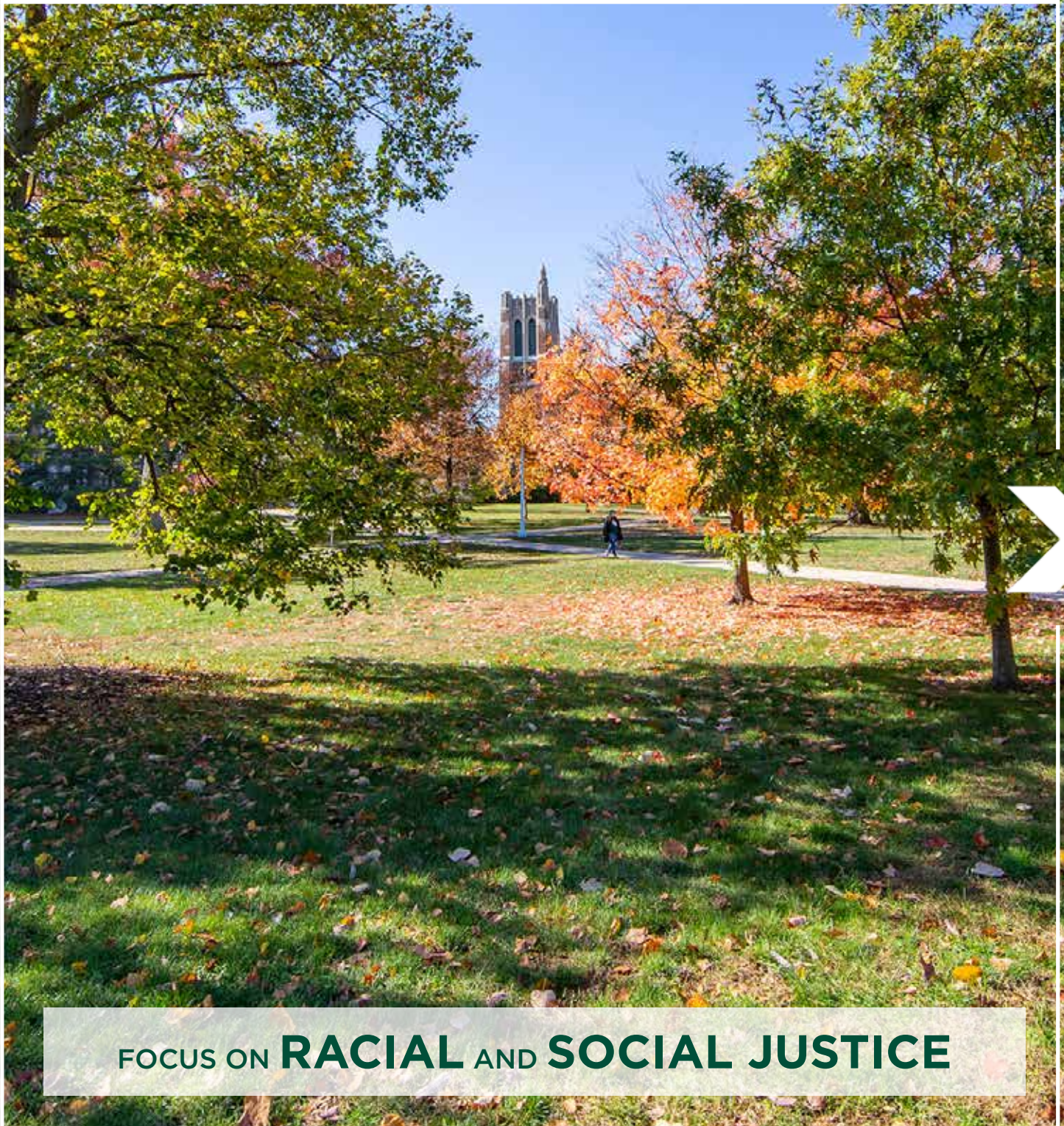




School of Social Work
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL WORK IN ACTION

Fall 2020/Winter 2021



FOCUS ON **RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**



Everyone can play a role in combating racism and social injustice

Dear Friends of the MSU School of Social Work,

Welcome to the MSU School of Social Work digital newsletter, *Social Work in Action*. Amidst the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, we are taking the opportunity to change from print and hope that you will like the new format. We are in a season of change, and we like to view change as opportunity.

I am humbled and grateful to be leading the MSU School of Social Work. Dr. John Mooradian transitioned out of the role in August and will retire next year. We are so grateful for John's steadfast leadership and wish him well as he starts this new phase of his career. As the School moves ahead in these challenging times, my hope is that we will move from strength to strength.

The focus of this fall's newsletter is **racial and social justice**. Racist violence, racism, and intolerance continue to plague our society. As social workers, we must lead efforts

to combat these injustices and work to build a society where all are valued.

