Dedicated
TO THE PUBLIC GOOD:
How GSSW Uses Research Funding to Benefit the Community

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• GSSW Nationally Ranked in the Top 20 page 1
As many of you already know, I am stepping down as dean of the Graduate School of Social Work in June. It has been an honor and privilege to work with you, my academic and professional colleagues, over the past nine years, and I am very proud of what we have accomplished together to benefit our school, our local and global communities, and the profession to which we are so deeply committed.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome Amanda Moore McBride as GSSW’s new dean, beginning in July I have known Amanda since we were faculty colleagues at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. I have every confidence that her inspiring and skillful leadership will continue our school’s commitment to excellence and pave the way for even greater achievements in the years ahead. I particularly look forward to working with Amanda when I return to the GSSW faculty a year from now.

GSSW has grown in many ways over the past nine years. Our MSW program is now offered in three Colorado locations and soon will be available nationwide with the launch of our online program next January. We have increased the size, diversity and excellence of our faculty, and we have supported and encouraged their commitment to scholarship, teaching, research and service. GSSW has greatly expanded its global focus and impact while at the same time building strong research and service partnerships here in Denver and nationwide. Our MSW program’s new national ranking, placing us within the top 20 for the first time in our history, represents a growing awareness among our peers that we are an innovative school on the move.

It has given me special satisfaction over the course of my deanship to get to know and work with those personal accomplishments and triumphs, and shake their hands as they graduate and enter our profession with knowledge, skill and a deepened commitment to social justice. I want to thank my distinguished faculty colleagues for their sincere commitment to our students, our dedicated staff who are the life-blood of our school, our Board of Visitors and advisory councils who have given so freely of their time and talents, and our alumni and donors whose continuing support is invaluable to our school.

I will be forever grateful for this opportunity to serve as GSSW dean, and I thank you for the confidence and trust you have placed in me.

Sincerely,

James Herbert Williams, PhD, MSW
Dean and Milton Morris endowed Chair

FROM THE DEAN

The Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver, already considered one of the best in the nation, has seen another nine-point rise in the ranking of its Master of Social Work (MSW) program by U.S. News & World Report. GSSW now is ranked No. 17, placing it in the top seven percent of all nationally accredited MSW programs.

The school has risen an unprecedented 33 points during the magazine’s last four ranking periods. It was ranked at number 26 when the rankings were last compiled in 2012.

“GSSW’s new ranking reflects widespread recognition of our faculty’s scholarship, research and teaching, as well as the achievements of our alumni,” says Dean and Milton Morris Endowed Chair James Herbert Williams. “Our colleagues across the country are noticing our accomplishments, and we continually strive for improvement and innovation.”

U.S. News bases its rankings on the results of peer assessment surveys sent to deans, other administrators and faculty at accredited social work degree programs or schools. Only fully accredited MSW programs in good standing during the survey period are ranked. Those schools with the highest average scores on the survey are included in the list published by the magazine.

“The continual and significant rise in GSSW’s ranking is a testament to the skillful leadership James Herbert Williams has provided for the school during his nine years as dean,” says Provost Gregg Kivistad. “When he steps down from his position at the end of this academic year, he leaves the school perfectly positioned to continue its upward trajectory under the leadership of incoming dean Amanda Moore McBride.”

The Graduate School of Social Work offers the MSW degree at the University’s Denver campus and on-location in Durango and Glenwood Springs, Colorado. The school will launch its online MSW program in January 2017.

NOTED EXPERT IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT APPOINTED NEW GSSW DEAN

by Barbara Brooks, Interim Vice Chancellor, Associate Vice Chancellor, Marketing & Communications

The University of Denver has appointed Amanda Moore McBride as dean of its Graduate School of Social Work, effective July 1, 2016. McBride comes to DU from the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, where she is the Bettie Bofinger Brown Associate Professor and executive director of the Gephart Institute for Civic and Community Engagement.

“Dr. McBride is an internationally recognized leader in the field of civic and community engagement, and for that and many other reasons she is perfect for the University at this important time in our history,” says University of Denver Provost Gregg Kivistad. “As our strategic plan, DC IMPACT 2025, elevates our commitment to and connections with Denver and beyond, her problem-solving, partnership-based approach will be of great inspiration and benefit to our community, including students, faculty and the region.”

McBride’s scholarship focuses on ways to promote engagement through education, programs and policy — specifically addressing issues of access and inclusion. She has studied national service, service learning and international volunteering. She has served as a consultant to the U.S. Corporation for National and Community Service, the United Nations Volunteer Program and the Social Science Research Council. She has convened conferences and written extensively on the topic of civic and community engagement in higher education, including articles for the Chronicle of Higher Education and Huffington Post. She is working on a book, titled “From Charity to Change: The Civic Mission of Higher Education,” as well as a co-edited volume on the relationship between social innovation and civic engagement in higher education.

“I am honored to join the DU and GSSW faculty, staff and students in their aspirations to positively impact the Rocky Mountain region and beyond,” McBride says. “Today’s entrenched social issues and disparities call forth what is unique about the social work profession and discipline — from a focus on social justice and diversity and inclusion to a scholarly understanding of health and wellness from the cellular to the societal levels.”

Chancellor Rebecca Chopp, who has stressed the importance of access and engagement since joining DU 18 months ago, sees the dean of GSSW as an important player in that context. “An inclusive community celebrates different cultures and cultivates the individual and collective flourishing of all of us,” she says. “Our school of social work has a history of cultivating these values, thanks in part to our retiring dean, James Herbert Williams, who will return to the GSSW faculty as Distinguished Emil M. Sunley Endowed Chair. With Dean McBride at the helm, and the goals of DU DC IMPACT 2525 as a guide, we will become an even more vital community partner.”

McBride earned her PhD and MSW from the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University, and her BA from Hendrix College in Arkansas.
Just as the world has undergone remarkable change over the past decade, so too has the Graduate School of Social Work. Since his appointment as dean in 2007, and as the University’s inaugural Milton Morris Endowed Chair in 2010, James Herbert Williams has inspired change and growth in nearly every aspect of the school.

“James Herbert’s leadership has literally transformed the Graduate School of Social Work. Student and faculty quality, enrollments and outcomes to the community have grown enormously during his tenure,” noted Chancellor Rebecca Chopp and Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Greg Kristad in announcing Williams’ intention to step down as dean at the end of this academic year.

As GSSW prepares for the next era of progress and forward momentum under the direction of incoming dean Amanda Moore McBride, we take pride in honoring our school’s many achievements during Williams’ nine-year tenure as dean.

Providing National and Local Leadership

GSSW achieved a new level of national prominence during Williams’ deanship. From 2008 to 2009 he served as vice president of the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research. He served as president of the National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work from 2011 to 2014, was a member of its Strategic Planning Committee from 2009 to 2010 and co-chaired its Health Disparities Task Force from 2009 to 2015. Williams has held a year of leadership positions with the Society for Social Work Research and became the organization’s president in February after serving in a one-year term as president-elect. He was named to the School’s 2016 class of SSWR Fellows, an honor reserved for only a small number of the organization’s members.

Williams also has held key positions with the Council on Social Work Education, GSSW’s national accrediting body, serving on its Commission for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice from 2004 to 2009, Strategic Planning Committee from 2010 to 2013, Commission on Educational Policy from 2010 to 2016 and board of directors from 2012 to 2014. Williams currently is serving a four-year term as editor-in-chief of Social Work Research, the highly regarded journal of the National Association of Social Workers.


The rapid increase in GSSW’s national ranking — up 17 points during Williams’ deanship and now at No. 17 among the country’s 266 accredited MSW programs — is a clear indication of Williams’ success in focusing the national spotlight on GSSW and of his esteemed reputation among his academic and professional peers.

Closer to home, Williams received the 2011 Clinical Social Work Advocate Award from the Colorado Society for Clinical Social Work. He was honored by both of his graduate alma maters in 2013, when he received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the University of Washington School of Social Work and the Day-Garett Award from the Smith College School for Social Work. That same year, Williams was selected to give the summer Commencement address at University of Denver.

Creating Change on a Global Scale

With the social world, an increasing number of social workers choose to live and learn in cultures very different from their own; many believe there is no better way to truly understand the impact of global forces on the vulnerable populations they serve, both at home and abroad. During his nine years as dean, Williams led GSSW to a position of international prominence in social work education, and the school’s academic and research efforts currently span five continents. The MSW curriculum includes many global learning opportunities, including an increasing number of experiential courses and internships. In recent years students have gained firsthand cultural and practice knowledge in Bosnia, China, Costa Rica, Kenya, Mexico and Switzerland, as well as in South Africa through a course that Williams developed and taught for two years.

Ann Petitta, Professor of the Practice of Social Work and assistant dean for field education, has served since 2010 as program director of Global Practice Bosnia, the University’s oldest international service-learning program.

On average, about a third of GSSW doctoral students are international students, many of whom return to their home countries as high-level administrators in national government, non-governmental organizations and universities.

Dear Williams, along with a growing number of GSSW faculty members and doctoral students, conducts research in countries around the world. In 2008 GSSW entered into a research partnership with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development, based in Nagoya, Japan, with a regional office in Nairobi, Kenya. Subsequent endeavors have included collaborative research and training projects on conflict, human security and sustainable livelihoods in Northern Kenya and Botswana. Williams served as principal investigator for both projects.

In 2012 GSSW established a collaborative agreement with the Global Risk Forum (GRF) in Davos, Switzerland. The partnership is aimed at strengthening sustainable development, as well as social and ecological resilience, thereby enhancing health and health security for humans, animals and ecosystems. The effort reflects the emerging “One Health” paradigm that connects the health and well-being of humans with that of animals and the environment. GSSW has served as co-hosting partner of three GRF One Health Summits in Davos, and will do so again in late summer 2016. The summit is Europe’s leading One Health event, addressing issues such as antibiotic resistance, Ebola and other infectious diseases, and the role of One Health in disaster risk.

American Humane Endowed Chair Andreas Reckmann chair of the faculty by Williams in 2013, conducts research related to global sustainable development, social-ecological justice and other issues reflecting the One Health perspective. He has been an active participant in each of the One Health Summits and recently supervised MSW student internships with GRF in Davos.

Cultivating Research and Scholarship

The University of Denver’s vision — to be a great public university dedicated to the public good — has few more compelling expressions than GSSW’s robust and growing research agenda. As described in the cover story that begins on page 8, GSSW’s externally funded research has nearly tripled under Williams’ leadership — from approximately $2 million in 2007 to almost $6 million that past year. Nationally funded research from a variety of sources has increased as well. Within a year of his arrival at the school, Williams created the position of associate dean for research, signaling the emphasis he would place on expanding the community impact of GSSW research.

Faculty members appointed over the last nine years are as committed to research and scholarship as they are to teaching. The list of faculty, student and staff scholarship produced during the past six months spans six pages of this magazine (pp. 20–25), compared to a single page in the fall 2009 inaugural issue of GSSW Magazine. The community also benefits from research conducted by GSSW’s seven scholars-in-residence, two additional/affiliated faculty members, and the six research professors Williams has appointed since 2012.

Williams himself has authored and co-authored numerous scholarly publications in the areas of juvenile delinquency, mental health services in public schools, health promotion/disease prevention among African American women, social and sustainable development, human security and global health.

He also has presented his work at many national and international conferences over the years.

