communities as a way to democratize the research process — both for students and community members.”

Dayton also appreciates the vitality and viewpoints students bring to her research.

“Our students are bright, motivated, and hard-working, and I often feel like working with them keeps me young,” she said. “It certainly keeps me in touch with current events and reminds me that, if these folks are our future, we’re in really good shape.”

*continued on the next page*



**COLLEEN LINN**

Program: M.A. in Anthropology

**MAXWELL SMITH** (CLAS '15)

Program: M.S.W.

**RESEARCH:** “Older Adults’ Experiences and Understandings of the Flint Water Crisis” study with Assistant Social Work Professor **Tam Perry** and Jessica Robbins, assistant professor at Wayne State’s Institute of Gerontology and Department of Anthropology. Through interviews with older adults living independently in Flint as well as in senior living facilities, the study examines the individual, social, and political effects of the water crisis on this vulnerable population. The research team is considering access to resources, caregiving and kin relationships, and comorbidities in addition to the crisis’ impact on everyday activities and substantive life changes such as relocation. This work received the 2017 Betty J. Cleckley Minority Issues Research Award from the Aging and Public Health section of the American Public Health Association.

As a quintessentially social justice-oriented research initiative, the study of older adults’ responses to the lead poisoning of Flint’s water supply attracted Linn and Smith, both of whom have an interest in community health, resilience and political-economic perspectives. As a community organizer and canvasser for Clean Water Action, Linn had worked before graduate school on issues related to Michigan’s water quality, while Smith, as an undergraduate majoring in African American Studies, had compiled literature for a book on black radical union movements in the Caribbean. Both Linn and Smith — who came to the Flint study through Robbins and Perry, respectively — viewed the research project as a way to gain interdisciplinary research experience that would immerse them in the population they were studying.

Responsibilities for the study, which has garnered both students early career accomplishments in the form of peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, and a national research award American Public Health Association, have included study recruitment and scheduling, data gathering and organization, manuscript preparation and attending community outreach events.

**CAITLIN CASSADY** (B.S.W. '07, M.S.W. '08)

Program: Ph.D. in Social Work and Anthropology

**RESEARCH:** Cassady is collaborating with Social Work faculty as co-author on two invited book chapters related to cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). The first collaboration, for the upcoming *Routledge Handbook of Social Work Theory*, is with Associate Professor **Antonio González-Prendes** and uses a critical lens to look at CBT’s fit with social work practice as well as existing gaps. Among other things, González-Prendes and Cassady are examining how social work practitioners in the field of mental health and substance use disorders treatment have over the past three decades increasingly used CBT as a main practice model or an integrated component, and how CBT may need to be adapted for diverse patient populations to accommodate culture, disenfranchisement or ethical issues. The second project, a chapter for *Trauma: Contemporary Directions in Theory, Research and Practice* (the second edition of a book co-edited by Social Work Interim Dean and Distinguished Professor **Jerrold Brandell**), will be a collaboration with González-Prendes and Associate Professor **Stella Resko**. The chapter will provide an overview of the use and effectiveness of CBT in treating trauma and explore models including cognitive restructuring, self-instructional training, various exposure-based therapies, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing therapy.

After four years of hospice and home health clinical practice in Michigan, California and Oregon, Cassady returned to Detroit in 2012 to “test the waters” of a Ph.D. program by enrolling in Social Work’s Research and Evaluation Certificate program. She soon began conducting gerontological research with Associate Professor and Doctoral Program Director **Faith Hopp**, assisting with a multicultural, interdisciplinary feasibility study of an adult day services program in Dearborn that

Both have praised their mentors’ interdisciplinary focus and generosity in teaching students “the ropes” of research.

“Marrying social work and anthropology makes perfect sense and is an integrative way to help people and communities understand and improve their daily lives,” said Linn, who earned a bachelor’s degree in anthropology at Michigan Technological University and who this fall will join the first Ph.D. cohort of Wayne State’s new Transformative Research in Urban Sustainability and Training program. “I’ve always envisioned myself as a nonprofit leader, but one rooted in local democratic action, and I feel this research has given me great experience toward that goal.”

continues to provide Cassady with data for publication and presentation. Cassady transitioned to the Social Work and Anthropology (SWAN) doctoral degree in 2015 and now pursues research and dissemination in the areas of palliative care and culture, physician-assisted dying, and the synergies between social work and anthropology.

From 2013 to 2015, Cassady taught research methods and CBT courses in the M.S.W. program, where González-Prendes serves as chair of the Interpersonal Practice Concentration and lead teacher for the CBT track. González-Prendes later invited her to co-author the CBT chapters, which Cassady describes as “incredibly generous. He hadn’t seen my writing — he was going on blind faith. But the faculty have all been incredibly supportive. They have a lot of confidence in me — maybe even more than I had in myself.”

Now a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Anthropology and a trainee at Wayne State’s Institute of Gerontology, Cassady plans to research end-of-life issues — particularly innovations to conventional hospice models, the right-to-die movement she observed while practicing in Oregon and California, and the perceptions that clinicians, terminally ill patients and family members have of one another. The anthropological perspectives Cassady is gaining from the SWAN program, she says, bring “a needed complexity” to understanding cultural differences in end-of-life decisions and experiences.

“There was a point in my career when I thought I could not do research,” said Cassady, who took a respective first and third place at Wayne State’s 2016 and 2018 Graduate and Postdoctoral Research Symposium. “But I wanted a Ph.D. so I could teach, and now I really enjoy research. The School of Social Work did that for me.” ■

Smith, whose diverse interests span individual psychotherapy, ethnography, and macro practice, said the Flint research has given him “a huge amount of confidence.”

“When you look at the Flint water crisis, you see that so much movement on the issue was achieved by citizenry doing research on their own water and allowing it to come to light,” Smith said. “Science and research aren’t something that should be intimidating to people, and Wayne State and the School of Social Work do a great job making it accessible.” ■



Nia Anderson

**NIA ANDERSON** (CLAS '17)

*Program: M.S.W.*

**RESEARCH:** “Singing to Babies in Motown: The Detroit Lullaby Study” study with **Carolyn Dayton**, assistant social work professor and associate director of the Infant Mental Health Program at Wayne State’s Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute for Child and Family Development. With Assistant Professor of Music Education Wendy Matthews, Dayton is examining whether violence-exposed parents at risk for insensitive parenting with their young infants can calm themselves and their babies by singing.

Anderson credits her work in Dayton’s lab with her decision to pursue a graduate degree in social work. As an undergraduate psychology student, she volunteered to do transcription on Dayton’s Baby on Board study (see page 8) to gain research experience, then moved over to the lullaby study. The interdisciplinary environment she encountered persuaded her that the strengths of psychology and social work were both applicable to her interest in working with adolescents.