In the fight for racial justice, we all have a role to play. Those of us with privilege have often been indifferent, but this must change. There are lots of opportunities to become involved; it is important to do something. For some, this may start with self-assessment and education; we need you. For others, you are intensely engaged in activism and policy change; we need you. Maybe you are not protesting at the capital, but you are writing letters to your Congressperson; we need you. Across the School, students, staff, faculty, and alumni are engaged in racial and social justice initiatives. Read on to learn more about these efforts. I hope they will inspire you to get involved.

In mid-March as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, all classes moved to an online format. For the health and safety of our community, we have continued to provide most

of our classes online. We are grateful to all our field partners for working with us to ensure our students can safely participate in field placements. Our research efforts have continued, albeit with modifications to ensure safety of participants. All of our community programs continue to provide service, in an adapted way, to ensure continuity of these vital services.

While 2020 has presented us many challenges, we continue to grow. Your support of the School is invaluable. It ensures that we can continue to offer excellence in research, teaching, and service.

Thank you.

Anne K. Hughes, PhD, LCSW
Director
School of Social Work
Michigan State University

Removing the knees from their necks: What social work must do to address systemic racism in the profession and larger society

The COVID-19 pandemic stripped away our ability to ignore the presence of systemic racism that has been hidden in plain sight in communities across the United States. Systemic racism permeates all of our social institutions—education, healthcare, criminal justice, employment, housing, and social services. More troubling, however, is the implicit if not explicit role of social work in perpetuating systemic racism in our society especially in the area of child welfare. This statement does not negate the work of many social workers to mitigate the harm created by the unequal treatment and opportunities afforded to Black, Brown, and Indigenous people in this country. Rather, it amplifies the contradictions and duality that are inherent in a profession that has been asked to serve as societal gatekeepers to promote social control and surveillance while our *Code of Ethics*

asks us to advocate for social justice for those who are marginalized in our society.

Particularly disconcerting is the reality that a majority of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people fear being victimized by police violence or community vigilantism. As my recent article* in the *Journal of Community Practice* underscores, compared to White men, Black men are 2.5 times and Black women are 1.4 times more likely to be killed by police, while a third of unarmed victims of police violence are Black. Latinx and Indigenous men are 1.2 to 1.7 times more likely to be shot and killed by police.

Vigilante violence targeted toward Black, Brown, and Indigenous people is another example of systemic racism. This type of terrorism involves White people harassing or attacking people of color as they carry

out activities of everyday life. These are not new behaviors; rather, the ways in which these acts are being exposed to the larger community via social media are more recent.

Moving forward, there are several ways in which social work can become actively anti-racist, beginning with anti-racist training that directly addresses the history of racism and social inequality in the United States.

Additionally, social workers must be critical of their organizations and the service delivery systems that perpetuate racism, and work to address them from the inside out. Until anti-racism is achieved within the profession, social work services and social workers will continue to perpetuate systemic racism. As I noted in the article, “Black lives (as well as Brown and Indigenous lives) will not truly matter until we act in tangible ways to ensure that they do.”

*<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10705422.2020.1823672>



Dr. Anna Maria
Santiago

“Until anti-racism is achieved within the profession, social work services and social workers will continue to perpetuate systemic racism. As I noted in the article, ‘Black lives (as well as Brown and Indigenous lives) will not truly matter until we act in tangible ways to ensure that they do.’”

Racial and Social Justice Collaborative (RSJC) moves forward with projects and activities



RSJC co-facilitators

Daniel Vélez Ortiz Bezil Taylor



The MSU School of Social Work **Racial and Social Justice Collaborative (RSJC)** was successfully launched on August 6, 2020. The Collaborative has been working to develop networks within our School community to support and promote projects and activities that center on issues relating to racial and social justice, including students, staff, faculty, and the community at large. Many in our School community have embraced this charge prior to, and in response to, the inaugural call.

The RSJC is actively collaborating with faculty and student groups that have emerged within our School community and are focused on issues relating to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as well as racial justice. We were active in bringing access to an Anti-Racist Social Work Summit event, sponsored by the School director's office. We are working to develop dialogue sessions on the topics covered at the summit as well as those discussed at National Association of Social Workers–Michigan Chapter LEAD Day. Further, the RSJC continues to support and coordinate other initiatives for this semester and the academic year.

The RSJC facilitators created surveys to capture the breadth and depth of the ways in which our School community practices and engages with racial and social justice currently and aspirationally. The survey received responses from students, staff, and faculty with many ideas and areas of interest. In brief, the staff/faculty survey results highlighted that our School community is invested in supporting students to learn, understand, and practice skills to address racial justice topics and discussions.

Further, survey responses indicated that some of our faculty already engage in racial justice topics through research. Others expressed strong interest in advancing research support and tools as well as facilitating discussions about racial and social justice.