Both the Butler Institute for Families and the Institute for Human-Animal Connection have thrived over the past decade, becoming nationally and internationally renowned centers for research, evaluation, training and education. When Professor Heather Taussig joined the GSSW faculty as associate dean for research in 2014, she relocated the Fostering Healthy Futures’ program to the school. Developed and tested at Denver’s Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect, PHF is a preventive intervention for maltreated children, ages 9–11, in out-of-home care.

In 2015 Williams brought the Center for Effective Interventions (CEI) to GSSW from its original location at Metropolitan State University in Denver. CEI provides technical assistance to communities and agencies in western states by promoting evidence-based and promising programs for children, youth and families. GSSW’s new Burns Center on Poverty and Homelessness is scheduled to open soon.

Forging Interdisciplinary Partnerships

Under Williams’ leadership, GSSW has developed and expanded its interdisciplinary partnerships with its University colleagues.

GSSW Professor Debora Ortega has continued her role in the University’s initiative to create and advancing knowledge that goes to voice the history, politics, culture and legacies of Latinx communities.

Williams co-chaired the planning committee for Du’s new Knapp Institute for Healthy Aging. The institute supports complementary research and scholarship in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as well as interdisciplinary study with GSSW and the Graduate School of Professional Psychology.

In 2013 GSSW joined with the Sturm College of Law, the Graduate School of Professional Psychology and the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System to found the Resource Center for Separating and Divorcing Families (RCSDF). The successful three-year pilot study tested the effectiveness of an interdisciplinary out-of-court model in helping families through the transition of separation and divorce. The first program of its kind in the United States, RCSDF had a significant increase in the number of faculty and staff in education, dispute resolution and therapeutic and financial consultation services to hundreds of divorcing and separating families. The effort reflects the need to bring an invaluable community resource, RCSDF provided experiential learning opportunities for student interns from all of its partner schools and programs.

In 2010 GSSW was awarded a four-year $10 million grant from the National Institutes of Health. The Emerging Scholars Program aims to increase the number of doctoral students and faculty to fully fund an additional 11 PhD students to train in a multidisciplinary health services research focus. The effort reflects the need to broaden the number of doctoral students and faculty to fully fund an additional 11 PhD students to train in a multidisciplinary health services research focus.

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Williams currently is spearheading development of GSSW’s new online program that, when it begins in January of 2017, will enable students from across the country to earn their degrees while continuing to live and work in their home communities.

GSSW’s PhD program, one of the oldest social work doctoral programs in the nation, also has undergone significant change since Williams’ appointment in 2007. New courses have been developed in research methodology, theory and pedagogy. Demonstrating the PhD program’s evolution and success, recent doctoral graduates have received academic appointments at a number of Research I universities—those that offer a full range of baccalaureate and graduate degrees. In addition to the far-reaching impact of GSSW’s research and scholarship, the school’s community service during Williams’ deanship has included a growing number of lectures, workshops, webinars and other continuing professional development opportunities. In 2015 GSSW partnered with the Graduate School of Professional Psychology, the Morgridge College of Education and University College to create the Center for Professional Development. This innovative collaboration enables the University to deliver the highest-quality inter-professional education to lifelong learners in many fields.

GSSW’s Bridge Project is another valuable community resource, helping to bridge the cycle of poverty for children, youth and families in Denver’s public housing neighborhoods. Bridge added a fourth program site soon after Williams came to GSSW. The dean also helped create the position of Philip D. and Eleanor G. Winn Professor for Children and Youth at Risk, currently held by Jeff Jenson, whose research has documented the effectiveness of the Bridge Project’s focus on positive youth development.

In conjunction with the school’s 80th anniversary celebration in 2011, Williams helped create GSSW’s annual Community Service Day, which takes teams of student, faculty and staff volunteers to various nonprofits in the Denver area at the start of each academic year. The dean is an active participant every year and hosts a luncheon for the volunteers after each event.

Shaping the Future of Social Work

GSSW continues to offer a broad array of continuing professional development opportunities for alumni and other community professionals. Participation in the University’s Center for Professional Development has expanded those options still further, as GSSW seeks to meet the needs of Colorado’s approximately 100,000 licensed professionals who require continuing education for their careers.

Social workers have been transforming society for more than a century. Their work has helped lower infant mortality, reduce poverty and assist people with mental illness. Today, more than ever, society’s urgent challenges require research, innovation and leadership.

The coalition’s paper Unleashing the Power of Prevention was published in the National Academy of Medicine website in 2015. Associate Professor Kim Bender, a coalition steering committee member, is among the paper’s 19 authors. Jenson chairs the coalition’s committee tasked with conveying the message and goals of the paper to diverse settings and audiences.

Jenson described his work on this project when he was a featured speaker at the Michael M. Davis Lecture Series sponsored in October 2015 by the University of Chicago’s Center for Health Administration Studies.

On May 6 Elizabeth Legg, PhD, LPC, NCC, will present a two-part series entitled “Trauma and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR).” Participants may attend one or both sessions and will receive a discounted rate if they attend both. Part One, “Trauma: Effects, Treatment, Resilience and Self-Care,” will be presented from 8 a.m. – noon. The session will review the definition of trauma, including the symptoms of PTSD and the effects of traumatic news on the brain, mind, body and relationships. Culture, gender and developmental issues will be addressed, as well as effective treatment approaches, resilience, post-traumatic growth and self-care.

Part Two of the series, “EMDR Therapy: Using the Brain’s Natural Healing System to Overcome the Impact of Trauma,” will be presented from 1 – 5 p.m on May 6. The session will provide an introduction to EMDR therapy, including the information-processing system that is activated to heal the body. Approaches to treatment, the three-pronged approach to address past/present/future trauma and therapies regarding mechanisms of action, populations and diagnoses that EMDR therapy can effectively address. Legg also will discuss research, precautions and requirements for training and certification. Demonstrations through video, live resource development exercises and case examples will be included.

Both sessions of this two-part series will be held in the Boettcher Foundation Community Room of Craig Hall.

Under the skilled direction of Trish Becker-Hufner, assistant director of alumni engagement & special events, GSSW continues to offer a broad array of continuing professional development opportunities for alumni and other community professionals. Participation in the University’s Center for Professional Development has expanded those options still further, as GSSW seeks to meet the needs of Colorado’s approximately 100,000 licensed professionals who require continuing education for their careers.

On March 11, Heather Arnold-Renicker, MSW, conducted a workshop entitled “Anti-Oppressive Practice.” The all-day workshop focused on storytelling as a relationship-building tool, personal reflection exercises, anti-oppressive practice skills and tools, and future planning.

On April 9, Lauren Kerstein, LCSW, presented “Effective Interventions in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs).” The workshop focused on the underlying characteristics of ASDs, as well as specific, effective interventions for working with children, adolescents and their families. A GSSW adjunct professor, Kerstein specializes in working with children diagnosed with ASDs, as well as those experiencing anxiety, depression, social difficulties, divorce and other adjustment, developmental or mental health needs.
2016 LECTURE SERIES FEATURES TWO NATIONAL SCHOLARS

GSWW’s 2016 Lecture Series began on Feb. 4 with a presentation by Richard Van Dorn, PhD, adjunct associate professor in the Duke University Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences and senior mental health services researcher at RTI International, an independent nonprofit institute that provides research, development and technical services to government and commercial clients worldwide. Van Dorn’s lecture was entitled “Violence and Victimization in Adults with Mental Illness.”

For the past decade, Van Dorn has been involved in clinically oriented research at the interface of violence, victimization, substance use and criminal justice. His research explores the needs of adults with mental illnesses and substance use disorders, and the co-occurrence between these conditions. Van Dorn is the primary investigator on the “Review of the Evidence on Behavioral Health Disorder, Violence and Associated Treatment Interventions’ project, funded by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. He is also co-investigator of the ongoing “Implementation Research for Vulnerable Women in South Africa” study, which is funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Register now for the final lecture in the series, to be held on May 12. Linda M. Rosenberger, MSW, CSW, president and chief executive officer of the National Council for Community Behavioral HealthCare, will present “The Benefits of Healthcare: The ACA is More Than Insurance Coverage for All. It Gives Blessing to Healthcare.”

Field Instructor Honored at CSWE Award Reception

GSWW field instructor Carol Heinisch, MSW ’03, CSW, received the Heart of Social Work Award from the North American Network of Field Educators and Directors at a reception held during the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting in Denver last October. A social worker with the Office of the Colorado State Public Defender, Heinisch has served as a field instructor for the past eight years, mentoring and training 23 GSSW MSW students. She received GSSW’s Award for Excellence in Field Instruction in 2010.

Conference Provides Higher Education Technical Assistance

Assistant Professor Ramona Bellrín, Professor Debora Ortega and the DU Latino Center for Community Engagement and Scholarship (DULCCES) partnered with the Office of Minority Health Resource Center (OMHRC) to host the regional Higher Education Technical Assistance Project Conference at GSSW on Aug. 26 - 28, 2015. The conference included sessions with federal grant-makers and regional officials, strategic guidance on preparing competitive research proposals, workshops on health and education disparities programs, and opportunities for collaboration.

In partnership with the Center for Professional Development, GSSW welcomed Amuradha Bhosale at the University of Denver on April 18 to lead a social justice workshop for professionals in human-service related fields. Entitled “Compassion in Action,” the workshop offered inspiration to anyone who has a personal or professional passion for service.

Register now for “Animals on the Mind: Social Neurobiology of the Human-Animal Bond,” the 2nd Biennial Practitioners Conference sponsored by GSSW’s Institute for Human-Animal Connection (IHAC), the conference will be held on May 12-13 in the Sturm Hall Auditorium, 2000 East Asbury Ave., on the University of Denver campus.

Register for lectures and other upcoming events online at www.du.edu/socialwork.

For additional information and registration, visit www.portfoliolabs.edu/animalsonthemend.

UNIVERSITY HOSTS INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL JUSTICE WORKSHOP

In partnership with the Center for Professional Development, GSSW welcomed Amuradha Bhosale at the University of Denver on April 18 to lead a social justice workshop for professionals in human-service related fields. Entitled “Compassion in Action,” the workshop offered inspiration to anyone who has a personal or professional passion for service.

Bhosale is a renowned grassroots women’s rights and anti-child labor activist based in the Kolhapur district of Maharashtra, India, where more than 36,000 children are involved in daily labor for local industries. A child-laborer herself when she was six years old, Bhosale has spent the past 20 years fighting to prevent child exploitation, labor, trafficking and female infanticide. She is director of Avani, a nonprofit community built on the principles of sustainability and local empowerment. Through Avani, Bhosale has facilitated the rescue of 341 child laborers, provided more than 3,600 migrant children with health and care education, organized the construction of schools inside brickyards and established a residential home for migrant children.

Conference topics will include animal-assisted interventions specific to social neuroscience in autism spectrum disorders, mental health treatment and exposure to animals across the lifespan. There will be three keynote speakers: California State Polytechnic University Professor Temple Grandin, PhD, world-renowned autism spokesperson and animal behavior consultant; California State Polytechnic University Professor Audrey Fine, PhD, a licensed psychologist who specializes in treating children with ADHD, learning disabilities developmental disorders; and Richard Louv, noted journalist and author of nine books. Other speakers include Rupert Isaacson, author, producer and founding director of the Indigenous Land Rights Fund.

Longtime IHAC supporter Chuck & Dodie Pet Food & Supplies are among the conference sponsors.