“Psychology and social work have a lot of similarities — they definitely fit well together,” said Anderson, whose continued work on the lullaby study involves coding the behaviors exhibited by parents and their babies. “Psychology is attuned to theories and clinical practices used with patients, while social work focuses on the real-world circumstances of those individuals and how to help them within those conditions. Both are so important, and I’ve found from my research experience that both can work together to make a big impact on the client.”

Anderson said that, despite her initial apprehension and learning curve, her research experience at Wayne State has given her clinical experience, confidence, and a leg-up in applying to graduate school. “It can be a bit intimidating, especially as an undergraduate when you don’t understand the terms and acronyms used in research,” she said. “But everyone was so supportive of me, and I feel like what I’ve accomplished made it all worth it.” ■



**DANIELLE SWANTEK**

*Program: B.S.W.*

**RESEARCH:** Swantek serves as study coordinator for “Biofeedback of heart rate variability in gambling disorder,” which is the first study of a heart rate variability method on a gambling disorder population. Swantek was recommended for the study by Assistant Social Work Professor **Jamey Lister**, who serves as co-principal investigator of the study, after volunteering on Lister’s PSMMT study on methadone treatment outcomes (see page 10). Led by Massil Benbouriche, a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Psychiatry, the 18-month pilot study will use biometrics to gauge whether the biofeedback intervention is effective in reducing gambling-related cravings, improving coping with stress after seeing gambling triggers and altering heart rate variability in roughly two dozen persons. Biofeedback training will teach subjects breathing techniques and provide feedback to help them resist cravings.

Swantek was referred to Lister by a classmate who works at Tolan Park and contacted him about volunteering on a study. “I wanted to get some experience in research for resume-building,” she recalled, “but I ended up enjoying participating in research studies and asked to continue.” She moved to the gambling disorder study and assumed a range of responsibilities, including data entry, setting up equipment, assisting with recruitment and enrollment, and overseeing research assistants.

Initially attracted to macro-level social work, Swantek says her research experience has led her to expand her focus to include interpersonal practice, preferably through

combined study of social work and psychology. “I enjoy learning about the brain, how it functions, and what can go wrong, while social work takes those research findings and creates change for the greater good,” she said. “The research I’m doing focuses on the scientific aspects of mental health and physiological functioning, while my social work training will help me take research like that and influence treatments and policies.”

Swantek praised Lister as a “great mentor, who is really supportive of my future plans and very helpful in recommending me to graduate schools.” She encourages undergraduates to get involved in research to gain a leg up, whether for the job market or advanced degree programs.

“Compile a list of things that interest you and find faculty who focus on those topics,” she said. “And be flexible. Even if you’re not assigned to the study of your choice right away, showing you have the initiative and drive to conduct research will help you move on to the work you want to do.” ■

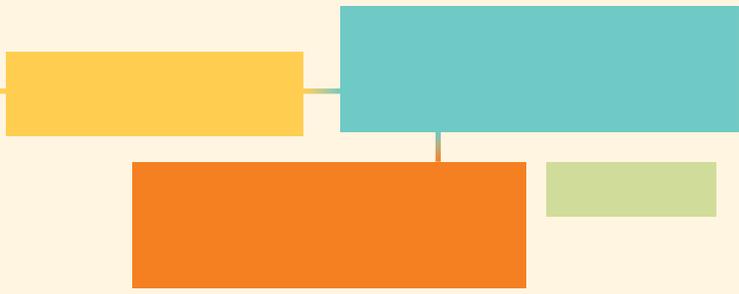
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**JOSEPH URBIEL**

*Program: B.S.W.*

**RESEARCH:** With help from faculty mentor Assistant Social Work Professor **Jamey Lister**, Urbiel received a Wayne State Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) fellowship for his study, “Injection Opioid Use Among African American Patients At An Urban Methadone Clinic: An Evaluation of Risk/Protective Factors to Injection Status.” For the study, Urbiel is conducting a quantitative analysis of 100 African American methadone maintenance patients at the university’s Tolan Park Research Clinic to develop an in-depth understanding of factors that led them to inject or prevented them from doing so. The study should help treatment providers understand what limited extant data shows to be a significantly lower injection rates among African American opioid users when compared to non-African American users.

Now in his final semester of undergraduate social work study, Urbiel works as a peer recovery coach at Tolan Park and began collaborating with Lister — who is also an adjunct professor at the School of Medicine’s (SOM) Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurosciences and is involved in a number of studies involving opioid use disorder treatment in urban and rural settings — by recruiting patients for Lister’s study on Psychosocial Predictors of Methadone Treatment Outcomes (PSMMT) (see page 10). In addition to Lister’s assistance as co-principal investigator and faculty sponsor of the study, Urbiel is receiving guidance with data collection and





Lori Vanderwill

**LORI VANDERWILL** (B.S.W. '15)

*Program: Ph.D.*

**RESEARCH:** With Associate Professor **Richard Smith**, Vanderwill is studying a range of issues related to equity in education, including factors that contribute to school closings and the impact of these closings on property foreclosures and land values. Among other things, their study examines whether school closings are determined solely by objective standards, such as academic performance and cost, or also by subjective factors, such as racial composition. For their study, Vanderwill and Smith

analysis from co-investigators Professor Cynthia Arfken of SOM's Substance Abuse Research Division and his Tolan Park supervisor Ed Mischel (MSW '79).

Urbiel stresses that recovery is the ultimate public health objective when working with opioid users, but says persuading users not to inject or to stop injecting is a worthy intervention given the serious risks of injection, namely transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C, and that it typically transitions users to a much more serious degree of addiction. Understanding the reasons African American opioid users are less likely to inject could lead to important harm reduction interventions for all users.

Urbiel has already presented findings from his study at the University of Alabama-Birmingham's Health Disparities Research Symposium as well as Social Work's Social Justice Symposium, SOM's Translational Neuroscience Program Symposium and Research Day, and the UROP Undergraduate Research and Creative Projects Conference. He says his progression from a personnel role in Lister's PSMMT study to a principal investigator role on his UROP project with Lister shows that the traditional model of "climbing the ladder in research" is possible even at the undergraduate level.