On the student side, survey responses showed a very strong interest to work on racial justice research projects, presentations, and coordinating events. The RSJC is moving ahead, and we welcome your input. We can be contacted via our email: sw.rsjc@msu.edu.

Working with the RSJC this fall are Graduate Assistant Francesca Pratt and Sophia Epstein (BASW).



Francesca Pratt



Sophia Epstein

Colorism and racism

As a faculty member and student of social work's Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE) and advocate of colorism, I have advocated in solitude for ending racism by ending race.

Ending race is a simple matter of science. Adherence to legitimate science and dismissing the contrived race will serve the integrity of factual evidence necessary for scientific investigation. Fortunately, as a byproduct of power and political operatives, the race concept has fallen from scientific and societal favor. Consequently, Georgia was the last state in 1937 to pass a eugenics race law.*

However, while race is publicly denounced as a contrived scientific fallacy, it continues as a function of societal discourse. Therefore, ending race—still assumed a legitimate concept by some—will necessitate its complete and total elimination from every facet of societal infrastructure. Included are the institutional facets such as law and policy, the customary facets such as segregation and religious affiliation, culminating

in elimination of the social facets such as stereotypical thoughts and actions. Indeed, all manifestations of “race” must be dismissed totally in psychological preparation for the ultimate goal of ending racism per se.

Ending racism by ending race will not completely eliminate human bias and/or discrimination as a matter of fact. Society will likely contend with such transgressions well into the foreseeable future. However, ending racism vis-à-vis ending race will enable the healing process to begin as racial lines over the years begin to blur.

The historical traumas of African American slavery and Native American conquest absent race labels allow for the purest and most scientific of intellectual debates by discouraging racial polarization. Under such circumstances, perpetrators of historical trauma as well as victims of same, during debates will be confronted by an equal potential to be informed. Humanity may then be poised to address colorism as a civil path to the elimination of racism permanently.

*<https://indyweek.com/news/american-eugenics-movement-world-war-ii-part-1-3/>

“Ending racism vis-à-vis ending race will enable the healing process to begin as racial lines over the years begin to blur.”

Dr. Ronald Hall



Why Seeing Colorism Matters

CSWE APM 2020 Presentation

Ronald E. Hall, PhD, Michigan State University
Maya Williams, MSW, Washington University in St. Louis
Latocia Keyes, PhD, LMSW, University of Texas at Arlington
Nicole Ransom, LCSW, Michigan State University

“As a team, we are ‘on fire with purpose and passion to end violence, in all its forms,’ and we center minoritized populations in our work to reduce health and social disparities.”

Dr. Heather McCauley



Dr. Joanne (Jo) Smith-Darden



For more information about what the SPARK-ers are up to, please visit <https://www.spark4change.com> or contact Heather (mccaule49@msu.edu) and Jo (smit3167@msu.edu).

School faculty “SPARK Research for Social Change”

The stars aligned for us in August 2019. Independently, we were researchers with robust, federally funded portfolios focused on the prevention of sexual violence. **Heather McCauley**, a social epidemiologist, had spent the previous decade evaluating school- and clinic-based sexual violence prevention programs, with emphasis on LGBTQ populations. **Joanne (Jo) Smith-Darden**, a social worker and developmental psychologist, brought to the School over 40 years of experience in training, practicing, consulting, and evaluating service delivery in a variety of settings, including conducting a decade of CDC-funded research on sexual violence among adolescents. We arrived at MSU School of Social Work looking for a community of scholars and practitioners to partner with to expand our reach and impact.

The first time we met, we couldn’t speak fast enough. Our excitement grew as it quickly became clear that we shared values around community engagement and social justice. As a result of those initial conversations, we began meeting weekly with a national team of scholars to pursue funding opportunities for our work. We also circled the state to introduce our shared vision and listen to our community partners’ needs.

Between the two of us, we submitted 17 grant applications within 14 months to address these needs, often working together late into the night to convince funders to provide infrastructure for our collective work. Our efforts paid off. We are currently principal investigators or co-investigators on five federal research projects totaling \$7.2 million dollars and have received funding from the

MSU Center for Gender in Global Context to expand our work globally. We are so thankful for this support.

A year after meeting, we embraced the lab model and launched the SPARK Research for Social Change lab in the MSU School of Social Work. SPARK is a values-driven research lab aiming to promote equity and social justice through community-partnered research, training, and practice.

As a team, we are “on fire with purpose and passion to end violence, in all its forms,” and we center minoritized populations in our work to reduce health and social disparities. Specifically, we are conducting a sexual violence policy evaluation in Michigan school districts, evaluating a social marketing campaign to promote community-level norms that protect against sexual bullying, and expanding the minority stress model to include the experiences of transgender and gender diverse individuals.