IHAC Practitioners Conference Set for May
Our research trajectory is strong, and I am proud to be among our peers because during this time we diversified our portfolio, and GSSW is positioned extremely well to take on the charge of the IMPACT 2025 strategic plan, having a strong past in community based partnerships.

By Professor Heather Taussig, Associate Dean for Research

The Graduate School of Social Work is no exception to this trend. In the past several decades, GSSW has worked intentionally to distribute and manage department and University resources in ways that maximize scholarly accomplishments. Resources for pilot studies, start-up research funds for new faculty members, statistical consultation and training for faculty and doctoral students, and staff support for submitting external research grants are among the tools currently used to promote research and scholarship in GSSW.

We have made significant strides in research and scholarly productivity in GSSW. The amount of externally funded research in GSSW increased from approximately $2 million in 2006 to nearly $8 million in the past year. The Butler Institute for Families has grown into an internationally recognized child welfare research and training center; investigators and staff in the Institute oversee projects totaling $4.9 million in 2014 – 15. Six research professors have been appointed in GSSW and the Butler Institute since 2012. The school benefits from vibrant lectures and continuing professional development that promote the intellectual exchange of scholarly ideas. These and other developments illustrate the school's commitment to increasing the quality and impact of research in GSSW.

Recent accomplishments underscore the importance of sustained support for research infrastructure and scholarly productivity in GSSW. In fact, our successes in recent years have led to new challenges for the future: identifying ways to increase interdisciplinary research, providing additional opportunities and resources for doctoral students to participate in funded research projects, and securing external funding in an increasingly competitive environment.

I was appointed as the school's first associate dean for research in 2008. Dean James Herbert Williams created this position as part of a comprehensive strategy to support and promote the diverse research and scholarship efforts of GSSW faculty, staff and students. It has been a pleasure to work closely with members of the GSSW community to increase the impact of research and scholarship in the school. This position, now capably filled by Professor Heather Taussig, signifies the importance of research and scholarship in the life of GSSW. She describes several new strategies to improve research infrastructure and identifies several recent accomplishments in an accompanying story.

Since I became the new associate dean for research in September 2014, scarcely a week has gone by without my signing a Proposal Review and Approval form so that a faculty member's grant proposal or contract can be routed through the University of Denver's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. GSSW is buzzing with research activity these days, and we continue to strengthen the infrastructure to support it.

Last fall, Associate Professor Daniel Brisson initiated the Intervention Research Faculty Workgroup, bringing faculty together to discuss innovative approaches to conducting rigorous intervention research trials in real-world settings. Topics mutually selected by the workgroup’s nine members range from methods for recruitment and retention of highly mobile populations to cutting-edge statistical techniques for analyzing complex data.

GSSW faculty's commitment to research activity also is evidenced by the high rate of faculty participation in our new research committee that promotes and oversees the school's externally funded research activity. In 2013, the 16-member committee appointed a part-time pre-doctoral specialist to support faculty in developing grant budgets and completing the required federal forms. Jennifer Collum, grants and budget manager in the Department of Psychology, helped GSSW faculty and doctoral students prepare almost 50 proposals during the year.

This spring our research committee sponsored a day-long workshop, "Theory Construction and Causal Modeling," led by Professor James Jaccard, associate dean for research at New York University's Silver School of Social Work, co-director of the Center for Latino Adolescent and Family Health, and the 2016 Society for Social Work Research Aaron Rosen Lecturer. Workshop participants learned strategies for constructing causal theories and models on a conceptual level, as well as guidelines for statistical data analysis to gain perspectives on those theories.

In addition to our faculty's focus on externally funded research (many of whose projects are showcased in this issue), we also have strengthened our research portfolio by appointing six new research faculty over the past two years, all of whom have received external funding. GSSW's doctoral students also are applying for an unprecedented number of external awards, submitting five federal pre-doctoral grant proposals during the past year.

Although competition for federal funds has never been greater, GSSW's faculty is committed to pursuing federal grants, as well as complementary state and foundation funding, for their work. GSSW faculty received 28 external research and training grants and contracts, totaling $5.8 million during the 2014 – 15 academic year. Faculty investigations addressed positive youth development and adolescent behavior, genomics, health and mental health, the human-animal connection, neighborhoods and communities, international development and education. Sponsored projects at the University of Denver totaled some $21.5 million in 2014 – 15 through all academic departments, and GSSW represented 27 percent of this total, making it the University's leading division in terms of externally supported projects. Especially notable is the growth in the research and training budget of GSSW's Butler Institute for Families. "Over a decade or more, DU has increased internal seed funding, embraced a commitment to hire the best individuals and set higher standards for tenure and promotion," says Curitime Lengfeld, associate provost for research. "The result has been very positive with strong growth in several metrics for research and scholarship. We should be proud of our hard work. We have weathered the variability in funding climates better than many of our peers because during this time we diversified our portfolio, and GSSW is one of those divisions contributing strongly to the diversifications. DU is positioned extremely well to take on the charge of the IMPACT 2025 strategic plan, having a strong past in community based partnerships."

Of course, research growth requires additional space. We are pleased to announce the recent opening of GSSW's Research, Evaluation and Collaboration (REC) Center, a newly renovated building adjacent to Craig Hall that houses collaborative space for doctoral students, offices for several Butler Institute for Families staff members and dedicated space for faculty research and project teams. The building also has small meeting rooms and a large conference room that can be reserved for the GSSW community's use. The need for the new REC not only reflects the substantial increase in our research activity but also provides opportunities for continued growth and expansion.

GSSW's research trajectory is strong, and I am proud to be among colleagues who are conducting rigorous, ethical and impactful community-based research.

GSSW RESEARCH CONTINUES ITS UPWARD TRAJECTORY
At the Butler Institute for Families, our mission is to enhance the well-being of children, youth and families by strengthening programs, systems and communities. One of the ways we do this is by conducting research and evaluation with child- and family-serving programs and organizations in Colorado and around the country. Funded by federal, state and foundation grants, our research and evaluation practices are geared toward improving the effectiveness of programs, organizations and systems that directly serve families, and demonstrating the impact of programs on child, youth and family well-being.

Over the past 12 months alone, the Butler Institute has received more than $1.6 million in grants to conduct systematic research and evaluation for more than 20 programs, organizations or systems in 22 states and with dozens of Native American Nations. We work directly with child welfare agencies, school districts, early childhood organizations and a number of other community organizations that serve the interests of children, youth and families. Among our current projects are the Capacity Building Initiative for Early Childhood Social-Emotional Health, a multi-year, multi-site study that is currently underway.

The initiative focuses on strengthening programs and organizations that serve the interests of children, youth and families. Our current projects are the Capacity Building Initiative for Early Childhood Social-Emotional Health, a multi-year, multi-site study that is currently underway.

The impact of our work on communities is most frequently evidenced by the program and organizational changes that our clients implement. "We've deepened our practice [by] paying attention to the fidelity of implementation," one noted an organization that changed the way it implements programming as a result of Butler's evaluation activities.

Other organizations have gained knowledge about what works best to create positive change for the children and families they serve, or they have embraced new data-informed decision-making processes to address organizational change. "We're making decisions about things from a much more data-driven, research and a best practice perspective," one told us.

At the Butler Institute, all of our research and evaluation is grounded in strong research designs, systematic data collection, and rigorous analytic techniques. We invite you to visit our website (www.thebutlinstitute.org) to learn more about our current research and evaluation activities and how impact the effectiveness of systems and organizations within a community context. We believe that generating a strong knowledge base about what works to support child and family well-being is an important contribution to ongoing social, cultural and political discussions. Equally important is the evaluation work we perform directly with community organizations to identify improvements and practices that can be implemented in real time to benefit children, youth and families in community settings.

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Community partnerships are key to the success of YFYN, and the intervention would not be possible without collaboration and support from partners at GS&W’s nonprofit Bridge Project, Denver Public Schools and the Denver Housing Authority. YFYN also receives on-campus financial support from the University Faculty Research Fund, a University PROF grant, the Interdisciplinary Research Incubator for the Study of (In)Equality, the University of Denver Latino Center for Community Engagement and Scholarship, and GS&W’s research committee.

While the two of us share ownership of the intervention, we have collaborated with other doctoral students in the delivery and testing of YFYN, and we also employ MSW students as part-time temporary staff on program delivery and research teams.

YFYN provides an exciting opportunity for families living in subsidized housing to foster their family relationships, address issues in their children’s schools and build on neighborhood strengths while addressing neighborhood issues. “[YFYN] just opened up more of a knowing that you have to communicate everything that you do,” one participant commented. “Talk to people about your problems. Speak on your injuries. Speak on your triumphs, you know, and communicate and let it out — and do it respectfully.”

For more information about YFYN contact Daniel Brison at daniel.brison@ucdenver.edu or Stephanie Lachina Potte at slachina@uccs.edu

THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN-ANIMAL CONNECTION: FURTHERING THE SCIENCE OF THE BOND
by Kevin Morris, Scholar-in-Residence

Research initiatives at the Institute for Human-Animal Connection (IHAC) focus on therapeutic human-animal interactions, the role of animals in communities, and conservation social work. As a GS&W Scholar-in-Residence, I lead innovative, externally funded studies in these core areas. These projects include GS&W PhD students, as well as MSW students who are earning their degree in Denver or elsewhere and are enrolled in the Sustainable Development and Global Practice concentration. Our multidisciplinary collaborations incorporate a variety of community partners.

Two of IHAC’s current Colorado-based studies use randomized controlled designs to measure the impact of canine-assisted interventions on psychosocial and clinical outcomes in family preservation and adolescent trauma therapy environments. One such study is being conducted with a nonprofit based in Denver and Colorado Springs that seeks to address destructive behaviors in families through care, support and education. We use a validated self-report instrument to compare outcomes among families integrating therapy dog teams in clinical sessions with families receiving standard-of-care therapy services. Our results demonstrate statistically significant improvements in family functioning among those who worked with therapy dogs.

Another locally focused project is the Canine Healers Study, supported by the nonprofit Excelsior Youth Center in Aurora. This study measures the impact of therapy dog inclusion in group treatment for adolescent girls who have experienced trauma. Data collection for this project is underway using a self-report instrument to measure trauma symptoms and clinical outcomes.

Projects like these that focus on the human impact of animal interactions also inform a major research project IHAC has undertaken with Green Chimneys, an internationally renowned therapeutic farm and school located in Brewster, New York. Green Chimneys serves students with special needs, such as emotional disturbances, learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, multiple disabilities and/or other health impairments. The organization incorporates a wide variety of animal-, horticulture- and nature-based therapies and activities throughout its campus and programs.

The IHAC research team is developing innovative strategies to study both the effects of the overall Green Chimneys experience and the therapeutic impact of individual interventions and activities. This long-term project will be funded by an integrated fundraising collaboration between IHAC and Green Chimneys that focuses on individual donors, as well as foundation and federal grants.

I recently launched a national study funded by the Humane Society of the United States to measure the impact of their Pets for Life programs in 34 cities across the country. These programs embed staff and resources in communities to engage people in pet care and to continue on opposite page

Over the last 14 years I have served as the principal investigator for numerous community-based evaluation studies funded by Denver Housing Authority (DHA). Two of these studies examined the efficacy and community impact of two large HOPE VI Revitalization Projects implemented by DHA — one in the Park Avenue neighborhood that was completed in 2008, and the other currently underway in the South Lincoln neighborhood.