"Working with Dr. Lister on this project has been a truly rewarding learning experience for me," Urbiel says. "I have a greater appreciation for research now that I am gaining a working knowledge of the process from start to finish." ■

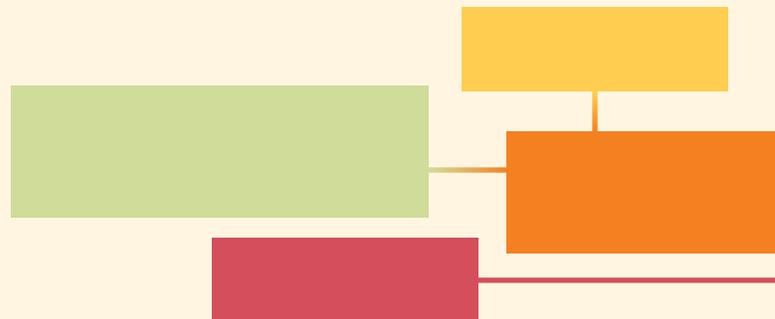
will analyze longitudinal data from the State of Michigan merged with neighborhood characteristics from the U.S. Census, Wayne County tax data, and City of Detroit open data.

Before pursuing her Ph.D., Vanderwill worked for three years as a social worker in Detroit Public Schools, providing clinical therapy to support the mental health of students. While there, she saw how disparities, violence, and a lack of resources negatively impacted the students with whom she practiced. After beginning her doctoral studies, she approached Smith, for whom she serves as a graduate research assistant, about designing a study that could elucidate these students' circumstances.

"We went back and forth a lot about the issue, seeing it as a chicken-or-egg question of whether poor neighborhoods have poor schools, or poor schools create poor neighborhoods," said Vanderwill, who her earned an M.S.W. from University of Michigan in 2016. "We wanted to examine the interaction of neighborhood and school characteristics in a way that could support an equitable policy conversation."

Vanderwill brings to the study research experience stemming from her undergraduate studies at Wayne State, when she began a years-long research collaboration with former faculty member and foster youth expert Angelique Day examining trauma-informed teaching methods in schools. Since joining the doctoral program in fall 2017, she has also worked with Associate Professor **Debra Patterson** on a federally funded study of foster parent competencies, assisting with literature reviews and transcript coding, and with Associate Professor **Stella Resko** on research related to adolescent drug use. Vanderwill helped Resko present this study in January at the annual conference of the Society for Social Work and Research.

"The social work faculty at Wayne State are so supportive of your research interests and willing to just partner up with you and let you decide where you want to go," said Vanderwill, who plans eventually to conduct research in social-emotional learning while advocating for educational policy changes that support teachers. "Dr. Smith is an amazing data scientist who is pushing me outside of my comfort zone in a way that is really enhancing my experience at the macro level." ■





Jessica Goletz

**JESSICA GOLETZ** (CLAS '16)

*Program: Combined M.A. and Ph.D. in Psychology (Developmental Science)*

**RESEARCH:** The “Baby On Board” study with **Carolyn Dayton**, assistant social work professor and associate director of the Infant Mental Health Program at Wayne State’s Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute for Child and Family Development, examines how fathers interact with newborns and influence the mental health of infants. The study followed couples from pregnancy through the first months of parenting, combining qualitative data on parental attitudes with biometric measurements of stress and histories of risk and resilience factors.

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Goletz was an undergraduate psychology student when an ad on Blackboard soliciting help for Dayton’s study piqued her interest. “I had no research experience and I was nervous about responding, but I decided to take the leap,” Goletz recalled.

“I got dressed up, walked in with my portfolio and said, ‘I work part-time at a pizza place, but I’m a hard worker!’ My interests and degree plans made me a good fit, and I was accepted into the lab.”

Goletz’ enjoyed a range of “really cool” responsibilities, from playing with babies to administering surveys, interviews and intelligence tests to engaging in data transcription and analysis. Eventually, she was incorporating study data into an honor’s thesis, co-presenting study findings, and parlaying her experience into a paid research coordinator position at Merrill Palmer. Goletz continues to work with Dayton on various projects, and presented with her at the annual conference of the Society for Social Work and Research.

“Going into psychology, I knew broadly that I wanted to help people, but research has helped me understand that you have to listen to people and understand what they need if you’re going to do that,” said Goletz, who hopes to pursue macro infant mental health. “Dr. Dayton and the other researchers I have worked with at Wayne State have modeled an amazing interdisciplinary approach to combining experiences and perspectives to be more effective.” ■

**ALEXANDRA CAMERON** (M.S.W. '15)

*Program: Ph.D.*

**RESEARCH:** Cameron is helping Assistant Professor **Megan Piel** examine foster youth experiences with health care services as they transition to adulthood. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have been linked to risky health behaviors, chronic health conditions, and overall poorer health outcomes in adulthood. Most youth are exposed to at least one childhood adversity, however youth involved in the child welfare system are more likely than their same-age peers to have experienced multiple adversities with compounding effects on their overall health. These physical health issues often have longitudinal impact well after youth turn 18, yet limited data exist on their experiences and utilization of health care services after aging out of the foster care system. Findings from this study can help build systems and community supports to improve healthy development and outcomes for this vulnerable population.

Cameron was admittedly “nervous” about research when she entered the Ph.D. program in 2015, her experience being limited to a master’s thesis on suicide and bullying among undergraduate students that she conducted with help from Associate Professor **Michael Kral**. Yet just two years into her assignment as a graduate research assistant to Piel, she has presented research at two national conferences (the Council on Social Work Education in Dallas and the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood in Washington, DC) and is scheduled to present at the Conference on Adolescent Health in Ann Arbor this spring.



While Cameron entered the doctoral program with an interest in practice with adolescents, she did not know much about adverse childhood experiences and their impact on various health outcomes in adulthood. She has assisted Piel with recruitment, data collection and analysis for their study on foster care youth experiences with health care services.

“Many of these young people only have about 90 days to prepare to leave the system that has supported them for much of their lives, and we are finding that a lot of the college students with a history of foster care don’t know about the additional supports that are available to them through campus health services,” Cameron noted. “Knowing about these services is critical to their transition to independence, both from the system and to a healthy adulthood.”

Praising Piel for allowing her to “take the reins” in their research endeavors, Cameron has found this generosity typical of the social work faculty.

“Every professor you run into is more than willing to help you out and to work with you as you identify what you want to research and how,” she said “Moreover, being in Midtown Detroit is really beneficial to accessing populations that students want to work with. Being in this urban area, we get a chance to help the city we are in and to interact with the communities around us.” ■



Kathryn Szechy

### KATHRYN SZECHY

*Program: Graduate Certificate in Research and Evaluation*

**RESEARCH:** Szechy has helped Associate Professor **Stella Resko** analyze data from a survey Resko helped the Michigan Prevention Association (MPA) develop on residents’ attitudes toward the legalization of marijuana in Michigan. Cannabis policy is developing rapidly in the United States, and although researchers have examined correlates of public opinion, only a small handful of studies have investigated the reasons that individuals support, oppose or remain undecided about legalization. Using a statewide sample, Resko’s study looks at reasons for these views in respondents’ own words.

