The 2016-17 Academic Year: It’s a Wrap!

What a year! Within the past year, the School of Social Work has relaunched the Social Work Alumni Network, reinstated the Kappa Phi chapter of the Phi Alpha Honor Society for Social Work, revived our Continuing Education program, held our first annual Critical Issues Symposium, and launched an ongoing series of Social Work Conversations for our students.

We have had a few changes on the faculty and staff front, too. In addition to the appointment of a new dean, Sharon Johnson, we have also had a few other personnel changes. Diane O’Brien was appointed MSW director, Lori Curtis was appointed BSW director, and two new staff members have joined our team: Nancy Scheberle is the new Administrative Coordinator for the MSW Program and the Field Office and Tchule Moore is our new part-time BSW academic advisor. Margaret Sherraden, Founder’s Professor, will be retiring at the end of this academic year.

Our faculty and staff have also received many accolades over the past year. Dr. Huei-Wern Shen was awarded tenure and promoted to associate professor. She holds appointments in both Social Work and Gerontology. Shanta Kyles received this year’s Chancellor’s Award for Staff Excellence. Lois Pierce was recognized with a 2017 Trailblazer Award, which honors exceptional women who have paved the way for others on campus and throughout the community. The School of Social Work also won several awards at the Student Leadership Awards Banquet in the Spring (see the article on page 7 for details).
EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Critical Issues Symposium: Images of the African American Male

The School of Social Work at UMSL hosted its first Critical Issues Symposium last February. The event was supported by the Deaconess Foundation, UMSL’s Office of Admissions and Alumni Relations group, and The YMCA. The Symposium centered on *Images of the African American Male*. The speakers included Halbert Sullivan, Founding President/CEO of Father’s Support Center St. Louis, Anthony Franks, Assistant US Attorney Eastern District of MO, Orlando Sharpe, STEM Program Director for YMCA Community Development, Dr. Otha Myles, Infectious Disease & HIV Specialist at St. Luke’s Medical Group, and Dr. Art McCoy, Superintendent of the Jennings School District. The speakers used their own personal stories and journeys to encourage a change in the narrative from the negative stereotypes typically found in mainstream American media to embrace and highlight more positive images surrounding African American men and boys. Over 500 people attended the event including 200 area youth who listened to, interacted with, and were inspired by the speakers and each other.

Lecture on Street Children in Bangladesh

On April 28th the School of Social Work hosted a presentation by Dr. Hasan Reza from the University of Indiana, South Bend. Dr. Reza’s lecture presented findings from his research on street children and their survival strategies in the context of extreme poverty in Bangladesh. Panelists Brittany Graham (Covenant House), MSW alumna Barissa Hoover (Youth in Need), Diane Peterson (Parkway School District) and Diedra Thomas-Murray (St. Louis Public Schools) provided a local perspective on homeless youth in St. Louis. The presentation was followed by an engaged discussion with the audience about the implications of practice experiences and research findings moving forward.
Lecture by German Visiting Researcher draws cross-disciplinary audience

On September 23rd, the School of Social Work hosted visiting researcher Dr. Jörg Plöger from the Institute for Urban and Regional Development in Dortmund, Germany. Dr. Plöger’s lecture, entitled “Complex Place Ties: Urban Incorporation of High-Skilled Migrants,” presented findings from his research in Dortmund, Germany and Manchester, UK. Following the lecture, Dr. Florian Sichling, Assistant Professor of Social Work, moderated a lively discussion with the audience and panelists Vin Ko from the St. Louis Mosaic Project and Blake Hamilton from the International Institute who each provided a local perspective on immigrant and refugee incorporation in St. Louis. The event, co-hosted by the Public Policy Research center, was well-attended by a diverse group of about 30 social work students and faculty, practitioners, alumni and other local researchers from Washington University and St. Louis University.

UMSL Scholarship Recognition Luncheon

Each year, UMSL invites scholarship donors and recipients to a campus-wide Scholarship Recognition Luncheon. In April, Dean Johnson welcomed donors Beverly Sporleder, long-time faculty member in the School of Social Work, and James and Lisa Lawson to UMSL’s annual Scholarship Recognition Luncheon. Sporleder endowed a scholarship for Social Work students, and the Lawson family endowed a scholarship for MSW students in memory of Elaine Rosalie Lawson. Christina Horton, this year’s recipient of the Lawson’s scholarship, was on hand to personally thank them for their generous support of her education.