These community development projects employ collaborative planning, innovative construction, and public and private partnerships to replace high levels of concentrated poverty and crime with attractive mixed-income communities.

One of the major long-term outcomes of these efforts was to increase the overall quality of life for residents at the revitalization sites and surrounding community, one of the key quality of life indicators was crime. During the five-year Park Avenue project, the City of Denver experienced a four percent decrease in overall crime but a 39 percent increase in violent crime. The Park Avenue neighborhood has experienced a 61 percent decrease in crime rates, approximately four times the decrease we found in our 12 comparable control neighborhoods and almost seven times the citywide decrease. Over the same five-year period, the Park Avenue area saw a 10 percent increase in violent crime rates; however, this was only one fourth the rate of increase in Denver as a whole. The control neighborhoods had violent crime increases similar to the citywide rate.

Our evaluation also used home-buying activity as a measure of community health and attractiveness. During the study period, the number of conventional mortgages issued for home purchases increased 241 percent, from 234 to 799, in the test neighborhood. In the control neighborhoods, these mortgages increased from 881 to 2,301, reflecting only a 61 percent increase. Similarly, the overall dollar value of conventional mortgage activity increased by 189 percent at the test site and 109 percent at the control neighborhoods.

These outcomes and other data, including in-depth interviews with community residents and businesses, indicated that the Park Avenue HOPE VI project was successful in achieving its goals. The South Lincoln project, also showing promising results, is scheduled to conclude in July.

Between 2009 and 2012, I also served as principal investigator for six evaluation studies to determine the effectiveness of the Residents’ Opportunity and Self Sufficiency (ROSS) that DHA developed for its residents. Each three-year ROSS project focused on a specific community within the City of Denver and engaged participating residents reach self-sufficiency, helping them achieve financial independence and eliminate their need for public assistance, including public housing. The services included financial planning and credit repair, GED classes, job training programs and college preparation courses. Overall, the results of these studies suggest that each of the ROSS programs met its goals, both for the types of services provided and the number of residents who participated.

Over the last five years, I have supervised and provided guidance to a number of MSW students conducting DHA studies. Four of these students conducted a needs assessment of thectx, a collabor atrred housing project, and the other students will complete their research in the fall. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of these students.

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IMPROVING LIVES FOR PEOPLE AND DOGS ON THE FORT BERTHOLD RESERVATION

by Research Associate Professor Sarah Beazell, Scholar-in-Residence Kevin
Morris and MSW student Melissa Janiszewski

For years, the Institute for Human-Animal Connection (IHAC) has worked to better understand the links between human suffering and the suffering of other animals, as well as between respect for human life and respect for other animals. IHAC’s project “Cultural Restoration, Humane Education and Addressing Free-Roaming Dog Populations on the Fort Berthold Reservation, North Dakota” is supporting development of a community-led initiative to restore traditional culture and reverence for animals while improving safety and public health.

‘Rez Dog’ has become a common term for a reservation dog in the animal welfare and animal rescue world. The phenomenon of free-roaming dogs on Native American reservations has recently swept North America, along with the suffering of the dogs and the safety of families and friends, as well as the need for expanded services to address these concerns. Tribal members have made several recommendations:

- construction and operation of a humane shelter, including staffing, workforce development and training, and maintenance of facilities
- implementation of educational programs within the tribal school district, including programming for The Boys & Girls Club focused on humane care for dogs; this includes providing opportunities for youth to care for animals in the shelter
- access to free or greatly reduced veterinary care, such as spay/neuter procedures and vaccinations, to reduce tribal members’ dependence on a personal veterinarian
- recommendations for the Fort Berthold Reservation in order to identify solutions that would be inspired and driven by the community

Preliminary data analysis is revealing several recurring themes: concern about the free-roaming dog population, the welfare of the dogs and the safety of families and friends, as well as the need to expand services to address these concerns. Tribal members have made several recommendations:

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- recommendations for the Fort Berthold Reservation in order to identify solutions that would be inspired and driven by the community

Our team was awarded an Interdisciplinary Research Incubator for the Study of (In)Equality grant from the University of Denver to investigate the feasibility of a three-pronged program addressing cultural restoration, humane education and humane dog population management.

In August 2015 we traveled to the Three Affiliated Tribes’ lands on the Fort Berthold Reservation to conduct qualitative interviews with tribal members in order to identify solutions that would be inspired and driven by the community.

GSSW Professors Working to Improve Coloradans’ Health

Assistant Professor Jennifer Greenfield and Clinical Associate Professor Michael Talamantes (pictured) have been appointed to workgroups for the Colorado State Innovation Model (SIM). Entitled “The Colorado Framework,” the SIM aims to provide access to integrated primary care and behavioral health services in coordinated community systems, apply value-based payment structures, expand information technology efforts such as telehealth, and finalize a statewide plan to improve population health.

Between February 2015 and January 2019, the State of Colorado will receive up to $65 million in federal funding from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, part of the Department of Health and Human Services. The funds will support Colorado’s efforts to integrate physical and behavioral health care in more than 400 primary care practices and community mental health centers, comprising approximately 1,600 primary care providers. In addition, the state will work to establish a partnership between the public health, behavioral health and primary care sectors.

Greenfield is a member of the SIM evaluation workgroup, and Talamantes co-chairs the workforce workgroup.

“Social work plays an important role in carrying out the mission of the Colorado SIM,” says Talamantes. “Jennifer and I are collaborating with health care professionals from all other disciplines to contribute to this project and ultimately improve the health of all Coloradans.”

CREATING A LEARNING COMMUNITY OF DIFFERENCE

by Associate Professor Leslie Haasche

At our faculty and staff retreat last September, our community discussed GSSW’s ongoing goal of responding to issues of difference and inclusivity. One approach we identified was to create more space and time for discussions through a learning community. Thus, starting in November, I joined with Professor Deb Ortega and Associate Professor Kim Bender in facilitating a series of monthly lunch-hour meetings where students, faculty and staff discussed diversity and inclusiveness.

Approximately 20 people participated in these “Learning Community of Difference” sessions, engaging in open, unstructured conversations based on the content of our foundation MSW course “Power, Privilege and Oppression.”

We also discussed ideas for improving the inclusivity of GSSW’s culture, climate and curriculum, and several of these ideas already are being implemented. A proposal to develop a new standing GSSW committee on inclusive excellence will be considered by staff, faculty and students. The planning committee for orientation activities is working to enhance inclusivity content. And our GSSW community is exploring ways to create ongoing training and smaller discussion labs to continue this important work.

We hope these conversations will continue throughout this academic year and prompt lasting ways to promote inclusivity at GSSW in the years to come.
Taussig illustrated her talk with stories, photos and videos. She also highlighted the program's adaptation of the program. Efforts are currently underway to disseminate the program nationally and internationally, and to pilot a teen mentoring and skills group program for preadolescent, maltreated children with vulnerable children and youth. Fostering Healthy Futures is 15 Years of Intervention Research, “focused on her research team’s work in an upcoming issue of the Journal of Marriage and Family, published by the National Council on Family Relations. The symposium was sponsored by the Office of Alumni Relations. Bender’s lecture was entitled “Belonging: A Basic Human Need.” All humans strive for a sense of belonging, noted Bender, but homeless youth often lack belonging. They leave homes marked by stress and violence, only to enter the streets where they face grave dangers and social impasses. Disputing the common myth that this group comprises lazy or rebellious juveniles, Bender illustrated her presentation with photos taken by homeless youth to express their view of the world. The photos were collected and displayed as part of Bender’s “Photovoice Youth Voice” project funded by a DU Public Good Grant last fall. Research projects like this one, Bender said, offer promising steps toward building a sense of belonging among homeless youth.

Karen Albright was appointed as affiliated faculty at GSSW effective Oct. 1, 2015. She also is an assistant professor in the University of Denver Department of Sociology & Criminology. Albright’s academic and research interests include social inequalities of socioeconomic status. Effective March 21, Lorena Gaibor joined the GSSW faculty as a clinical assistant professor and the coordinator of the Social Work with Latinos/as Certificate Program. She comes to GSSW from New Jersey, where she worked for more than 15 years as a community organizer, job-training school social worker, community developer, housing advocate and program coordinator, in addition to other local and statewide positions. Gaibor received her MSW from Rutgers in 2009.

Faculty Research Generates National Publicity

A report issued in February by the Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership and authored by Assistant Professor Yoli Anyon is focusing national attention on restorative practices as alternatives to punitive school disciplinary policies that have proven to be ineffective and racially discriminatory. A coalition of racial justice, education, labor and community groups, the Partnership is working to ensure widespread implementation of restorative practices in Denver Public Schools. The group’s goal is to share the successful model with other districts across the country that are seeking to replicate, scale and sustain these practices. Anyon was quoted by NRC News in a Feb. 11 feature about the project.
GRANT FUNDS TO SUPPORT FACULTY RESEARCH

Assistant Professor Shannon Silva has received a grant from the University of Denver Faculty Research Fund to support her evaluation of the implementation and impact of restorative justice legislation in Colorado. This funding will help generate knowledge about the benefits and challenges of system-level use of restorative justice strategies in criminal cases.

Assistant Professor Yoli Anyon has received a University Public Good Grant to support work on her project entitled “Increasing Opportunities for Organizational Leadership and Decision-Making Among Low-Income Youth of Color in After School Programs.”

FACULTY NEWS

GSSW WELCOMES TWO SCHOLARS-IN-RESIDENCE

Dean James Herbert Williams appointed two new GSSW Scholars-in-Residence in November 2015.

David L. Gies was the first chief operating officer for the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) in Nairobi, Kenya, establishing internal controls and reports for funders in the United States. The founder of ANAW – USA, Gies currently serves as secretary to the board of directors and in the U.S. liaison for the sister program in Nairobi. Additionally, he raises funds and manages the transfer of funds between the U.S. and Kenya, where advocacy for humane livestock practices, wildlife protection, human security and conflict resolution in Africa are implemented. Gies works to promote understanding for the value of human-animal connection and its logical extension for One Health.

Gies earned his MS from De Paul University and an MPA from the University of Colorado at Denver. He has taught as an adjunct professor at GSSW, where he co-led the service-learning course “Social Work in Kenya.” He also has taught at Regis University in the Master of Nonprofit Management program.

Gies’ management experience spans more than 30 years of charitable giving and cause-related fundraising for the arts and animal-related issues. He previously served as executive director of the Animal Assistance Foundation, where his work included expanding Colorado’s capacity for ending pet euthanasia, promoting strong community ethics for animal care and encouraging funders to include animals in their grant-making portfolios.

Richard Reading is a consultant in conservation biology and an adjunct professor in the University of Denver’s Department of Biology. He recently was appointed as the new director of research and conservation at the Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster, Colorado. In this new role, he will lead an expansion of Butterfly Pavilion’s world-leading captive breeding, international field research and conservation programs.

Reading received a PhD and three master’s degrees from Yale University in wildlife ecology and human dimensions of wildlife, and an honorary doctorate from the National Education University of Mongolia.

Reading has worked primarily on grassland ecosystems on six continents, with a focus on the Great Plains of North America, the steppes of Mongolia, the savannas of Botswana and the Altiplano of Peru and Bolivia. His work focuses on developing pragmatic, effective and interdisciplinarily approaches to the conservation of wildlife and protected areas through research, capacity development and working with local people and governments. Reading serves on the boards of several nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and overseas. He has published more than 175 scientific papers and book chapters, and he has written or edited eight books.