To gauge her interest in pursuing a Ph.D., Szechy began work on a graduate certificate in 2016 after more than 25 years of practice as a clinical social worker, having earned her bachelor’s in psychology at the University of Western Ontario and her M.S.W. from the University of Toronto.

Szechy’s passion for conducting research — which has included published work on attachment theory as an undergraduate and on hospital social work while working at a pediatric hospital in Toronto — was “reignited” during Resko’s statistics class, when Resko made her data from the MPA survey available to Szechy for a final project. Resko, who worked with Szechy to develop her ideas about the data, encouraged the entire class to parlay their projects into professional publications or presentations. For Szechy, this meant helping Resko code qualitative data from the MPA survey and analyze quantitative data for presentation at the annual conference of the Society for Social Work and Research.

“Dr. Resko is all about her students being hands-on and empowered as researchers, and the work we did together is related to the issues I see in my clinical practice,” said Szechy. “One of the reasons I chose Wayne State was the breadth of scientific inquiry being pursued by the faculty, and being a part of that inquiry has been a great experience.” ■



## AMANDA BRISKEY (B.S.W. '17)

Program: M.S.W.

**RESEARCH:** Briskey serves as coordinator for two studies being conducted by Assistant Social Work Professor **Jamey Lister**. The first, Psychosocial Predictors of Methadone Treatment Outcomes (PSMMT), looks at psychological and social factors influencing treatment outcomes for people in methadone treatment through quantitative intake surveys taken at Tolan Park Research Clinic. The second, Project on Rural Opioid Use Disorder (PROUD), examines challenges that residents of rural Michigan face when seeking treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) through a mixed-methods pilot study in rural communities in SE Michigan. The study, which will help guide development of future psychosocial interventions for rural OUD, examines quantitative and qualitative data from individuals with opioid use problems taken from surveys and focus groups as well as qualitative data from interviews with medication-assisted treatment providers.

Briskey sought out research opportunities as an undergraduate social work student to compensate for the lack of “face time” she perceived as a result of taking a large number of online classes. “I didn’t feel like I was bonding with professors the way that other B.S.W. students were, and I was looking for something that would help me get to know them better and get the references I would need for graduate school.” Answering Lister’s advertisement for research help, Briskey

began volunteering on the PSMMT study as a research assistant, handling a range of responsibilities that included scheduling and administering surveys, brainstorming recruitment strategies and implementing plans of action. Briskey was eventually hired to work as coordinator for the PROUD study by Lister, who serves as principal investigator, as well as on a smoking cessation study by David Ledgerwood of the Wayne State School of Medicine.

Briskey, who is helping write a systematic review paper on OUD treatment for a directed study with Lister, hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in social work and eventually work as a clinical social worker conducting individual therapy. She says her research experience has provided her with invaluable references as well as a range of transferable skills. “People like the fact that I can apply the skills I’ve gained in research to pretty much anything,” Briskey said. “It may be the ability to collect and analyze data and get results from it, or to have a phone conversation with people you don’t know, or to work with people from different populations. It really gives you hands-on experiences that you can use outside of the lab.”

She also appreciates the preparation she received before beginning her research duties. “There is no reason to be intimidated — everyone trains you to know exactly what you are doing,” she said. “There was no question in my mind that I was prepared.” ■

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## ASHLEY QUINN

Program: M.S.W.

**RESEARCH:** Quinn is working with Assistant Professor **Megan Piel** on a study of foster parents’ perspectives of cultural competency, as well as their cultural receptivity, which is a pre-cursor for assessing cultural competency. Although African American children represent 14 percent of the U.S. child population, they constitute more than half of the children entering foster care in Michigan. Because the majority of foster homes in the state are Caucasian, these transracial placements present a need for racial awareness, cultural receptivity and integration to promote positive identity development among African American foster youth. Quinn has helped Dr. Piel develop the research design, methods and institutional review board application for a survey of hundreds of licensed foster parents to evaluate their experiences fostering transracially and is also assisting with data collection and analysis.

Quinn recalls meeting with her MSW advisor about fulfilling the research component of her degree program and describing her desire to pursue a Ph.D. and eventually to influence child welfare policy. The advisor suggested these two interests, coupled with Quinn’s practice

experience as a foster care licensing specialist at the Ann Arbor-based foster care and adoption agency Fostering Futures, made her a good fit for a research thesis under the guidance of Piel, whose research focuses on the intersection of child welfare and mental health, with attention to foster family resilience and youth transitions to adulthood.

Quinn reached out to Piel and is now collaborating on a mixed-methods survey of nearly 400 licensed foster families that has yielded quantitative data for her thesis and qualitative data for future analysis. Quinn intends to present her findings to foster care licensing agencies across Michigan as well as at national social work and child welfare conferences such as the Society for Social Work and Research and the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. The two are also preparing publications to submit to journals relevant to child welfare and social work practice with children and families.

“I really appreciate Dr. Piel’s support,” Quinn said. “As a graduate student I feel very thankful to have had this learning experience and the help of a faculty member who wants to see me grow.” ■

Empower social workers  
I see the power individuals who make  
helping them find their voice  
are agents of change working to improve  
lives of others by advocating for  
vulnerable populations • We are heroes and our  
empowerment is empathy • We promote social  
justice so everyone can get the fair  
share that they deserve • We find  
strengths within the community and  
build upon them to make a positive  
impact • **BY BEING THE VOICE WHEN NO  
ONE ELSE WANTS TO MAKE NOISE WE  
GIVE HOPE TO THE FUTURE**

# A SWISS TWI

## ON SOCIAL WORK

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THROUGH A DYNAMIC NEW PARTNERSHIP, SOCIAL WORK FACULTY AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY AND THE ZURICH UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES ARE HARNESSING THE STRENGTHS OF U.S. AND SWISS APPROACHES TO SOCIAL WELFARE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS COMMON TO DETROIT AND ZURICH.

Social workers are tasked with understanding culture and its function in human behavior and society, so it's not surprising that diversity and inclusion are key components of education, training and scholarship at the School of Social Work. Part of the school's commitment to promoting research and practice that is sensitive to differences among peoples and groups involves its pursuit of programs focused on cultural, language, and global competencies — a great example of which is a new scholarly and research exchange with social work faculty at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) in Switzerland.