The SPARK lab comprises School of Social Work doctoral students **Jamie Kynn** and **Jenny Tanis**, MSW students **Cassandra Jones**, **Brigitte Thornes**, and **Lindsey Rudden**, and BASW student **Lily Giancaspro**.

Beyond embracing a lab model, we embrace a team science approach to our work. We see value in bringing interdisciplinary voices to the table relative to an integrated and interactive quest for scientific discovery and translational research. And we acknowledge that our success, in large part, is due to our conceptual understanding of shared leadership that is grounded in trust and a shared vision.

For Alum Juan Flores, MSW degree set the stage for a purposeful life

Since graduating with my MSW, I have been busy living my purpose and helping people. I credit much of what I do and my success to my decision to pursue an MSW from Michigan State University (MSU). While in grad school, my field placement was in Migrant Student Services' (MSS) High School Equivalency Program (HEP), which led to a graduate assistantship with the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP).

If it were not for this MSW program, I would not have made the realization that higher education was my calling. It was with MSS that I realized that what brought me purpose and satisfaction was helping underrepresented students transition and navigate the college environment. Helping students reach their goal of graduating and earning a college degree was something I had always made time for but did not realize that I could make it a career.

While in undergrad and at MSU, I always signed up to help undergraduate students and loved it. Upon graduation with my MSW, I applied to several jobs at different colleges and universities. MSU College of Natural Science was the first to call, and I accepted the position of academic advisor. Through this job, I was able to guide students through their undergraduate experience so they could build experiences that made them competitive for admittance into professional programs like medical school, dental school, pharmacy school, optometry school, etc.

The experience I gained at Nat Sci was invaluable, and after two years,

I accepted a position in the Division of Student Affairs and Services' Office of Cultural and Academic Transitions (OCAT).

Accepting this position was a way for me to come home. OCAT was the first department on campus that made me feel like I belonged at MSU and invested in my growth and development. Through their Student Aid program door-to-door visitations, they were able to reach me and provided the recipe for success.

I simply could not pass up the opportunity to do the same thing for other students, and after ten years in OCAT, I have been granted the privilege to improve the student experience and make MSU a place where students can thrive, especially those who come from marginalized communities.

Through my role, I create programs that support educational equity and student success. Through our Student Success Initiatives, we have worked endlessly to close the achievement gaps that exist between our underserved students and their counterparts. Every one of our initiatives works to increase persistence and retention and reduce equity gaps and systemic barriers that prevent minoritized students from thriving.

Through this position I have been blessed with the opportunity to learn and contribute to making MSU a world-class institution. Some of my proudest experiences have been my work to advance racial and social justice through my participation on various committees. My notable achievements are coordinating the

“Making the decision to earn an MSW changed the trajectory of my life and helped me live my purpose of preparing people to live their best life.”

Juan Flores (He/Him/His)
Coordinator, Student Success & Community Initiatives, Office of Cultural and Academic Transitions



Annual Dia de la Mujer (DDL M) Leadership and Empowerment Conference, creating a first-year Latino Student Mentoring program that matches first-year students with mentors, participation in the Neighborhood Concept team where I contributed to the design of what is now called the MSU Neighborhoods, serving on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force on Climate and Policing, and serving as the new vice president for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Search Committee.

Making the decision to earn an MSW changed the trajectory of my life and helped me live my purpose of preparing people to live their best life.

Social work students speak from the heart: Choices, advice, and plans for the future



Alexis Johnson
BASW '21

Why did you choose social work?

I would love to say that I chose social work and I knew from the beginning of my academic career that I wanted to be a social worker, but in all transparency, social work chose me! Admittedly, I have always wanted to work in a helping profession, and I happened to realize that my previous major was not fulfilling my need to pursue actual change, advocacy, and relationships. With that information, I did my research and did not hesitate to switch to social work, and here I am!

Do you have any advice for students currently enrolled in a social work program?

Be yourself and be your own advocate; if you can't advocate for yourself, how will you advocate on behalf of others? And most importantly, never be afraid to use your voice because someone, whether it be a professor, teaching assistant, advisor, or even classmate, will always be there to listen to you and support you.

What is your ideal job upon graduation with a degree in social work?

I am so indecisive when it comes to my ideal job and place in the social work realm. Sometimes I want to work with the survivor population (domestic, sexual, etc.), other times I want to work within the prison system, focusing on recidivism and other interventions besides prison, and then the next day, I want to work on racial disparities within labor and delivery. The only thing that I know for certain is that I want to go to graduate school and earn my MSW.

This was a hard question for me, but I wanted to share my answer because I want other students to know that I do not have a concrete answer, and that it is okay; we are all still figuring out our own dreams and path.

Do you have a favorite quote?

"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept." —*Angela Davis*



Erin Kramer
BASW '21

Why did you choose social work?