FACULTY NEWS

Dean Williams Named to 2016 Class of SSWR Fellows

Dean and Milton Morris Endowed Chair James Herbert Williams has been named to the 2016 class of Fellows of the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR). The SSWR Fellowship honors members for their individual accomplishments, leadership and contribution to SSWR as a scientific society. The number of 2016 inductees is approximately three percent of the SSWR membership. Williams also has taken the reins as president of SSWR, having served a one-year term in 2015 as president-elect.

Founded in 1993, SSWR is a nonprofit professional membership organization that supports social workers, social welfare professionals, social work students, social work faculty and researchers in related fields.

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FACULTY NEWS

Professor Jean East (MSW ’79, PhD ’85) received the Robin Morgan Outstanding Woman Award at the annual University of Denver Women’s Conference on April 1. Established in 2001, the award is presented annually by the Women’s Staff Alliance for Networking & Development to a DU woman who goes beyond her job responsibilities to advocate for women in the University community. The award is named for a former staff member who organized staff women to foster their professional development and enhance the University’s mission through women’s voices and competence. Recipients of this award are women who further these ideals.

East has been a GSSW faculty member since 1990 and served as associate dean of academic affairs from 2010 to 2014. Her academic, practice and research interests include women’s issues, empowerment practice, leadership development and community work. In 1995 she co-founded Project WISE, a Denver nonprofit that supports women with low incomes in creating personal and political change.

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Books

Book Chapters


Peer-Reviewed Presentations


Peer-Reviewed Articles


Rechkemmer, A. (2015, October). One Health governance and the social sciences: Enhancing coherence, accountability and effectiveness. Invited plenary presentation at the Third One Health Summit, Davos, Switzerland.


The following papers, workshops and posters were presented in October 2015 at the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting in Denver, CO.

Atsclahl, B., & Lee, S. Effects of destructive and constructive parental behaviors on child problem behaviors. In Denver, CO.


Beltran, B., & Regun, S. Stand in the place where you live: Place-based social work education. In Denver, CO.

Bender, K., Nicotera, N., Anton, T., & Jenison, J. Intervention research with youth in community-based agencies: The promise of university-community partnerships. In Denver, CO.
RECENT FACULTY, STAFF & DOCTORAL SCHOLARSHIP


Callboum, M., & St. Mary, J.A. Findings from an urban after-school project: A university-community partnership in public housing. Poster presentation.

East, J., McCauren, J., Jameson, M., & Derpuk, A. Supporting adjunct faculty: Best practices in the context of social work values. Roundtable discussion.

Ellingson, W., Hunt, S., & Manning, S. Developing Native American partnerships: Opportunities and challenges for curriculum development.


Jo, L., & Hanna, M. Foster care and adoptions through a CRT lens: Lessons for the classroom.


Barth, R., Fong, B., Brekke, J., Jenson, J., Gehlert, S., & Walters, K. Frontiers of change, transformation, and innovation through grand challenges for social work.


Johnson, K., Sienkiewicz, M., Yuskis, K., & Ellingson, W. Workplace internships: Continuing the discussion.


McQueen, J., & Begun, S. Policy course conversion from classroom-based to online delivery: Strategies and lessons learned. Interactive e-poster.

Mitchell, J., Ross, K., Sienkiewicz, M., & Yuskis, K. Getting “off the ground”: Welcome to the world of online field instruction.


Petrella, A., Hodas, R.W., Friedman, O., & Taussig, H.N. Collaboration between research, practice, and field: Combining efforts creates a stellar internship. Panel presentation.

Tingate, S., Petrella, A., Bhurawan, A., & Bencomo, B. It was possible after all: Multi-university collaboration for online field instructor training. Panel presentation.


Rienks, S.L., Leake, R., & deGuzman, A. Predictors of student readiness for a career in child welfare. Interactive poster session.

Ross, K., Johnson, K., Mitchell, J., & Sienkiewicz, M. Ready or not, here they come: Assessing readiness for field.

Silva, S.M. Tracking justice alternatives: What advocates can learn from restorative justice legislative trends.


von Merz, S. Curriculum development and language integration for bilingual students working with Latinos/as.

Selman, K., Forge, N., & Walls, N.E. LGBTQ student engagement: The roles of gay-straight alliance characteristics and safe adults.


Collins, E., McDonald, S.E., & Williams, J.H. Behavior problems among children of Mexican-immigrant mothers receiving interventional partner violence services.

McDonald, S.E., & Williams, J.H. Profiles of socio-emotional adjustment among children exposed to intimate partner violence.

The following papers and posters were presented in January 2016 at the Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research in Washington, D.C.

Rosecore, J., Anyon, Y., & Jenson, J. Fidelity and adaptation of youth empowerment programming in community practice.

Yang, J., & Anyon, Y. Race and risk behaviors: The mediating role of school bonding.

Anyon, Y., Lechuga, C., & Ortega, D. An exploration of the relationships between student racial background and the school sub-contexts of office discipline referrals.

Anyon, Y., Nicoter, N., & Veeh, C. Contextual influences on the implementation of a school-wide intervention.


Bender, K.A., Brown, S., Begun, S., Barman-Adhikari, A., Ferguson, K., & Thompson, S. Coping styles associated with victimization profiles among homeless youth.

Brown, S.M., Bender, K.A., Ferguson, K., & Thompson, S. Exploring the structure of coping and relationships to depression among homeless youth.

Bender, K.A., Brown, S., Begun, S., Barman-Adhikari, A., Ferguson, K., & Thompson, S. Coping styles associated with victimization profiles among homeless youth.

Ferguson, K., Bender, K.A., & Thompson, S. Gender, coping strategies, homelessness stressors, and income generation among homeless youth in three cities.

Ferguson, K., Bender, K.A., & Thompson, S. Risk and protective factors associated with formal and informal income generation among homeless young adults in three U.S. cities.

Kim, Y., Thomas, S., Bender, K.A., & Ferguson, K. Factors associated with homeless young adults’ comorbidity between substance abuse/dependence and depression. Poster.

Kim, Y., Thompson, S., Bender, K.A., Ferguson, K., & Begun, S. Factors associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among homeless youth. Paper presented in Building a homeless research agenda symposium.

Rai, A., Bender, K.A., Thompson, S., & Ferguson, K. What type of transience places homeless youth at risk for drug use and addiction?

Bender, K.A., & Tausig, H.N. Social work intervention research: Behind the scenes. Paper presented in Research Methods Workshop (D. Herman, Moderator).

Bexell, S.M., & Reckemmer, A. A critical analysis of inclusion gaps in directly relevant sustainable development themes in recent social work research.

Brison, D., Lechuga Peña, S., & Plassmeyer, M. Public housing as a predictor of perceived neighborhood social cohesion.

Plassmeyer, M., Brison, D., & Lechuga Peña, S. A day late and a dollar short: Does increased service usage among residents of affordable housing predict resolution of loss violations for late payment of rent?

Lechuga Peña, S., Brison, D., & Plassmeyer, M. Effects of the Parents and Children Bonding intervention on academic achievement and parental involvement.

Yang, J., Hanna, M., & McDonald, A. The needs and experiences of young adults who aged out of foster care: A systematic review.


Studies have examined the impact of sexual attitudes on youth health, with a focus on the HIV epidemic. Several studies have explored the role of healthcare providers' attitudes in patient care, and some have evaluated the effectiveness of interventions to change these attitudes. For example, a randomized controlled trial showed that an intervention to improve healthcare providers' knowledge and attitudes towards sexual health resulted in a significant increase in the proportion of patients who received pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). Additionally, some studies have investigated the role of gender and cultural factors in shaping attitudes towards sexual health. For instance, a study in South Africa found that cultural beliefs about gender roles and female贞操 were associated with lower rates of condom use among women.

However, more research is needed to better understand the complex interactions between individual, social, and cultural factors that influence sexual attitudes. Future studies should aim to identify effective interventions to change attitudes and promote sexual health.

Overall, the findings from this systematic review suggest that sexual attitudes are an important factor in shaping sexual health behaviors and that interventions to change these attitudes may be effective in promoting sexual health.

References:

REDUCING THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES
by Research Associate Professor Julie McCrae

Since last August, I have been serving as principal investigator for a project that seeks to mitigate the adult health effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). Based in Pueblo, Colorado, our project is a partnership among the Butler Institute for Families, Southern Colorado Family Medicine (SCFM), Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pueblo and the St. Mary-Coronin Health Foundation.

ACES are 10 experiences that occur before age 18 that have been found to have a profound impact on adult health. Researchers who studied more than 147,000 Kaiser Permanente patients in Southern California found that experiencing four or more ACES greatly increased the likelihood of chronic health conditions in adulthood, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer, heart disease, mental illness and sleep disorders. ACES include childhood physical, sexual or emotional abuse; physical or emotional neglect; household substance abuse and mental illness; violent treatment of the mother; parental separation or divorce; and the incarceration of a household member.

Our project, funded by the Caring for Colorado Foundation, aims to reduce physical or emotional neglect; household substance abuse and mental disorders. ACES include childhood physical, sexual or emotional abuse; pulmonary disease, cancer, heart disease, mental illness and sleep disorders. Many express that the only parenting they know is from their own family, and they don’t want to repeat the same patterns.

Research Associate Professor Julie McCrae joined the Butler Institute for Families in 2010. An ACE Master Trainer, she is part of the Colorado ACE Collaborative led by Colorado Springs nonprofit Peaceful Households. For additional information about the Butler Institute, visit www.thebutlerinstitute.org.

The response from parents has been positive. They appreciate the resources that are provided and having ACE information incorporated into their health care. Many express that the only parenting they know is from their own family, and they don’t want to repeat the same patterns. Parents who visit the SCFM health clinic for prenatal or well-child health care meet with a social worker who discusses the link between ACES and health, has the parents complete an ACE and resiliency assessment, and discusses the potential impact of ACES on parenting. The social worker also helps families identify available community resources including housing, mental health counseling and “SafeCare,” an evidence-based home visitation program for families with young children. Physicians follow up with the families during their clinic visits, creating a consistent message about the importance of alleviating toxic stress in families.

Our program anticipates providing services to 100 families with new infants and 300 families with young children. Overall, 60 percent of SCFM Clinic patients are Hispanic/Latino, and many are low-income and medically underserved.

As part of the class, Western Colorado students practice social work e-advocacy skills in virtual visits to the communities’ vulnerable populations. The program now offers a spring quarter “Contemporary Social Work Issues” course each year focused on environmental justice in Colorado’s rural mountain communities. According to Dr. Henry Hooper, Ottens Foundation board president. “These are small steps, ” Dean says, “but one needs to begin somewhere!”

Because about 25 percent of Four Corners students come from the areas many Native tribes, the curriculum includes two specialized courses on Native social work, both taught by Native faculty. A Native Advisory Council on is among the community partners providing ongoing guidance to the program.

The Schramm Foundation, based in Denver, has supported GSSW for many years, including capital support that created the Schramm Foundation Plaza when Spruce Hall was transformed into Craig Hall in the early 2000s. More recently, the foundation funded scholarships for Four Corners and Western Colorado MSW students, as well as technology upgrades to better connect these students with the main campus in Denver.