# ST



The exchange began in 2014, when Ursula Blosser, dean of ZHAW's School of Social Work, invited now-Interim Dean Jerrold Brandell to spend a month of his sabbatical in Zurich. While there, Brandell taught an intensive short course on psychoanalysis and clinical social work and presented a colloquium to ZHAW's social work faculty on focal conflict analysis. The following year, Frank Wittmann, director of ZHAW's Institute of Management and Social Policy, came to Detroit to meet the staff of Wayne State's Center for Social Work Research, returning again in 2016 with colleagues Dirk Baier and Monica Goetzoe. A Wayne State Social Work delegation traveled to Zurich in September 2017, and Wayne State played host to ZHAW faculty and staff once more in March 2018.

According to Brandell, the collaboration with ZHAW — which will ultimately comprise research collaborations, reciprocal teaching opportunities, and study abroad experiences — creates opportunities to explore new ideas for addressing social problems, such as substance misuse, intimate partner violence, and physical and psychobehavioral conditions afflicting older adults, that are common to both Detroit and Zurich. But it also allows faculty from each country to see what the other nation does well.

Wayne State Assistant Social Work Professor Jun Sung Hong, who has collaborated with ZHAW's Baier on research related to bullying and cyberbullying, said Switzerland's widespread adoption of a harm reduction model could have beneficial applications for the United States. Integrated into Swiss social and public health services, criminal justice and correctional programs, and public policy, harm reduction emphasizes rehabilitation over punishment in a way that respects the dignity of the person and the health of society, Hong observed.

Meanwhile, Wittmann said ZHAW's faculty are eager to learn more about "how Wayne State connects teaching, science and practice."

"It is always exciting to gain insight into how one's own profession engages in practice, teaching and research under different social and political conditions," Wittmann observed of ZHAW's visits to Detroit. "We are very interested to find out how Wayne State has achieved such a high status of research in the field of social work. Likewise, the design of social work in a society with other dimensions and with different social problems is very instructive for us."

Anwar Najor-Durack, director of field education for the Wayne State School of Social Work, said the relationship with ZHAW hopefully will yield international experiences for students as well as faculty. Talks are underway to develop an online social work course taught by and for both universities, as well as to facilitate student exchanges ranging from intensive, two-week learning trips to graduate study.

"If this model with Switzerland works, it could open the door for collaborations with other countries," Najor-Durack said, noting that Social Work has partnered with other American universities in recent years to give social work students study abroad opportunities in Guatemala, Ecuador, Poland, and the Netherlands. "Given the globalized communities they will encounter after graduation, our students need a good understanding of how the world impacts their practice and the people they are practicing with."

*Left: Walking on Niederdorfstrasse in Zurich's Old Town are Brandell and Joanne Smith-Darden, associate professor for research with the Wayne State School of Social Work.*

*Above: At Zurich's Needle Park are (left to right) Hong, Nina Neuenschwander, research associate with ZHAW's Center for Social Work Studies, Larissa M. Sundermann, research associate with ZHAW's Institute of Management and Social Policy, Joanne Sobeck, associate dean for research with Wayne State's School of Social Work, and Wayne State Social Work Professor Poco Kernsmith.*



FACULTY

# DISTINCTIONS

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK FACULTY HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED WITHIN THE PAST YEAR FOR CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD.

## Jerrold Brandell

*Interim Dean and Distinguished Professor*

On Oct. 21, Brandell received the **University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration's (SSA) Edith Abbott Award for Lifetime Achievement**. One of the school's highest honors, the Edith Abbott award recognizes a SSA alumna/us for distinguished service to society and for outstanding professional contributions at the local, national, or international levels. Presenting the award at the school's AMP the Base Impact Conference in Chicago, SSA Alumni Association Board President Alison Weston praised Brandell "for his distinguished work, commitment to the profession, and remarkable service" during nearly 40 years of teaching, higher education administration, and practice as a clinical social worker.

Brandell was also honored by the **American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work (AAPCSW)** with its first-ever **Selma Fraiberg Award for Excellence in Practice with Children and Adolescents and Their**

**Parents**. The award, presented at the AAPCSW's 15th Biennial National Conference in Baltimore, recognizes an active AAPCSW member who has dedicated his or her career to practice with children and adolescents and contributed to the field through teaching, presenting, and writing. In selecting Brandell for its inaugural award, AAPCSW cited his work in the area of therapeutic storytelling — specifically his development and dissemination of "reciprocal storytelling" — as a key contribution to the field of child and adolescent practice. Brandell has taught reciprocal storytelling to countless clinicians through numerous publications including his book, *Of Mice and Metaphors*, and through lectures and workshops in more than a half-dozen countries.

## Joanne Sobeck

*Associate Dean for Research*

Sobeck was named a member of the 2018 class of **Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) Fellows** during SSWR's 2018 Annual Conference, held Jan. 10–14 in



Joanne Sobeck



Hong speaks at the recognition ceremony for the WSU Academy of Scholars Junior Faculty Award



Richard Smith

Washington, DC. Fellows are SSWR members who have aided the society in its mission to advance, disseminate, and translate research that addresses issues of social work practice and policy and promotes a diverse, equitable and just society. Sobeck has distinguished herself through her own body of research — focused largely on nonprofit capacity building and community-based program development, implementation and evaluation — and as director of the School of Social Work’s research center. Under Sobeck’s leadership, the center for the past decade has significantly strengthened its community presence and partnerships and undertaken large-scale research and evaluation projects with local, state and national impact.

**Jun Hong**  
*Assistant Professor*

Hong received the 2017 **Alberti Center Early Career Award for Distinguished Scholarly Contributions to Bullying Abuse Prevention**. The Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention, located in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Buffalo, selected Hong for his exemplary scholarly contributions to the field of bullying abuse prevention and for conducting research that has the potential to influence practice and policy. Hong has conducted extensive research into the influence of bullying and peer victimization on health and mental health — particularly among racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, sexual minorities, those in low-income communities, and those who have been stigmatized. He has contributed to the development of school-based bullying prevention programs and presented his research

on bullying to national and international audiences at academic conferences, workshops and public service events.

Hong was also a recipient of the **WSU Academy of Scholars Junior Faculty Award** for the 2017–18 academic year. Established in 2003, the award is given annually to a select number of junior faculty members who have a significant record of publications or creative achievement and who have achieved national or international recognition very early in their careers.

**Richard Smith**  
*Associate Professor*

Smith was appointed **editor of the *Journal of Community Practice*** with Anna Maria Santiago, professor and associate dean for graduate affairs for the College of Social Sciences at Michigan State University. Sponsored by the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA), the interdisciplinary journal is grounded in social work and publishes articles about community organizing, planning, social administration, organizational development, community development, and social change. The first special issue to be published under this new editorial leadership will be about ecosocial work and social change, which is tied to Smith’s research on sustainable community development. Smith, who serves as a core advisor for the International Ecocity Standards project of Ecocity Builders, Inc., was awarded ACOSA’s Emerging Scholar Award in 2013.