The School of Social Work is very grateful to the donors of all of our scholarships. If you are interested in learning more about scholarships offered by the School, please visit our donation page at www.umsl.edu/~socialwk/Donate.
Forging a Path to Racial Equity

Courtney McDermott, Assistant Teaching Professor and Assistant Director of Field Education recently secured three grants from the Council on Social Work Education, fund for social policy and education and practice totaling over $23,000. Over the course of the past year, the grants have further engaged our students in policy work, especially in areas where policy, poverty, and race intersect. They have also supported our series of Social Work Conversations, whose focus this year was on policy issues to coincide with McDermott’s grants.

Work for the Field Placement Implementation grant began last summer. McDermott worked with Kira Banks, St Louis University Department of Psychology, who created a tool for students to use at their practicum sites that would assess agencies through a racial equity lens. This year, students took part in a pilot program assessing their agencies.

McDermott’s Community Engagement grant brought in experts to discuss important policy issues in the region with social work students from UMSL, St Louis University, Fontbonne University, and the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University. As part of our Social Work Conversations, students were able to hear from members of the Ferguson Commission, Ferguson Legislators, and social workers Amy Blouin, Christine Woody AND Ryan Barker who discussed advocacy skills with our students. In addition, the School of Social Work was able to screen the documentary Show Me Democracy, which chronicled the journey of seven college students, including UMSL Social Work alumnus Robert Elam, as they became activists in the wake of the killing of Michael Brown. Elam spoke to the social work audience after the screening.

In addition to these events, the Community Engagement grant also helped support the trip of almost seventy social work students to Jefferson City to participate in the Empower Missouri’s Student Advocacy Day.
Social Work Conversations

Social Work launched a series of conversations with the aim of exposing our students to the many areas of social work practice and to discuss emerging social issues with social workers working in the field. The focus of the Conversations this year was policy in keeping with McDermott’s grant programming. In addition to the Conversations related to the policy grants, we also hosted Ryan Berg, who discussed homelessness and LGBT youth, and Adriano Udani, Political Science, who discussed immigration and the implications the 2016 US presidential election.

Stay tuned for next year’s conversations by visiting our website: http://www.umsl.edu/~socialwk/

Social Work Continuing Education

We had a great year with the reboot of our Continuing Ed program. In addition to the Symposium and visiting lecturers (pg 2-3), Dr. Cabrera-Nguyen and Erin Mason gave a lecture called Considerations in Practice with Undocumented Immigrants, and Diane O’Brien and Justin Bennett gave a Licensure Update and Prep Session. Save the date for the following events in the Fall:

Continuing Education
Fall 2017 Events

Sep 15 Behavioral Health Event (Full Day Program) *Includes a session on Ethics
Oct 23 Licensure Update and Prep Session
Nov 17 Right from the Start: Timing, Trajectories, and Teacher-Student Trust in the Transition to High School

Social Work Continuing Commitment.

Grant: Food Insecurity, Health, and SNAP Participation

Drs. Baorong Guo and Shirley Porterfield, along with Jin Huang of Saint Louis University, have secured a $75,000 grant from University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research to study the risk of food insecurity among young adults with disabilities. They will be investigating how the risk of food insecurity may affect health outcomes among this population and whether participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, may protect young adults with disabilities from food insecurity and any related negative effects on their health. According to the researchers, the findings of this study will help guide policies aimed at developing nutrition assistance programs for young adults with disabilities.
UMSL’s Social Work students have had a great year. Here are just a few of the accomplishments of our students this year. Over 100 students came out for our practicum fair in the Fall. BSW student Chris Summers participated in the Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol. Summer’s research was about the Missouri Non-discrimination Act, which would extend protections in Missouri’s current Human Rights Act to include the LGBT community in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Nearly 70 BSW and MSW students from our St Louis and Mineral Area campuses participated in Empower Missouri’s Student Advocacy Day. Students talked to legislators about a state Earned Income Tax Credit and about raising the age of juvenile offenders in Missouri. Social Work students Danielle Wehmeyer, Kathleen Church, Camisha Tucker, and Gregory Faupe were awarded a $12,000 grant by the Episcopal Presbyterian Health Trust to fund an AIDS tester as part of a Walk-In Testing Increase Initiative for the Saint Louis Effort for AIDS organization.