The John and Sophie Otten Foundation, based in Ridgway, Colorado, recently provided a commitment for an additional $400,000 in scholarship support for Native American students at the Four Corners MSW Program. The foundation established the scholarship fund in 2012 to support recruitment and retention of Native students.

“We’ve been so pleased with the way the program has introduced a Native American focus into its classes, creating a consistent very well,” notes Dr. Henry Hooper, Otten Foundation board president.

VITAL SUPPORT FOR FOUR CORNERS PROGRAM

Among the many supporters of GSSW’s Four Corners MSW program in Durango, Colorado, are the Schramm Foundation and the John and Sophie Otten Foundation. Both continue to provide invaluable support for the program’s operation and students.

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Before her death, Ott requested that memorial donations in her name may be made to the Graduate School of Social Work Four Corners Program, University of Denver, Allin Gift Processing, P.O. Box 930458, Denver, CO 80291-0585. Online donations may be made at www.du.edu/SupportGSSW.

The Four Corners MSW Program mourns the loss of longtime supporter Catherine S Ott, 91, who passed away on March 17, 2016. A Denver native, Ott was a staunch advocate for those in need. In addition to supporting the Four Corners program, she volunteered at a suicide prevention clinic, St. Andrew Avellino Seminary and Church, and Maria Drose Services, a Denver counseling center for the underserved.

“Cathey Ott (right) shares a hug with Four Corners Program Director Wanda Ellingson.

Four Corners Program supportive Native American MSW students at the Four Corners MSW Program. The foundation established the scholarship fund in 2012 to support recruitment and retention of Native students.

Elevating Social Sustainability and Environmental Justice in Western Colorado

GSSW’s Western Colorado MSW Program has joined the Mountain Partnership, an official United Nations partnership and international voluntary alliance aimed at improving the lives of mountain peoples and protecting mountain environments around the world. According to the partnership’s mission statement, the group uses “the wealth and diversity of knowledge, information and expertise of its global membership [to stimulate] concrete initiatives at all levels to address threats, improve quality of life and sustain healthy environments in the world’s mountain regions.”

The Western Colorado Program demonstrates its commitment to the partnership’s mission in a number of ways. The program now offers a spring quarter “Contemporary Social Work Issues” course each year focused on environmental justice in Colorado’s rural mountain communities. Discussion topics include the impacts of climate change on local economies, the need to provide safe and affordable housing in rural resort communities, and food and water rights, especially for the communities’ vulnerable populations.

As part of the class, Western Colorado students practice social work e-advocacy skills in virtual visits to the communities’ vulnerable populations. Because about 25 percent of Four Corners students come from the areas many Native tribes, the curriculum includes two specialized courses on Native social work, both taught by Native faculty. A Native Advisory Council is among the community partners providing ongoing guidance to the program.

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Shanna Kattari was selected by the GSSW Research Committee to receive a 2015 Outstanding Dissertation Proposal Award this fall. This award is given by the committee twice each year for proposals that score the highest on multiple indices. Kattari also received a Graduate Studies Dissertation Fellowship. These awards will support research for Kattari’s dissertation, “Development of the Ableist Microaggression Scale and Assessing the Relationship Between Ableist Microaggressions and the Mental Health of Disabled Adults.”

Darren Whitfield was selected to participate in the mentoring day of the 2015 Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Network 9th National Scientific Meeting. The meeting, entitled “Integrating Social, Behavioral, and Biomedical strategies: The future of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Research,” was held Oct. 28–31 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Doctoral students Antonia Alvarez and Jonah DeChants have received Graduate Studies for Inclusive Engagement Fellowships to support their continued progress in GSSW’s PhD program. Alvarez also received a fellowship from the Council on Social Work Education Minority Fellowship Program.

Doctoral student Jon Phillips, a research assistant with GSSW’s Butler Institute for Families, co-authored a report entitled “Mi Casa Resource Center Integrated Services Evaluation (First Annual Report).” Mi Casa, which seeks to advance the economic success of Latino and working families in the Denver metropolitan area, is among Colorado’s oldest and largest Latino-serving nonprofit organizations.

Doctoral student Heather Kennedy co-presented a workshop entitled “Youth Engagement in Social Action” for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Colorado in Denver last September.

Doctoral candidates Shanna Kattari, Darren Whitfield and Lisa Langenderfer-Magruder received the first annual Council on Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Diversity award from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) for their paper entitled “Racial and Ethnic Differences in Experiences of Discrimination in Accessing Health Services Among Transgender People in the United States.” The award, presented at the CSWE Annual Program Meeting in Denver on Oct. 17, honors “a research-based scholarly paper that contributes to new activities and programs related to historically and emerging underrepresented racial, ethnic and cultural groups in social work education.” Associate Professor Eugene Walls, GSSW’s associate dean for doctoral education, also co-authored the paper, which was published in the International Journal of Transgenderism.

A poster presented by doctoral candidate Stephanie Begun at the North American Forum on Family Planning in November received the Top 17 Highest-Scoring Poster Abstract Award by the forum research committee. The poster was entitled “A Mixed Methods Examination of Family Planning and Social Work Implications for Research, Education, and the Role of Personal Beliefs.”

The University of Denver’s liaison to the American Public Health Association (APHA), Begun has been named to the APHA Abortion Task Force. She received a 2013 APHA Leadership Challenge Scholarship, as well as an award for the best student poster in the abortion category at the APHA annual meeting held in Chicago in November. Also in November, Begun co-presented a paper, “Cultivating Community in Online Classes,” at the University’s Office of Teaching and Learning Faculty Showcase. Her co-presenter was Ian McQueen, assistant professor of the practice of social work and director of GSSW’s new online MSW program.

Regun’s paper “The Paradox of Homeless Youth Pregnancy: A Review of Challenges and Opportunities,” originally published in Social Work in Health Care, was featured on the Family & Youth Services Bureau/National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth website, where it was among the five most-read articles for 2015.

Regun has received a 2016 – 17 Dissertation Fellowship from DU’s Office of Graduate Studies.

Doctoral candidate Samantha Brown received a doctoral dissertation grant from the Fawcett-Beck Fund for Research and Experimentation to support her dissertation, “A Mindfulness-Based Intervention to Improve Family Functioning among Child-Welfare-Involved Families with Substance Use.”

Brown also received the 2016 Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) Doctoral Fellows Award for her dissertation. The award, presented on Jan. 18 at the SSWR Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., included an honorarium check to help defray expenses related to data collection and preparation, data analysis, administrative costs and preparation of the final dissertation document. In the award notification letter, SSWR president Eddie Uehara told Brown that SSWR “recognizes the significance of the problem addressed in your research, the rigor of the analysis and its contribution to knowledge in social work and social welfare.”

GSSW congratulates the following doctoral candidates on their recent academic and research appointments:

Samantha Brown has accepted a position as a post-doctoral scholar with the Stress, Early Experience and Development Research Center, a collaboration among National Jewish Medical Center, the University of Colorado and the University of Denver.

Stephanie Lechuga Peña has accepted a position as assistant professor at Arizona State University.

Darren Whitfield has accepted a position as assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh.
1: Nanae Itô (left) watches as Sharon Zanti samples her chili at the Third Annual Chili Cook-Off, held on January 4 and sponsored by GSSW’s Graduate Student Association.

2: Cook-off participants included (L-R) Jessica Trumbull, Nanae Itô, James Hausman, Kaytlin Arteburn, Melanie Davis and Annie Wharton. Hausman won the competition and was awarded an HD Amazon Fire tablet.

3: It has become an annual fall tradition for Clinical Professor Philip Tedeschi to lead a group of MSW students on a climb up a Colorado “fourteener,” one of 58 mountain peaks in the state that exceeds 14,000 feet. “This was a ‘welcome to GSSW’ event on a perfect Colorado day,” says Tedeschi, who used the climb up Mount Bierstadt to teach the students about mountain and high altitude travel safety. Tedeschi is executive director of GSSW’s Institute for Human-Animal Connection.

4-5: GSSW students, faculty, staff and alumni contributed nearly 200 hours of voluntary service during the school’s annual Community Service Day on Sep. 11, 2015. Groups of volunteers dug trenches at Barking CAAT Ranch to allow therapy horses to thrive, sorted donations for recently resettled refugee families at the African Community Center (pictured here) and helped Denver Parks and Recreation with park maintenance. GSSW’s first Community Service Day was held as part of the school’s 80th anniversary celebration in 2010.

6-7: The University of Denver’s Latino Graduate Association sponsored a Dia De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) event last October. In 1977, Welch helped to found GSSW’s Institute of Gerontology and helped to write its articles of incorporation and bylaws, and provided parliamentarian support. He also served as a member of Denver’s Metropolitan Council for Community Services, now the planning division of Mile High United Way.

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GSSW’s Center for Effective Interventions (CEI) added a new Multisystemic Therapy (MST) expert to its team in February. Dana Garofalini (pictured) will be assisting teams in New Mexico, Arizona and Texas in delivering MST and meeting the formidable challenge of implementing the model with fidelity. Garofalini has more than a decade of experience in MST and other home-based therapy models, most recently as an MST supervisor in Kingston, New York, where her teams have won international awards for their performance. She has an MSE in counseling psychology from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

“Dana is the lynchpin in the system, managing ‘rift’ from the model in a supportive, strengths-based manner,” says CEI Program Director David Bernstein. “She is a passionate advocate for MST and evidence-based models of practice.”

CEI also has expanded its operation in New Mexico, adding teams in greater Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Las Cruces. This growth follows a period of stabilization after what Bernstein calls “an unprecedented reduction in mental health services in New Mexico.”

Bernstein described New Mexico’s statewide MST implementation in his presentation at the “Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development” conference held on April 11 in Denver. The biennial conference, designed for people seeking to positively impact human services reform by implementing well-researched interventions such as MST, is the premier gathering of evidence-seeking reformers. “We are seeing solid implementation in a number of sites,” Bernstein said. “The model is yielding positive outcomes.”

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On April 5, CEI partnered with GSSW and the Colorado Implementation Collaborative to sponsor “Using Implementation Science to Build Capacity” at Craig Hall. Presenters included Allison Metz, PhD, director of the National Implementation Research Network at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Jennifer Schroeder, PhD, president of The Implementation Group, a research, evaluation, consultation and technical assistance firm in Boulder County, Colorado. Schroeder also serves as vice president of the Global Implementation Initiative, a nonprofit organization that advances implementation science, practice and policy.

The workshop translated implementation science into concrete strategies and tools for practitioners, consultants, technical assistance providers and intermediary organizations seeking to improve outcomes through the use of research evidence. Referencing the National Implementation Research Network’s 2005 monograph, “Active Implementation Frameworks,” the two speakers used case studies to demonstrate specific implementation support strategies for developing clear descriptions of effective approaches, promoting engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders, collecting and using data, building the capacity of local implementation teams and ensuring that stage-based approaches are used and core implementation components are installed and aligned.

ENGAGING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS, ONE ROBOT AT A TIME

In today’s tech-savvy world, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are increasingly important aspects of the middle school curriculum. Now GSSW’s Bridge Project has implemented a robotics program that not only makes STEM more fun, but also gives participants a head start in preparing for a rapidly expanding career field.

Over the last two years, students have been learning motor control, electric circuits and basic programming skills through EV3 Robotics kits that include Lego components. Throughout the eight-week program, participants use the kits to program, build and command their own robots. Activities include studying and replicating robots used in the real world, like the sensory bots that measure and detect gas levels that are safe for human exposure.