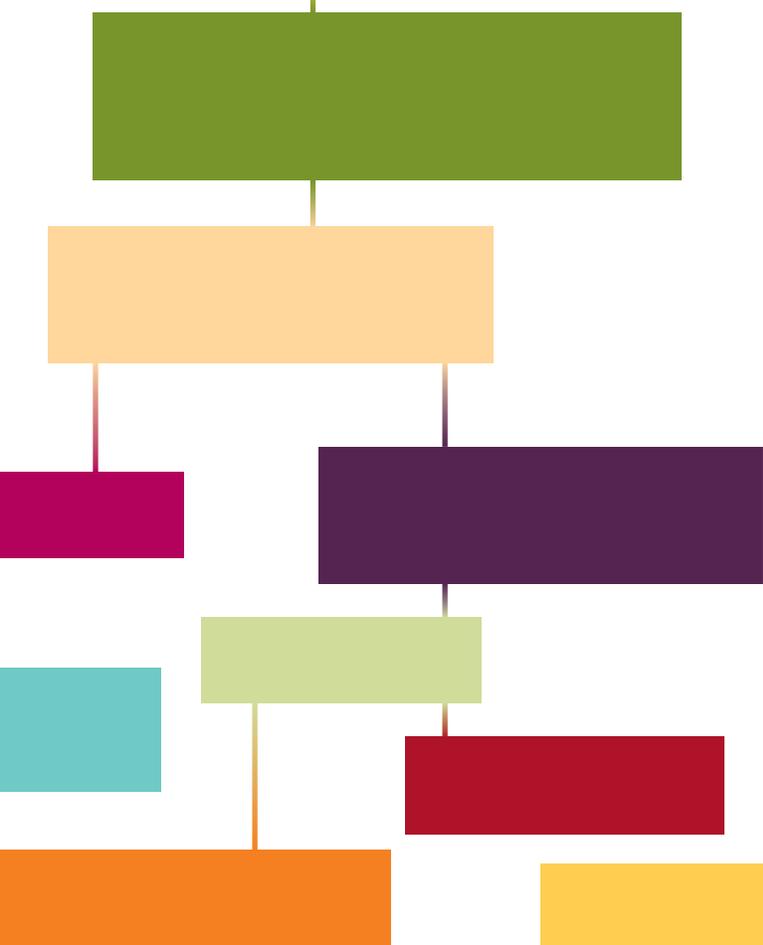


The School of Social Work Alumni Association plays an important role in determining the priorities, activities and outreach of the school by representing the views of its members and by fostering an engaged alumni community providing critical feedback to the school. As practitioners and researchers, alumni advise the school on emerging trends in the field, helping to shape student education and training. As donors, alumni enhance the scholarships, funds and capital improvements that strengthen our role as a world-class school of social work. And as ambassadors, alumni increase the visibility of our school and promote enrollment, community partnerships, and funding.

# ALUMNI ASSOCIAT

The contributions of the Alumni Association are guided by its board of directors, which meets monthly and plans activities and initiatives through its Social Committee and Education Committee. The Social Committee stages events for alumni to engage and encourage Wayne State social work students, honor the achievements of its alumni, and support the school's development initiatives and community-based outreach work. The Education Committee creates opportunities to educate social workers about issues related to practice and self-care and provide financial assistance to students.

The Alumni Association Board of Directors welcomes news members, particularly as they promote a dynamic array of micro, mezzo and macro practitioners. For more information about joining the board, contact President **Artan Hughes** at [artan229@yahoo.com](mailto:artan229@yahoo.com).



# MEET OUR BOARD MEMBERS



Artan Hughes  
PRESIDENT (MSW '10)



Paul Hudson Mack  
VICE PRESIDENT (MSW '11)



Kai Anderson  
TREASURER (MSW '13)



Tresa Simmons  
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Diane' Townsel  
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Jessica Lennon  
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(MSW PROGRAM)



Charise Coats  
IMMEDIATE PAST  
PRESIDENT (MSW '10)



Brandon Ivory  
(MSW '00)



Mary Glass  
(BSW '15, MSW '16)



Amber Thomas  
(MSW '17)



Lindsay McCracken  
(MSW '16)

The School of Social Work has achieved 62% of its fundraising goal under the university's four-year development initiative, Pivotal Moments, having raised \$3.4 million of the \$5.5 million it set out to raise at the start of the university-wide campaign. A significant portion of these funds are supporting upgrades to Social Work's new building on Woodward Avenue, which it occupied in January 2016 after an initial phase of renovations.

Slated to begin in 2018, Phase II focuses on classrooms and engagement spaces for students and the community. Clinical practice classrooms will support interactive workshops, instructional software for specialized clinical

instruction, and community engagement projects — all of which will help our students explore best practices in social work. A new media center will be a high-tech, innovative space inspiring new methods of teaching social work and providing online interactive learning activities. This space also will support community engagement activities, including lectures, workshops, continuing education programming and large meetings.

In addition to the classroom spaces and media center, Phase II also includes a community engagement lounge that opens up onto Woodward with an attractive and versatile outdoor space for students, alumni, faculty, staff and the community to relax and interact.

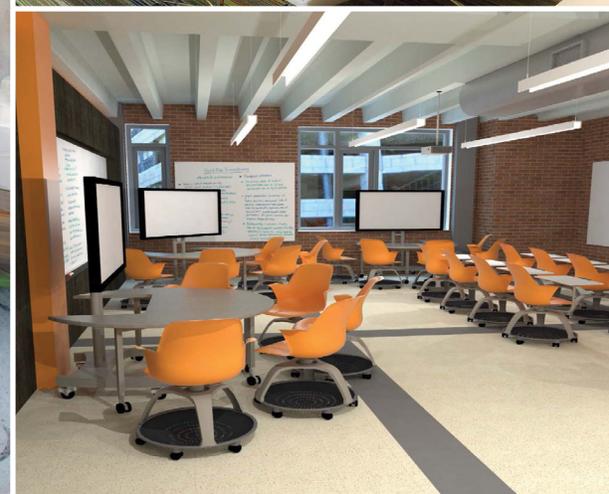
# PHILANTHROPY

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WAYNE STATE  
School of Social Work





FOUR NEW FUNDS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS AND GENERAL OPERATIONS.

The **Ida Rosenbaum Kost Endowed Scholarship**, created with \$40,000 by D'vorah Kost to honor the memory of her mother, was established to support undergraduate or graduate students who have faced or are facing significant challenges in their lives. Preference will be given to students in good academic standing who are involved in the Transition to Independence Program for Wayne State students aging out foster care, to students facing housing or food insecurities, or to students who have been through the criminal justice system.