I selected the social work program as I began to take notice that social work allows for one to learn about themselves, the world around them, and societal issues while striving for solutions and employing empathy to assist others, organizations, and individuals. I consistently found myself drawn to the social work program during my initial year at MSU while I was majoring in political science until I ultimately decided to meet with an advisor about the BASW program and transfer into it! Social work's dedication to improving society in a sustainable fashion is ultimately the reason I chose social work. The art of sitting back, watching, and striving to understand a community or issue, talking with those within an affected group, and working with a community to create change and come together for a solution is what drives me. It's about helping people and hearing their needs from them.

Have any instructors had a particularly strong impact on you?

The list of instructors and individuals who have had a strong impact on me during my time at MSU is an extremely lengthy one (I'll try to keep this short!)—**Dr. Joanne Riebschleger** has generously dedicated her time to mentoring and teaching me over the last year as I have been assisting her in her research. Dr. Riebschleger continuously encourages and advises me; her passion for assisting others is infectious, and her desire to learn is as well. She is truly one of my favorite people to speak with and learn from! My field instructors, **Brooke Stokdyk**, and **Jess Scott-Nehls**, have also strongly influenced me with their modeling of advocacy skills and the care of students. **Dr. Lorelei Blackburn** has strongly shaped my ability to advocate for myself in the academic setting and strongly encouraged me to strive toward expanding my knowledge and working toward incorporating the intersectionality of issues into my work and education. **Nicki Moody** has impacted me in a multitude of ways, especially in emphasizing the importance of providing oneself with grace and flexibility throughout life and schooling. She emphasizes in our work the importance of creating a balance!

Erin Kramer - continued

Do you have any advice for students currently enrolled in a social work program?

Maintain balance, reach out for advice, and engage in your learning! Keeping a balance in your life between education, work, and social engagements is always number one priority. It leads to my mental health being preserved and all aspects of my life being addressed. Reaching out to your instructors and support system for help, advice, and

guidance is a must. Engaging in your learning by going the extra mile—reading books relating to subjects you are interested in outside of class, diving into your coursework will allow you to be a better prepared social worker!

What is your ideal job upon graduation with a degree in social work?

Ideally, after completing my BASW, I plan to earn my MPH and MSW and then work with the Department of Veterans Affairs on their health care programs and resources.



Francesca Pratt
MSW '21

Hello! My name is Francesca Pratt, and I am a second-year MSW student in the full-time East Lansing program with a concentration in clinical work. Before beginning my MSW journey, I graduated with my Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from MSU in 2017. My first field placement was at Loaves and Fishes Ministries, where I learned so much about homelessness in the Greater Lansing area. This experience allowed me to gain a newfound appreciation for understanding how policy directly impacts the lives of the clients I will work with in a therapeutic capacity. It displayed the need for clinical social workers to expand beyond one-on-one interactions and advocate for policies and procedures at the macro level as well. This year, I am placed at the Michigan State University Couple and Family Therapy Clinic (CFTC), where I provide therapy for individuals, couples, and families. Having the opportunity to learn from such a supportive community of people at the CFT clinic has empowered me greatly and made me feel confident as a new therapist. After my graduation in May, I hope to continue my education and become a PhD candidate for the Couple and Family Therapy Clinic through the Human Development and Family Studies department here at MSU.

When did you decide to pursue a degree in social work?

I decided that I wanted to pursue a degree in social work while working for Angel House, a residential home for teenage mothers in foster care. Angel House offers services from individual therapy, to life-skill development groups, family reunification efforts, and above all, a safe and compassionate community for its residents. For two years as a direct care worker, my main priority was to holistically support the teen residents with balancing their

demanding workload of being full-time mothers and high school students. My deep passion and love for working alongside Angel House's amazing residents and clinical staff motivated me to become a clinical case manager, which widened my capacity and skill set to support more teen mothers in an intentional way. Continuing to learn the residents' stories and witnessing their strength, resiliency, and unending love for their families affirmed my commitment to clinically support families and pursue a Master of Social Work degree.

Name one experience that has been impactful during your time as an MSW student at MSU.

Being a member of student organizations as an MSW student has instilled in me the importance of integrating both advocacy and community organizing within my clinical-focused social work. The Student Advocates for Basic Needs Security (SABNS) group is focused on ensuring that the entire MSU community—particularly administration, faculty, advisors, and staff—prioritizes students' access to basic needs. SABNS recognizes that for all students to successfully graduate, they must, at bare minimum, have secure housing and food—necessities that too many MSU students do not have access to, and a devastating reality further exacerbated by COVID-19. Our group also recognizes that basic needs insecurity disproportionately affects students of color, which has fueled our partnership with the School of Social Work's new Racial and Social Justice Collaborative to make our actions inclusive and intersectional. By working together with MSW and BASW students, our group is driven to research and roll out applicable action steps for the MSU community to improve communication and connectivity with its students.