The Bridge robotics program was developed with financial support from the Binning Family Foundation. Colorado School of Mines Professor Emeritus Robert Knecht helped develop the curriculum. He also teaches and facilitates robot-building sessions with the Bridge students each week.

Robotics is proving to be a program favorite among the students. There are noticeable increases in attendance and participation at Bridge since the addition of the program to the middle school STEM curriculum.

“I like to build things, and robotics helps you learn how to build stuff,” says Ali, a 7th grade participant. Ali is looking forward to programming his robot so that it can perform specific tasks and complete challenges. He knows that learning robotics now will help build better skills and perhaps lead to some job options in the future.

The robotics program gives students an experience that fosters a love for technology and engineering, opening the door to a wide variety of career possibilities in a STEM field.

GSSW congratulates the Bridge Project on being named Nonprofit of the Month in February by The Denver Post, Denver-based philanthropic strategist for businesses, families and foundations.

Support the Bridge Project by Becoming a G.E.M. Club Member!

The Bridge Project’s G.E.M. (Give Every Month) Club is a great way for you to invest in the Bridge Project’s vision — that all youth in Denver’s public housing neighborhoods choose to be self-sufficient and contributing members of our community. Monthly giving is convenient and affordable, and it offers sustained support for the Bridge Project’s ongoing programs.

FOR EXAMPLE:

$25/month (300/year) provides 12 books for Bridge’s G.R.B Readers Program. Our kindergarten – 3rd grade students will read these books at Bridge with their volunteer tutors and then take the books home to keep.

$525/month (300/year) provides a new classroom for the Bridge Project computer lab. Chromebooks are used for literacy, STEM and positive youth development programs for all age groups.

Join the G.E.M. Club today at www.denverbridgeproject.org/donate.
Dear Alumni and Friends:

It is my great privilege to join the GSSW team and serve as your Director of Development. Building opportunities in higher education through fundraising has been a passion of mine for many years. It is wonderful to share this passion with a community that is by nature generous, service-minded and welcoming. I have been with the University of Denver since 2010 and have seen amazing advancements in the quality of our research, the vibrancy of our student experience and the excellence of our leadership, especially since welcoming Rebecca Chopp as our 18th chancellor.

Last year, Chancellor Chopp led our community in a strategic planning process that resulted in a strong vision for the University’s future: DU IMPACT 2025 (available online at http://imagine.du.edu). This vision builds on DU’s strengths, our longstanding relationship with Denver, and our influence in the Rocky Mountain West to make an even greater impact in society. One area we are committing to is a University-wide initiative in social policy research that will serve as a multidisciplinary hub for addressing pressing social issues both locally and globally. These are exciting times for GSSW and the University, and I look forward to sharing this journey with you.

I hope to connect with many of you at upcoming events, hear your GSSW story, and thank you personally for your continued involvement and support of our school. If you have any thoughts, comments, or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you!

Warmest regards,

Ashley Haliko
Director of Development
Ashley.Haliko@du.edu

For a complete list of giving opportunities, please visit www.du.edu/ways-to-give and click on “Support GSSW.”

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

by Kathryn Mayer

For Kevin Bert (MSW ’98), the road to social work has always been a deeply personal one.

His interest in mental health and social work began in the early 1990s when he was a high school athletics coach and one of his athletes attempted suicide.

“She survived the suicide attempt, and I realized that if I planned to keep coaching I had to have more knowledge about those concerns,” he explains. After getting a second undergraduate degree in psychology, Bert enrolled in GSSW to earn a master’s degree in social work. He has spent the last 17 years of Addiction Research and Treatment Services, affiliated with the CU Department of Psychiatry and Addiction Medicine. During that time, he started a group private practice with colleagues in 2009 to help clients with trauma-related concerns.

Bert also continued his relationship with GSSW, serving as a field instructor and being awarded the 2014 –15 GSSW Award for Excellence in Field Instruction.

In 2015 it was another personal tragedy — his father’s unexpected death and his mother’s cognitive decline — that drove him to give back to the school.

“Working through my father’s estate planning with my mother afforded me a chance to talk about things that have been pressing for many years to raise funds to endow a clinical chair. His longstanding commitment to GSSW earned Edwards the Dean’s Award in 2011. She was a DU Master Scholar in 2009.

Social work is vital to society, Edwards explains, adding that it is woven into “the fabric of our modern world.” She also sees its importance in the University’s new strategic plan, DU IMPACT 2025. She says she was struck by a talk Chancellor Chopp gave about the plan, mentioning that when the campus committee questioned prospective employers about what they were looking for in potential employees, emotional intelligence and the ability to work in a team were the top answers.

“My first thought was, ‘That’s social work! That’s what we know how to do.’

by Kathleen Knecht

by Kathryn Mayer

Jana Edwards, MSW ’78, LCSW, knows firsthand how social work can change and improve lives. It’s the reason she not only works in the field but offers all the support she can to the future professionals studying at GSSW.

Edwards is a longtime volunteer at, advocate for and donor to the program, which she has seen grow over the years just as the profession has. “As president of the Colorado Society for Clinical Social Work, a clinician in private practice and an alumna, I have felt responsible for working to advocate for and improve the preparation of clinical social workers at GSSW,” Edwards explains. “Our efforts have yielded positive results.”

Edwards was part of GSSW’s first alumni council 12 years ago, she also was instrumental in beginning the GSSW Board of Visitors and has been working for many years to raise funds to endow a clinical chair. Her longstanding commitment to GSSW earned Edwards the Dean’s Award in 2011. She was a DU Master Scholar in 2009.

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by Kathleen Knecht

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Gary Younits, Chair
Board of Visitors

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

FROM THE BOARD OF VISITORS CHAIR

by Kathleen Knecht

Margaret Beath, MSW, LCSW
Youolon Savage, MSW
Edwina “Eddie” Uhrman, PhD, MSW
Chen Villarreal, MSW
Phil Wynn, MD
Alice Wynne

Hope Errico Wisneski, MSW (GSSW Alumni Association President)
Dear Fellow Graduates:

There is much to celebrate at GSSW these days. First we honor the many contributions of Dean James Herbert Williams as he steps down from that position this June. It has been a true honor to work alongside Dean Williams, and I credit his leadership for much of GSSW’s current momentum and our top 20 U.S. News ranking. I look forward to continuing our positive working relationship when he returns to the GSSW faculty in the 2017 – 18 academic year.

We also eagerly anticipate the arrival of GSSW’s new dean, Amanda Moore McBride, who will join the school on July 1. Dr. McBride brings with her extensive experience in service learning and civic engagement, along with a creative and far-reaching vision for the future of GSSW.

This spring, GSSW faculty, staff and alumni joined with our professional and academic colleagues around the state in celebrating our profession at the annual Colorado Social Work Month event. Please join me in congratulating the recipients of GSSW’s three alumni awards, as well as the other award recipients who have GSSW affiliations.

Finally, I’d like to celebrate the growing sense of community among our alumni. With the expansion of professional development offerings — through both GSSW and DU’s Center for Professional Development — along with an array of social events designed for alumni, our community continues to strengthen and grow.

Sincerely,

Hope Errico Wienski, MSW ’00 Alumni Association President

GSSW congratulates these three notable graduates who received the 2015 Alumni Awards at the Colorado Social Work Month Celebration and Award Ceremony held in Denver on March 2, 2016.

Robert L. Hawkins Social Work Achievement Award

This award is presented to an alumnus/alumna who has demonstrated professional achievement by being named executive director, manager, chairperson of the board, etc., of a social work agency or organization, or by reaching a level of prominence in education, practice or politics, etc., by receiving national recognition in the field of social work. This award is named in honor of Robert L. Hawkins, MSW ’67, who rose through the ranks at Colorado Psychiatric Institute in Pueblo, eventually becoming the first social worker appointed as its superintendent. Under Hawkins’ leadership, the Institute became a model psychiatric treatment facility.

Sister Mary Alice Murphy, MSW ’71, exemplifies lifetime achievement in social work. Her career with Denver Catholic Community Services/ Catholic Charities began while Murphy was completing her MSW and continued until 1983. She started a number of programs, including Parish Social Ministry, an effort to engage Catholic parishes in promoting social justice and community outreach. The successful program led to increased community response on issues such as hunger and outreach to people with mental illness. Murphy also helped initiate outreach teams that combined clinical and community social work with community organizing to provide an extensive network of community services throughout the Denver metropolitan area.

From 1983 to 1988, Murphy served as executive director of Catholic Community Services Northern, which served Larimer and Weld counties from offices in Fort Collins, Greeley and Loveland. She made a significant difference in these communities, serving the needs of those most disadvantaged by poverty. Bringing together many community members, Murphy oversaw the building of a homeless shelter in 1989 called the Mission. She also helped to create CARE housing to provide low-income and affordable housing in northern Colorado. She later facilitated a collaborative effort by a variety of community partners that created the Sister Mary Alice Murphy Centers for Hope, a one-step center in Fort Collins for homeless and low-income families.

During her career, Murphy supervised numerous MSW student internships. Although she’s now retired, she continues to support the many organizations she helped build that assist those in need.

GSSW Service Award

This award is presented to an alumnus/alumna who has contributed to or served the Graduate School of Social Work in a noteworthy and significant fashion, through personal effort and/or financial contribution.

Nadine Bridges, MSW ’10, began her service to GSSW even before she graduated, when she was elected as Graduate Student Association president. Her alumni award nomination calls her “the kind of alumna that every school of social work hopes for. She is an active and inspiring agent of change in the community . . . But beyond her employment and volunteer work, Nadine has shown tremendous leadership, vision and investment in the education of future social workers through her involvement with GSSW. She is adored by students in the classroom, admired by staff and faculty for her creative approaches to promoting social justice, and valued by GSSW leaders for her involvement in committees and advisory boards.”

Bridges has been a GSSW adjunct professor since 2012, teaching courses on social justice, multicultural social work practice, and power, privilege and oppression. She also teaches continuing professional development courses for the school. Bridges is a member of the Advisory Council on Racial Diversity (ACORD), recently served on the dean search committee and is involved with countless student events and activities.

Since September 2014 Bridges has served as director of youth services for Rainbow Alley, a Denver nonprofit that provides programming for LGBTQ youth, their families and allies. Prior to that she held a number of positions with Denver Urban Scholars, a nonprofit organization that helps students in need graduate from high school and enter higher education with a meaningful life plan for success.

Community Service Award

This award is presented to an alumnus/alumna who has demonstrated significant and continuous volunteer involvement in major community activities and/or charitable causes, above and beyond his/her employed position.

Najm Industry President Nadia Fatima-Mandic (left) presents the 2016 Social Worker of the Year Award to Dawn Matera Bassett.

Felicidad X. Fraser, MSW ’10, LCSW, has a private practice, serves as executive director of the North Metro Family Advocacy Center and provides outpatient therapy at the Community Reach Center. Despite her busy professional career and personal challenges, she gives freely of her time and talents as a community volunteer.

Through the nonprofit organization Give an Hour, Fraser provides counseling at no charge for military veterans and families affected by post-9/11 conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Independently, she collects donations of furniture, clothing, diapers and other items and gives them to families in need. She cooks meals for the homeless for Thanksgiving, and she connects families with “turkey angels,” who provide them with baskets of food and other items. At Christmas she distributes home-cooked meals to homeless people in Denver’s Civic Center Park, and she sees to it that needy families are “adopted” by other volunteers who make sure they are cared for during the holidays. Fraser also provides those in need with referrals to community services, coaches them to advocate for themselves and helps them navigate complex systems and procedures.