Born in 1917 in Kansas City, Ida Rosenbaum was raised and educated in Detroit. After earning a bachelor's degree from Wayne State University in 1939 and a master's from University of Michigan, she enjoyed a 25-year career as a clinical social worker at Jewish Family Services. In 1977, she and her husband David retired to Florida where Ida continued to serve as a social worker until age 89, seeing clients, starting a widow support group and chairing a hearing-impaired support group for many years.

The **Sabry M. Attia Endowed Support Fund** has been established at the Wayne State University School of Social Work, providing \$25,000 to support operations in the school.

The support fund, which can be used at the dean's discretion for such things as research, equipment, lectures and education, was established by Mervat Sabry Hassan (CLAS '98) in honor of her late father, Sabry M. Attia, who came to the United States in 1970 to begin a new life with his family. Settling in Grosse Pointe with his wife and four daughters, he worked at Henry Ford Hospital while completing his Master of Social Work at Wayne State, where his eldest daughter and later his wife were pursuing degrees as well. Upon completing his M.S.W. in 1973, he earned his Ph.D. in Education at Wayne State in 1985.

Hassan recalls that her father loved his career as a social worker, and that it was his wish to support the School of Social Work to encourage others to pursue careers in the field and improve the lives of others.

The **Eli A. Scherr Endowed Scholarship** has been created with \$30,000 by the Eli A. Scherr Philanthropic Fund of the United Jewish Foundation of Metro Detroit. The scholarship recognizes scholastic achievement and gives preference to students whose field placements are located at a Jewish agency in Metropolitan Detroit or in the area of geriatrics practice in the region.

Scherr, who holds a Bachelor of Science as well as a Master of Business Administration from Wayne State University, has been a certified public accountant since 1971. Beginning in 1968, he worked for the Internal Revenue Service for five years as a field auditor and in a variety of administrative positions. Subsequently, he worked in the private sector as controller and chief financial officer for two large multi-level real estate companies until his retirement in 2011. He has served on the board for Jewish Senior Life, which is the branch of the Jewish Federation dealing with housing and care for the elderly.

The **Arlene N. Weisz Endowed Scholarship** was created with a legacy gift for high-achieving full-time or part-time graduate students demonstrating financial need.

Professor Arlene Weisz joined the Wayne State School of Social Work faculty in 1995 after working as a psychotherapist in several different settings in Chicago. She received her M.S.W. and Ph.D. from the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In addition to teaching and research, Weisz served as the Director of the Doctoral Program from 2009–2014. Her research interests include youth dating violence, sexual assault prevention, and family/ domestic violence.

Weisz established the scholarship to express her appreciation of the school's engagement in a diverse, urban environment and its role as a rewarding place to engage with others in supporting the growth of social work as an intellectual and practice endeavor. Many years ago, Weisz's family benefited from receiving social work services, and she is eager to support the provision of high-quality services for families in the future.



## 2017-18 Scholarships

59

ANNUAL MERIT- AND  
NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

46

OF WHICH ARE ENDOWED

70

STUDENTS RECEIVED  
PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS

\$263,788

TOTAL AWARD AMOUNT

\$3,768

AVERAGE STUDENT AWARD

WAYNE TOGETHER  
COLLABORATIVE

11

MSW STIPENDS  
EQUALING \$70,400

21

## Will you invest in student success?

The School of Social Work at Wayne State University prepares students to be effective, compassionate and ethical social work practitioners through challenging classroom instruction, mentoring from accomplished faculty members, and extensive hands-on experience. This approach provides students with the skills and knowledge they need to serve vulnerable individuals, families and communities in a wide range of contexts.

Access to resources and financial support is critical for many students as they strive to earn their degrees and launch fulfilling, impactful careers. Approximately 84 percent of Wayne State students rely on some form

of financial aid. Scholarships and field education stipends help ease this burden, allowing students to focus on their academic goals and pursue internships, research and career opportunities that enhance their learning.

Your support can help empower these students and those they will go on to serve. Make a gift today at [giving.wayne.edu/donate/socialwork](https://giving.wayne.edu/donate/socialwork) or contact **Jana McNair**, director of philanthropy, at [bb3074@wayne.edu](mailto:bb3074@wayne.edu) or at **(313) 577-4429**.



# INNOVATIONS

THE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AND POLARIZING SOCIAL ISSUES FACING RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS HAVE PROMPTED THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO RESPOND WITH INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES FOR DISCUSSING, STUDYING AND SOLVING PRESSING PROBLEMS.

## Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is viewed as a win-win pursuit by individuals who see no contradiction between “ethical” and “enterprising” and who wish to make a positive impact on society. While the growing field has yet to coalesce around a single definition, there is general agreement that social entrepreneurship combines the passion and integrity of a social mission with the discipline, efficiency, and core processes of a high-performing business to generate both revenue and socially relevant results. It has the potential to take commercial enterprises beyond mere market value to address protracted social problems encompassing everything from poverty to food insecurity to environmental degradation.

Mindful of the many objectives shared by social work and social entrepreneurship, the School of Social Work is meeting student demand for training in social innovation and enterprise with the creation of a popular new course, Social Entrepreneurship (SW 6991).

Adjunct faculty member Marijo Upshaw (MSW, '16), a member of the school's Entrepreneurship Committee who created and teaches SW 6991, said social workers are drawn to social entrepreneurship because both fields focus on developing human relationships, addressing the

*Above: Social Work's Entrepreneurship Committee brings together faculty, advising and development expertise. From left to right, the members are (front row) Optimize Wayne co-founder Limi Sharif, Director of Philanthropy Jana McNair, Charise Coats (MSW, '10) of the school's Alumni Association board, academic advisor and committee co-chair Shantalea Johns, (back row) adjunct faculty member Marijo Upshaw, M.S.W. student Dominique Golden, academic advisor Tamarie Willis, and Richard Smith, associate professor and co-chair.*

root causes of social inequity, maximizing change, and empowering and uplifting marginalized populations.

“Social entrepreneurship at its core is about upsetting the status quo, and as such it aligns with social work's fundamental values about social justice and systems change,” said Upshaw, who earned an M.B.A. at Rutgers University and practiced social entrepreneurship as leader of financial services for Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin and as a principal of the entrepreneurial start-up Social Work p.r.n., a national provider of social work staffing services. “Today's social work students are part of a new generation of millennials who want to ‘do well and do good’ by using a range of diverse skills to innovate and create positive change across virtually every sector.”

M.S.W. advisor Tamarie Willis, who also sits on the school's Entrepreneurship Committee, says the Social Entrepreneurship course was a logical outgrowth of



## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK HOSTED FIRST-EVER SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONFERENCE

As part of its commitment to providing social entrepreneurship training and content, School of Social Work will host its first-ever social entrepreneurship conference on April 6 in the Student Center on main campus. The event was open to the general public and free for Wayne State students.