“I feel very grateful and excited about this opportunity. Becoming a CSWE doctoral minority fellow means that I get to join a community of scholars coming from minoritized communities which is very empowering and uplifting to me.”

Jessica Saba



“Jessica’s major strengths are her clear direction, her vision, her creative and critical thinking, and her courage. She is not afraid to buck conventional ways of thinking about research and where we as Social Work can do better.”

Dr. Anne Hughes

Jessica Saba named CSWE Doctoral Minority Fellow

The Council on Social Work Education’s Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) opportunities support the mission of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to reduce the effects of substance abuse and mental illness on America’s communities by increasing the number of individuals trained to work with underrepresented and underserved racial/ethnic minority persons with or at risk for mental health and/or substance abuse disorders. The career goal of applicants must be to provide leadership in practice, research, teaching, and policy promulgation in government or private organizations serving this population.

Doctoral student **Jessica Saba** was recently awarded a fellowship in the program. “I feel very grateful and excited about this opportunity. Becoming a CSWE doctoral minority fellow means that I get to join a community of scholars coming from minoritized communities which is very empowering and uplifting to me,” said Ms. Saba upon learning of the award.

“Jessica is a wonderful student, and it’s been a pleasure working with her. This fellowship is well-deserved recognition for her expertise, commitment to social justice, and plan of study. I am excited to continue to support her as she develops as a scholar and advocate,” says Saba’s Doctoral Study Chair **Dr. Angie Kennedy**.



Monica Villarreal receives ACOSA *Outstanding Practitioner Award*

The Association for Community Organization and Social Action (ACOSA) has chosen **Monica Villarreal**, MSW, for the *2020 Outstanding Practitioner Award*, which “honors the significant contribution to a community of a BSW or MSW level macro practitioner or group/organization. Nominees demonstrate outstanding contributions in an area of community and/or organizational practice.”

Villarreal was nominated by **Dr. Anna Maria Santiago**, associate dean for research and graduate studies at the College of Social Science and professor of social work, and **Dr. Anne Hughes**, director of the School of Social Work. Dr. Hughes said, “Monica is a stellar example of a community-committed practitioner dedicated to racial and social justice. She earned her MSW in 2017 but prior to that was a passionate community activist. She joined the Michigan State University School of Social Work fixed-term faculty in 2018 as the Flint Community Initiative program coordinator and as a member of the teaching faculty.”

Villarreal shares her experience with social work students and

interns from many disciplines via the Flint Community Initiative, a community-University partnership. This initiative engages students and community members in collaborative, community-driven projects that help to expand community assets and contribute to a thriving future for Flint residents. Her leadership of this initiative has ensured that Flint residents lead efforts and teach students how to be effective partners with communities in need. She leads by example and has contributed to the professional development of future community practitioners.

Her work related to the Flint Water Crisis and now the COVID-19 pandemic underscores her outstanding contributions to community practice at the local, state, national, and international levels. Villarreal was an early community responder to the Flint Water Crisis, serving on the Flint Water Crisis Resource and Recovery Committee for several years. As chair of the Advisory Board, she collaborated with local churches and numerous community partners from Flint and elsewhere to design and implement the Flint Community Help Centers. The Help Center design employed an innovative and collaborative service

delivery model aimed at providing one-stop, mobile, holistic health and social services to vulnerable Flint residents in order to mitigate the deleterious effects of the water crisis.

Additionally, through the use of community empowerment strategies, the Help Centers aimed to reduce social and racial inequalities via deliberate systemic change of local services delivery systems. Monica supervised students from three different universities who participated in all phases of Help Center delivery as part of their field placements. She continued advocating for and providing water to homebound elderly and disabled residents long after funding ended for the Center; COVID-19 effectively ended those services in March 2020.

“Monica Villarreal’s work, particularly around the issues of access to clean and safe water and reducing social and economic inequalities experienced by vulnerable populations and communities, has contributed to a greater understanding of these human rights issues and identified better models of community practice to address them,” stated Dr. Santiago.

L-R **Dr. Anna Maria Santiago**, **Monica Villarreal**, and students from the 2019 Flint Community Initiative.



MSW curriculum recommendations for change

In spring 2019, the School started an MSW curriculum inquiry process with support from the MSU Hub for Innovation in Learning and Technology. We weren't sure what to expect. We only knew that it had been much too long since we had taken a comprehensive look at our curriculum, and there was energy and motivation for this work coming out of re-accreditation that we didn't want to lose.

Honestly, I stepped into leading this process with equal parts excitement and trepidation. I was a bit afraid of being sucked into conversations of course credits and alignment of course objectives with CSWE competencies and whether content x belongs in week 2 of course y or week 6 of course z. All necessary conversations, but not where we needed to be right now.