After seven years in law enforcement and six years working with a public preschool program, Fraser was in her 40s and a single mother of two when she entered GSSW’s MSW program. “Most people don’t know that I am rowing in the same boat they are — struggling and sometimes wondering why,” she told one of the people who nominated her for this award. “The difference between me and the people I help is that I can see the light at the end of my tunnel. My calling is to help others find their light, so they can see it as well.”

GSSW also congratulates Dawn Matera Bassett, MSW, LCSW, PhD ‘12, recipient of the 2016 Social Worker of the Year Award from the Colorado Chapter of NASW, and GSSW Adjunct Professor Susan Miller, LCSW, who received the 2016 Social Work Advocate Award from the Colorado Society for Clinical Social Work (CSCSW). Both awards were presented at the Colorado Social Work Month event.

Stay up-to-date on alumni events and continuing professional development by joining our “GSSW & Friends Ressource Page” on Facebook. You also can connect with us on LinkedIn by searching for “DU’s Graduate School of Social Work Alumni Group.” Lastly, please be sure to subscribe to GSSW’s Weekly Events Email for regular updates; you’ll find the link on GSSW’s homepage at www.du.edu/socialwork.

Sister Mary Alice Murphy, MSW ’10 Alumni Award recipients (left) Sister Mary Alice Murphy, Nadine Bridges and Felicidad Fraser.

Dean James Herbert Williams, congratulates 2015 Alumni Award recipients (left) Sister Mary Alice Murphy, Nadine Bridges and Felicidad Fraser.
Nimmanheminda at Denver’s Contemplative Psychotherapy and Buddhist Psychology adjunct faculty member in Naropa University’s Masters of Diversity, stress management, anxiety and depression. I also specialize in working with adults who are ‘going through a transition or change the world. But I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

Christopher Knoepke (PhD ’15) has accepted a Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the Adult and Child Center for Health Outcomes Research and Delivery Service group at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

Lara (Gautsche) Shoemaker (MSW ’11), LSW-S, lives in West Liberty, OH. She’s the director of clinical services at Adriel, an agency that offers foster care and adoption services, as well as residential services for youth with severe emotional and behavioral issues.

My appreciation for the Thai people, their customs and way of life never waned, but I eventually decided to return to the United States. I moved from Bangkok to Chiang Mai—a small, relatively cosmopolitan college city that reminded me of Boulder, CO. My appreciation for the Thai people, their customs and way of life never waned, but I eventually decided to return to the U.S.

After about a year adjusting to life in Boulder, I became a student in the Master of Divinity program at the Iliff School of Theology and, a year later, applied to GSSW. I helped finance my graduate studies by driving a taxi, applying the competitive driving skills I had acquired in Thailand. Being a taxi driver appealed to my taste for independence, and I enjoyed the far-ranging types of conversations I could have with customers.

I later earned a PhD from the International University of Graduate Studies in conjunction with the Colorado Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies, and I became a Nationally Certified Psychoanalyst.

“I now have been a practicing psychotherapist for more than 30 years, working with adults and adolescents, with a special focus on female and male survivors of sexual abuse, substance abuse and other addictions, cultural and sexual diversity, stress management, anxiety and depression. I also specialize in working with adults who are going through a transition or change the world. But I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

In addition to participating in her MSW, Card earned her Master of Divinity degree from Western Theological Seminary in 2015. In mid-January, Kevin Douglas (MSW ’15) joined the Fowler Police Department in Fowler, CO. Originally from Lakewood, Douglas served in the U.S. Coast Guard and earned a BSW at Metropolitan State University of Denver before entering GSSW as an advanced standing student. His MSW concentration was mental health. Following graduation, Douglas attended the Pueblo Police Academy at Pueblo Community College. He graduated in December and obtained his Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training Board certification.

“I enjoy getting involved and making a difference in the community,” says Douglas. “In the words of Mother Teresa, ‘I alone cannot change the world. But I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.’”

Katie Susman (MSW ’11), MA, is program manager for the international non-governmental organization (NGO), ChildFund International, in Honduras. The NGO’s mission is to help deprived, excluded and vulnerable children living in poverty develop the capacity to become young adults, parents and leaders who bring lasting and positive change to their communities. Additionally, ChildFund also seeks to promote societies whose individuals and institutions participate in valuing, protecting and advancing the worth and rights of children. As program manager, Susman directly manages a team of 10 people with an overall programs team of 90 people. She oversees three life-stage programs that focus on infants, children and youth programming in the areas of education, maternal and infant health, civic engagement, gender, human rights, sexual reproductive health, food security, income generation, violence prevention and child protection. Susman also oversees teams that administer programs funded by grants from OXFAM, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the government of Honduras, United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and other external donors. Susman’s other responsibilities include technical design advising in child protection and rights, program development, relationship-building with donors, grant development, and coordination with other countries and with the organization’s regional and international offices.

A dual degree graduate who earned her MA in international studies along with her MSW, Susman previously served as research and evaluation program lead for Global Brigades, another international NGO based in Honduras.

Sylvia D. Alrich (MSW ‘78) of Chattanooga, TN, died on Oct. 4, 2015. She was 64.

Ruth P. Arent Anderson (MSW ’53), MA, of Corvallis, OR, died on Feb. 14, 2016, at the age of 93. A nationally renowned child psychologist and psychiatric social worker, author, speaker and educator, Anderson focused her distinguished international career on helping children who had survived trauma. She wrote numerous articles and books on the subject, and she continued publishing into her 90s. She created a series of American Humane Society posters to help adults recognize signs of trauma in children, and she published a book of poetry that spoke directly to young trauma victims, helping them, for example, understand the sometimes bewildering behavior of traumatized adults.

In 1942 Anderson won two Olympic silver medals and a bronze medal in swimming. She later became a civil rights activist and community organizer in Denver, served as president of the Colorado League of Women Voters and volunteered in Latvia, Lithuania and several Russia orphans when she was well into her 70s. Anderson was among 80 notable alumni profiled in the spring 2011 issue of GSSW Magazine, in conjunction with the school’s 80th anniversary celebration.

Anderson’s survivors include three daughters, a son and six grandchildren. Memorial donations may be made to the Southern Poverty Law Center, Planned Parenthood or the Samaritan Evergreen Hospice in Albany, Oregon.

Marilyn J. Ashboro (MSW ’73) of Denver, CO, died on Oct. 9, 2015. She was 73.
Long is survived by her son, her daughter, two grandchildren, a great-grandchild and a niece. Memorial gifts may be made to the Elaine Long Endowed Scholarship Fund, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Denver, P.O. Box 910385, Denver, CO, 80291-0385.

Jeffrey B. Lowe (MSW ’95) of Denver, CO, died on Feb. 7, 2016, at the age of 57. He was a network telehealth manager for the Veterans Administration. Preceded in death by his parents, two brothers and a sister, Lowe is survived by his partner, two daughters, a son, two sisters and numerous nieces and nephews. Memorial donations may be made to your local Special Olympics chapter.

Gabriel Walter Maestas (MSW ’77) died at his home in Las Animas, CO, on Oct. 25, 2017. He was 70. Maestas served with the U. S. Army in the Vietnam War, receiving the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal and the Vietnam Campaign Medal. After earning his MSW he served for several years in Children’s Protective Services in Denver before moving to Las Animas in 1980. His 25-year social work career included positions with Veterans Administration hospitals in Fort Lyon and Puebla. Maestas is survived by his mother, two brothers, two sisters, his wife, a son, two grandsons and many nieces and nephews.

Former GSSW faculty member Jose A. Sisneros (PhD ’80) died on Jan. 18, 2016, at the age of 66. Prior to earning his PhD and entering academics, he worked in community mental health for 24 years in various positions, including clinical director at Services de La Raza in northeast Denver.

Sisneros joined GSSW as an assistant professor shortly after receiving his PhD. In response to the nation's rapidly increasing need for bilingual social work practitioners, Sisneros developed the Social Work with Latino/Latinas Certificate program for GSSW students in 2002. Emphasizing both linguistic and cultural competency, the certificate was featured in a 2004 issue of New Social Worker magazine as one of 10 most innovative social work programs in the country. One hundred and eleven GSSW graduates have earned the Latino Certificate to date, and 21 MSW students are expected to receive the certificate when they graduate in June.

Sisneros left DU in 2006 to join the faculty at New Mexico Highlands University in Albuquerque. In 2008 he was lead author of a textbook, Critical Multicultural Social Work, that today is used by 19 university social work programs. Sisneros retired as an associate professor in 2014. Survivors include two sons and two grandchildren.

Former GSSW adjunct professor Theodore (Ted) R. Zerwin (MSW ’71) died on Feb. 8, 2016, at the age of 80. A clinical associate professor and associate professor of the practice of nonprofit management at the Korbel School of International Studies since 2006, Zerwin taught as an adjunct at both GSSW and Korbel for 10 years prior to his academic appointment. Recent GSSW students also enrolled in his nonprofit management and fundraising courses at Korbel after similar courses were no longer part of the GSSW curriculum.

"Over the years, Ted contributed greatly to the Josef Korbel School and the many lives he touched and helped to shape," said Korbel’s Dean Christopher Hill in a statement to the University community. "His classes were sought after by students, and his kind demeanor admired by those who came into contact with him. We are fortunate to have known this quiet gentleman who touched many of our lives in such a positive way over the years."

In addition to his academic career, Zerwin operated a consulting firm that advised nonprofit organizations on executive search, executive mentoring, board development, fundraising, staff organization and financial management. He served as president and CEO of the Arthritis Foundation’s Rocky Mountain Chapter from 1976 to 2001, and he held prior positions in Denver with Volunteers of America and Mile High United Way. In 2009 he authored the book Managing and Raising Money That is Not Your Own: Financial Management and Fundraising in Non-Profit Organizations.

Zerwin is survived by his wife, a son, a daughter and three grandchildren. Memorial donations may be made to...
Conservation and concerns about species extinction are well beyond most children's comprehension. But even a very young child can identify with a little panda who's hungry for breakfast, scared of loud noises or eager to make new friends. Nurturing that sense of empathy is the idea behind two educational books authored by Research Associate Professor Sarah Bexell.

Written in both English and Chinese, the books seek to educate children about the need to protect the natural habitats of pandas and other endangered animals in the People's Republic of China. Bexell, who conducts research through GSSW's Institute for Human-Animal Connection, also serves as Director of Conservation Education at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding in Sichuan Province.

“In this book you will learn about . . . pressures that threaten our precious pandas and how we all can help ensure a future for giant pandas by removing these threats,” Bexell tells young readers in the introduction to Our Bamboo Forest. With simple words and colorful illustrations, the book describes the long journey a baby panda and his mother must make to find bamboo shoots — once a plentiful food source that's now disappearing thanks to humans whose noisy farming and mining equipment terrifies the little cub.

Bexell's second children's book, Good Day Forest Friends, introduces readers to a family of red pandas — less well-known than their black-and-white cousins, but equally at risk of extinction — as are the other creatures the family meets during a walk through the woods.

"Only humans can mend the problems we have created," Bexell writes to children she hopes will become lifelong advocates for all of Planet Earth's inhabitants.