Organized by Social Work's Entrepreneurship Committee and co-sponsored by the School of Social Work Alumni Association Board, Wayne State's student-led social innovation program OptimizeWayne, and the Wayne State student chapter of the Association of Black Social Workers, "Social Entrepreneurship: The Emerging Role of Social Innovation And Social Enterprise in Southeast Michigan" offered a plenary session followed by two "tracks" that participants can choose from. Track I focused on best practices of social innovation and enterprise, while Track II provided focused content on business planning and development for those wishing to start or grow a social enterprise.



substantive changes made six years ago to the M.S.W. macro concentration, when it was revised to provide greater competencies in work such as community development and organizing, nonprofit administration, and policymaking.

"Our students are looking at a lot of the problems affecting society and see themselves as central to making a change," Willis said. "This course — which explores the history, theories and concepts of social entrepreneurship and helps students develop a feasibility plan to explore starting up a social venture, nonprofit or commercial enterprise — is so popular because it equips them to be and to create the change they hope to see."

One of only a handful of social work programs in the nation that is providing social entrepreneurship content, the School of Social Work is currently working with Wayne State's Mike Ilitch School of Business to facilitate students' receipt of both an M.S.W. and the business school's 15-credit graduate certificate in entrepreneurship and innovation. Assistant Professor Richard Smith, who co-chairs the Entrepreneurship Committee, said graduating with both credentials empowers students to be proactive with their careers.

"I explain to students that rather than wait for the perfect job, they could create their own organization or partner with an existing one to find an innovative way to advance human rights and social justice now," Smith said.

## People & Politics

In spring 2018, the School of Social Work invited the campus community to a series of informal, nonpartisan discussions about current events and the overall "climate of the country."

Organized by the school's Social Justice Committee, "People & Politics" created opportunities in January (main campus), February (WSU Schoolcraft Center) and March (Macomb Education Center) for students, faculty and staff to discuss concerns, ideas and observations. The participant-led sessions were designed to have attendees choose topics to discuss with facilitation from committee members.

According to committee member and Director of Continuing Education Laaree Emery, People & Politics was a response to calls from School of Social Work stakeholders for lengthier and more robust conversations around everything from voting rights and water scarcity to unemployment and health insurance.

"During the past year, there has been growing concern and interest voiced by students and faculty to have a 'safe' place for discussions that are currently happening in the classroom but that seem to call for a venue that enables a deeper and more open forum for student and faculty conversations," Emery said. "These important conversations enhance our knowledge and understanding of one another and adhere to social work's mission to promote social, cultural and economic justice for the betterment of the poor, vulnerable and oppressed."



# LECTUR

RACIAL IDENTITY, FLINT'S WATER CRISIS, AND THE PROBLEM-SOLVING SYNERGIES OF SOCIAL WORK AND ANTHROPOLOGY WERE THE FOCUS OF SOCIAL WORK'S LECTURES IN 2017.

## 11TH ANNUAL DIVERSITY LECTURE **One Drop of Love**

Award-winning actor, producer and educator Fanshen Cox DiGiovanni performed "One Drop of Love," her multimedia one-woman show exploring the intersection of race, class and gender. Using filmed images, photographs and animation while chronicling the evolution of the U.S. Census' racial categories, her parents' interracial marriage, her political and social activism, and her experiences in Africa with the Peace Corps, Cox DiGiovanni explained how her racial identity has simultaneously been determined for her and subject to her own interpretation.

The daughter of a Jamaican father and a mother of Danish, Blackfoot and Cherokee ancestry, Cox DiGiovanni sits on the board of MixedRootsStories.org and has been featured in the *New York Times* and on NPR as a spokesperson on using the arts to explore racial identity. She challenged the audience to contemplate the United States' centuries-old "one-drop" rule of racial classification and its role in the empowerment and disenfranchisement of generations of Americans. At the same time, she explored how her perspectives on race have been shaped by highly personal experiences such as her parents' divorce, her brother's brutalization by police, and her father's failure to attend her wedding to a white man.

A major theme of "One Drop Of Love" is the complexity and subjectivity of identity and the lifelong search that finding "racial answers" often requires.



### 30TH ANNUAL EDITH HARRIS ENDOWED LECTURE

## Supporting Resiliency and Well-Being Through Stress and Adversity: Building a Path Forward from the Flint Water Crisis

Empowering Flint residents to decide and guide their community's response to the water crisis is critical to supporting resiliency and ensuring the beleaguered city heals from both historical and recent trauma, a leader in the city's recovery efforts explained.

Returning frequently to the theme of self-determination, social epidemiologist Vicki Johnson-Lawrence described how the Flint water crisis both resulted from and contributed to chronic stress and disparities afflicting the city. Pre-existing conditions — including unemployment, violence, poverty, inadequate schooling and housing, community-wide mistrust, competitive (rather than collaborative) community relationships, and emergency manager control — created a climate for the policy decisions that introduced lead to the water and stymied efforts by advocacy groups and community leaders to achieve a collective, cohesive response.

Johnson-Lawrence, who directs the Flint Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma program, said harnessing the strengths at the intersection of social work and public health has been highly effective, allowing for a clinical focus on the health effects resulting from the lead poisoning as well as a sensitivity to social conditions, life stages, family systems, and social justice concerns that impact recovery. This approach, as well as the community-based participatory research which Wayne State faculty are bringing to the recovery effort, are key components of Wayne State's new joint Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) and Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) degree.

*Pictured above (left to right): Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Joy Swanson Ernst and Vicki Johnson-Lawrence*

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### SOCIAL WORK AND ANTHROPOLOGY LECTURE

## Theory & Method Matters: Finding the Right Combination

Transdisciplinary training in social work and anthropology can help scholars better understand “elusive factors” that influence individuals' health and wellbeing but are difficult

to capture using popular research methods, Deborah K. Padgett, professor of social work and public health at New York University, said in support of Social Work's joint-title doctoral degree in the two disciplines.

Padgett discussed the need for more research describing the interaction of “upstream” determinants of health, such as economic and social policies, and “downstream” determinants, such as biology and

behavior. Combining perspectives from social work and anthropology, she said, can promote “flexibility in methods and theoretical allegiances,” leveraging both disciplines' rootedness in, and understanding of, the environments where research takes place.

An international expert on homelessness, particularly among adults with co-occurring mental and substance use disorders, Padgett is known for her advocacy and practice of integrating ethnographic and mixed methods in research. In 2006, the Society for Social Work and Research announced the Deborah K. Padgett Early Career Fellowship in recognition of her contributions.



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