Our process was driven by our mission to educate students “for ethical, competent, responsive, and innovative social work practice”

“We are now figuring out how to best move from recommendations to actual change, and I'm excited to keep the conversations going.”

Dr. Amanda Woodward
Associate Director for
Academic Affairs and Research
and MSW Program Director



and promote social justice and positive change. Curriculum in this context is not just coursework, but everything that influences the student experience. To that end, we were also guided by a framework informed by three contemporary curriculum theory scholars, including:

- A focus on pedagogical practices as relationships imbued with an ethics of care (Nel Noddings).
- The recognition that curricula are complicated conversations that come to hush or exclude the very voices most invested in their outcomes (William Pinar).
- A reminder that curricular plans are always provisional and dormant; they can be implemented by committee and institutions, but it's the work of teachers—their voices, expertise, and passions—that bring curricula to life (Ted Aoki).

With those perspectives in mind, we talked to students and faculty, reviewed syllabi, looked at what other schools are doing, and created schematics of our curriculum revision processes and the paths students take through the program. Our primary aim was to inform and evaluate structural changes to the MSW degree program, but we also wanted to create spaces for energizing curricular conversations and develop insight-rich, resource-light inquiry methods that we can keep using so that curriculum review and revision is interwoven into the ongoing work of the School.

Two big themes emerged. First, it quickly became clear that the overall structure is solid, and the disruption caused by major rebuilding of the curriculum would be more harmful than productive. However, there are lots of opportunities to reshape the curriculum within the current structure and room for creativity and experimentation. Second, discussions of curriculum often developed into

discussions about strengthening community and the need for structural processes that allow for more inclusive participation and engagement in the life of the School across all of our stakeholders.

Recommendations were formulated with these two themes in mind, and prioritized recommendations emerged from student input. These include:

- Consistently include student voice in curricular discussions and decision making.
- Shape curriculum content through a social justice lens.
- Build a stronger sense of community across the School's program offerings and ensure all students, faculty, and staff feel their identities are welcomed, supported, and acknowledged.
- Integrate more advanced content into the curriculum.
- Experiment with enhanced pedagogy and practices and provide more opportunities for students to practice critical skills.
- Prepare students to be strong writers in their field.
- Make course outcomes and objectives clear for students while continuing to meet CSWE standards.
- Help faculty and staff develop a strong sense of the overall structure of the curriculum and program options.
- Better integrate curriculum across sequences and between the classroom and field.
- Better prepare our students to become social work leaders and innovators.
- Ensure that our courses and program promote well-being and balance in students' lives.

We are now figuring out how to best move from recommendations to actual change, and I'm excited to keep the conversations going.

BASW students offered personal and professional development opportunities

Throughout October 2020, BASW students had the opportunity to attend three different in-house events focused on their personal and professional development that have included six BASW and MSW alumni.

We were thrilled to host **Sadie Shattuck**, a recent BASW graduate, who shared her insights about applying to MSW programs during our “The MSW: Tips, Tricks, and Debunking Myths” event. And we

were equally as thrilled to host an alumni panel with five BASW and MSW clinical and OCL alumni: **Jessica Gray, Omolade Latona, James Bell III, Tyrone Bonds, and Gabby Papoulis.**

Our wonderful panelists offered advice and guidance to students about pursuing an MSW degree, how to successfully approach the social work profession, and ways to merge their passions and skills into a thriving social work career. We hope

to host many more alumni panels and events that connect our BASW students to alumni!

If you are an alumni of either the BASW or MSW program and are interested in offering guidance, connection, and mentorship to our students, please take a few minutes to fill out our survey (see link below).

We look forward to reaching out to you to be part of future alumni events!



School of Social Work
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Wednesday, Oct. 14th
6-7 p.m. EST
Zoom: 932-3516-1090

**Clinical & Macro
Social Work
Alumni Panel!**

Open to any Spartan who wants to become a social worker, get their MSW degree, connect with professionals, or has an interest in social work as a career

Jessica Gray, MSW '20
Clinical Program
Housing Support Coordinator
at SOS Community Services

Tyrone Bonds, MSW '20'
Clinical Program
Crisis Behavioral Technician at
Residential Options Inc.

James Bell III, MSW '12
OCL Program
State Assistant Administrator for
the Michigan DOHHS
& PhD candidate at USC

Gabby Papoulis (she/her), BASW '15'
Licensed School Social Worker
Co-Host of Podcast,
"How is Anyone Still Alive?" about
living silently with a chronic illness

Left: Sadie Shattuck presenting her research poster at the University Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum.