Student Round Up

Social Work Student Promote Civic Engagement

Students in Dr. Kristen Wagner’s Community Development class spent a class period on a day of community service helping to get out the vote. Twenty one students in Dr. Wagner’s class set up tables on north and south campus and passed out voting materials developed in part by UMSL students in political science. The students handed out information about voter’s rights, why college students are important in the voting process, and absentee ballot applications for St. Louis City and St. Louis and St. Charles counties. The students partnered with representatives of the Democratic Party who were on campus that day registering voters. At the end of the day, 20 new voters were successfully registered for this election cycle. This project was designed to promote civic engagement with the student body here on campus. According to Dr. Wagner, the field of social work — and this class in particular — fosters excitement about community engagement at all levels. With the election looming, the class focused on getting local about the national election. Dr. Wagner hopes that students’ engagement in the national election will translate into an enthusiasm and understanding of the importance of local issues.
**Graduate and Alumni Reception and Awards**

In May, the School of Social Work, the Student Social Work Association, and the Social Work Alumni hosted a reception to honor the graduates from the 2016-17 academic year and the alumni who have served the school during the past year. Over 100 people attended the reception, which is a testament to the vibrancy of the School of Social Work.

At the reception, Lori Curtis, faculty advisor, inducted 35 social work students into our relaunched chapter of the Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society.

Student awards were also presented at the reception. Each year, The School of Social Work has the difficult task of choosing outstanding students in academic and practicum performance from among our many deserving graduates. This year’s task was no easier than usual.

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**2016-2017 Social Work Student Awards**

**Graduate Student Marshall**
Anna Hall

**MSW Outstanding Academic Performance**
Zachary Hopper (winner)
Anna Hall (honorable mention)

**MSW Outstanding Practicum**
Laura Kirkley (winner)

**BSW Outstanding Academic Performance**
Crystal Johnson (winner)
Mary Loggia (honorable mention)

**BSW Outstanding Practicum**
Moosun Ra-el (winner)
Lindsey Hopkins and Harold Taylor (honorable mention)

**Outstanding Service Award**
Student Social Work Association
(winners: Tiah Jett, Madeline Stroder, Anna Hall)
Sarah Bruno (honorable mention)

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**Student Leadership Awards**

Several students and faculty of the School of Social Work received accolades at UMSL’s 2017 Student Leadership Awards Banquet this spring. **Linda Wells-Glover** received not only the Advisor of the Year award, but the Legendary Triton Award, which honors faculty or staff who have made significant differences for students’ academic progress. **Courtney McDermott** and the **Student Social Work Association** were honored with the Outstanding Program Award for their work on the Social Work Conversations series. **Amy Hawkins** was nominated for the Rising Star Award and **Madeline Stroder** won the Outstanding Community Service Award. We could not be more proud and we know that their hard work has really elevated the School of Social Work.
ALUMNI ROUND UP

Alumni News

Our Alumni are out in the community changing lives for the better every day. Here is a round up of just a few stories that have made it back to us. Zabrina Hamilton, MSW alumna, was honored as the 2016-17 Hazelwood School District’s Social Worker of the Year. Kathy Harris, BSW alumna, was named Citizen of the Year by the Kirkwood-Des Peres Chamber of Commerce for her lifelong advocacy for children. Tiffany Jackson, BSW and MSW alumna, was named executive director of Room at the Inn, which provides emergency shelter for homeless women and families. Clark Porter, MSW alumnus, was profiled in Out of the Box: Ending the Cycle of Incarceration, a documentary about the highly successful probation program of the Eastern District of Missouri. Robert Elam, BSW and MSW alumnus, was featured in the documentary Show Me Democracy, which chronicled the journey of seven policy interns at the Scholarship Foundation in the aftermath of the killing of Michael Brown.

ALUMNI – We Want to Hear from You!

Do you want to get involved with the School of Social Work? Have you changed jobs? Had a success you would like to share? Gotten married? Let us know! Please keep us posted by filling out a very short survey or send an email to us at socialwork@umsl.edu.

Social Work Alumni Network

This year, we re-launched the Social Work Alumni Network. The organization seeks to engage social work alumni, build relationships among alumni and between alumni and the School, and increase visibility of our alumni in the community. The Alumni Network helped sponsor the School’s first Critical Issues Symposium and co-hosted the end-of-year Social Work Graduation and Alumni Reception. Lauren Carmack, Joni Chester, and Melissa Douglas, Clark Porter, and others devoted time and energy to getting the Network off the ground. If you are interested in becoming part of this network, you can learn more on the Social Work Alumni Network webpage or email Lauren Carmack at lauren.carmack@gwymca.org. There will be an annual planning meeting in the Fall.

Find Us on the Web!

Website http://www.umsl.edu/~socialwk/

facebook https://www.facebook.com/UMSLSocialWork/