“If you are an alumni of either the BASW or MSW program and are interested in offering guidance, connection, and mentorship to our students, please take a few minutes to fill out our survey.”

https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6VbfuhPzTbyjWQd

Lily Burnstein, BASW Student Program Support Coordinator

Recent hires, retirements within the School

School



Anne Hughes, PhD, took over the role as Director of the School in August 2020 succeeding Dr. John Mooradian. Dr. Hughes joined the MSU School of Social Work in 2009 and was the PhD Program Director from 2018-2020.



Ashlee Barnes-Lee, PhD, joined us as a Dean's Research Associate in August of 2020.



Heather McCauley, ScD, MS, began her tenure with the School in August of 2019 as an Assistant Professor.



Joanne Smith-Darden, PhD, assumed the role of Associate Professor and Ruth T. Koehler Endowed Professor in Children's Services in August of 2019.



Meg Cianciarulo joined the School staff in September 2020 as the Executive Secretary to the Director.



John Seita, PhD, retired as an Associate Professor in May 2020 after 19 years with the School. Dr. Seita brought a tremendous amount of expertise in foster care and the child welfare system, and we wish him the best in retirement.



Toby Salzman, LMSW, joined the School as a Special Assistant to the Director and Communication Specialist in 2003. Salzman left in May 2020, and we thank her for her many contributions to the School.



Pat Talbot joined the School as the Executive Secretary to the Director in 2014 and retired from the University in May of 2020.

PhD



Joanne Riebschleger, PhD, became the PhD Program Director in August 2020 after joining the School in 2005.

Community Programs



Gina Tremonti Gembel, MSW, became the Continuing Education Director in March of 2020.



Beth Lindley, MSW, assumed the role of Director of the Kinship Care Resource Center in September 2020.

BASW



Lily Burnstein, MSW, joined the BASW program in November 2019 as the Student Support Coordinator.

MSW



Kelly Fornwalt, LMSW, became the Assistant MSW Program Director in August 2020 after previously serving as the MSW Statewide Blended/Weekend Advisor.



Emily Halling, MSW, joined the MSW program in November 2020 as the MSW Statewide Blended/Weekend Advisor.



Raúl Vargas joined us as the MSW Student Support Coordinator in November 2020.

Field Education



Cori Denay, LMSW, left her position in August 2020 as the Flint and Mid-Michigan Programs Field Coordinator. She had joined the School in 2009, and we wish her the best in retirement.



Aubree Rogers moved from our Field Office Coordinator position to become the School's Unit HR Coordinator in September 2020.



Parryss Carter-McGee joined the School as the new Field Office Coordinator in August 2020.

Invest in initiatives meaningful to you

Students enter the profession of social work with a strong commitment to service, integrity, and competence. As social work educators, we believe that the good our graduates do is multiplied and extended across generations, and we are honored to help prepare them for their service.

In keeping with land-grant principles of education, research, and outreach/service, we take seriously our

responsibility to the education and training of students as well as outreach for community engagement.

If you share our values, please consider supporting these efforts with a gift to one of the scholarship and endowment funds highlighted below. A full list of giving opportunities and links to donate online can be found at socialwork.msu.edu/Alumni-and-Giving/Endowments.



Robert Little Scholarship Fund

This fund provides scholarships for graduate students with a career interest in child welfare, with preference for those who want to work in kinship care.



Dr. Mary Bremer Barron Scholarship Fund

This fund supports scholarships for students, with preference for those from the greater Flint community.



MSW Veterans Scholarship

This fund supports veterans by providing scholarships for study in the MSW program.



Paul P. and Donna K. Freddolino Endowment for Distance Education

This fund supports the School of Social Work's distance educational programs, including both student support and the development of new educational technologies.



The School of Social Work Endowed Fund

This fund provides a range of supports for the School, including student scholarships, support for faculty research, and support for School programs.



Future Leaders Endowed Scholarship in Social Work

This fund supports graduate students through scholarships, assistantships, or fellowships.



Gary R. Anderson Endowed Fund for Child Welfare Leadership

This fund supports workshops, lectures, and scholarships in the School related to child welfare leadership and workplace development.



Chance at Childhood Endowment Fund

This fund supports research, education, training, and outreach concerning intervention and treatment for at-risk children and families; children's justice; coordination of professionals dealing with at-risk children and families; and methods of encouraging children and youth to develop into well-adjusted, capable, and productive adults.



Youth Education and Support

This fund helps build, test, and disseminate research focused on real ways to increase child and youth access to accurate, non-stigmatized knowledge of mental illness and recovery.



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A Mission of Social Justice and Positive Change: The MSU School of Social Work is dedicated to educating students for ethical, competent, responsive, and innovative social work practice, and to conducting and disseminating high quality research that improves the well-being of the most vulnerable in society. Our teaching, research, and outreach synergistically promote social justice, positive change, and solutions to the problems facing diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

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OUR SCIENCE **TRANSFORMS THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE**
AND INSPIRES LEADERS