Bringing SOCIAL WORK SKILLS to the Educational Process

THE KEY TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
Greetings, Alumni and Friends,

Once again I am happy to welcome you to the fall issue of Bridges.

Fall means back to school for students of all ages and seems a fitting season to share the School of Social Work’s vision for the field of social work and the role it can play in the educational arena. This issue of Bridges is dedicated to addressing what we refer to as the social determinants of educational outcomes. It is well documented that many of our urban schools are experiencing poor performance outcomes. Attendance is low, dropout rates are high, and graduation rates for many schools are below 50 percent. For many years now, our school has played an important role in school social work via its Home and School Visitor Program. We are pleased that the new director of this program, Deborah Robinson, is bringing a new passion and commitment to such an important part of our mission. Helping to carry out that mission are alumni like Annette Giovanazzi (BASW ’82, MSW ’84; see page 13) who are working diligently as school social workers.

Clearly, social problems are at the heart of much of what is thwarting positive educational outcomes of youths in grades K–12. Hence, I believe that social workers occupy a unique position to best address many educational difficulties currently being experienced by urban youths. Our school recently launched a major initiative to influence the social factors that have an impact on youths’ educational success. As part of this initiative, we have begun to work closely with Pitt’s School of Education in the effort to address the myriad of problems experienced by students in urban schools. Also helping us to address these challenges is James Huguley, a PhD graduate of the Harvard University Graduate School of Education who is serving as a postdoctoral fellow in the Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP). He specializes in understanding how school and social contexts contribute to racial achievement disparities in educational outcomes. This past summer, the Heinz Endowments supported, and CRSP hosted, a summit that brought together educators from across the region. Presentations and shared research from this event are just some of the many resources that are now available on the center’s one-of-a-kind searchable online directory. We are thrilled to now offer all of the center’s publications, lectures, and research in one place, and we hope that this work will be used by educators and researchers from across the country.

In fact, this year, the center was able to share its work with a large audience when it hosted the Race, Ethnicity, and Poverty Summit—the first of its kind. We met some wonderful people, learned about research being done throughout the United States, and were able to share the innovative work we are doing here at Pitt. Plans are already under way for a new summit next year, and we look forward to welcoming even more centers.

And yet, as we meet new friends, we sadly say good-bye to others. Gary Koeseke, one of our most dedicated and well-loved faculty members, retired this year. We are lucky that Koeseke will remain as editor in chief of the journal Race and Social Problems, but he will be missed by his students and friends here in the school.

However, the school continues to grow, and this has been an especially exciting year as we have made some major changes in administration, promoted faculty members, and added to our faculty and staff. You can read about these developments on pages 4 and 5.

As always, you are invited to drop by the school for a visit whenever possible, and we look forward to seeing you at the school and CRSP speaker series. I also encourage you to visit the new CRSP Race Research Online Directory at www.crsp.pitt.edu and browse through 10 years of excellent research, videos, and publications.

Larry E. Davis
Dean
Donald M. Henderson Professor
NEW ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

VALURE CARR COPELAND, who has served as chair of the doctoral program since 2007, has been appointed associate dean for academic affairs. Copeland says, “The mission of social justice and equality are the most important values of our profession. My capacity as a social work educator is being able to move out of myself and be with others in a way that is not about possession and control but to be with them where they are for partnership and collaboration.”

RACHEL FUSCO has been appointed chair of the direct practice concentration. Fusco says, “I am excited to be the newly appointed chair of direct practice, the largest concentration in the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. Our direct practice concentration provides students with a strong foundation in generalist practice and prepares them to help clients address their needs and realize their full potential. I focused on direct practice in my own MSW degree program, and it prepared me well for clinical work with a range of populations across settings. As an academic, I have used my own practice experience to guide both my teaching and my research.”

CHRISTINA NEWHILL has been appointed director of the doctoral program after serving as chair of the direct practice concentration for the last seven years. Newhill says, “I am very excited to begin my appointment as the new PhD program director for our school. Our doctoral program has a legacy of a deep commitment to education and scholarship, and our graduates have made important scholarly contributions to the social work profession across the education, research, and leadership realms. I look forward to working with our students and faculty to develop some exciting new initiatives to strengthen our program even further over the coming year.”

NEW STAFF

SUMMER KIRVEN is a research assistant working with Shaun Eack, assistant professor, on an autism and schizophrenia project. SARAH SCHREIBER is a research assistant working with Eack on an autism and schizophrenia project.

NEW FACULTY and NEW POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

GERALD COCHRAN has been appointed an assistant professor. JAMES P. HUGULEY is a new postdoctoral fellow at the Center on Race and Social Problems.

BOARD OF VISITORS MEETING

The Board of Visitors meeting, which included a dinner and a business meeting, was held May 2, 2013. Attendees are pictured above.

PERRY-THOMPSON COCHAIRS MLK REMEMBRANCE PROGRAM

Laura Perry-Thompson, Master of Social Work program coordinator at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, cochaired the celebration for the Johnstown branch of the NAACP 50th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Remembrance Program. Perry-Thompson has been active in attracting more youths to the NAACP by establishing a youth council and instituting a youth membership drive.

“it’s important to be involved with the program to carry on the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., especially in terms of making the youths aware of his legacy,” says Perry-Thompson. “His focus was on equal opportunities for everyone and peace.”

NEW STAFF

SUMMER KIRVEN

SARAH SCHREIBER

NEW FACULTY and NEW POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

GERALD COCHRAN

JAMES P. HUGULEY

FACULTY PROMOTIONS

RACHEL FUSCO

has been promoted to the rank of associate professor with tenure.

SARA GOODKIND

has been promoted to the rank of associate professor with tenure.

JOHN WALLACE JR.

has been promoted to the rank of full professor.

CENTER ON RACE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS SPEAKER SERIES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2013

“A Glass Half Full? Discrimination against Minority Homeowners”

MARGERY AUSTIN TURNER, Senior Vice President for Program Planning and Management, Urban Institute

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2013

“Race and Culture in the Family: Their Impact on Youth Outcomes of Asian American Adolescents”

SHAUN M. EACK, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, New York University

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2013

“A Multigenerational Perspective on Neighborhoods and Racial Inequality”

PATRICK T. SHARKEY, Associate Professor of Sociology, New York University

DATE TBD

“Stratification Economics: Implications for Understanding Inequality”

WILLIAM A. DARITY JR., Arts & Sciences Professor of Public Policy and African and African American Studies; Professor of Economics; Chair, Department of African and African American Studies; and Codirector, Research Network on Racial and Ethnic Inequality, Duke University

2013–14 SPEAKER SERIES

All lectures are from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the School of Social Work Conference Center, 207 Cathedral of Learning. Lunch will be provided; registration is not required. For more information, please visit www.socialwork.pitt.edu or call 412-624-6304.
The Center on Race and Social Problems launches new Race Research Online Directory

The University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work’s Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP) is excited to announce the launch of its new one-of-a-kind Race Research Online Directory. The CRSP Web site, www.crsppitt.edu, has always been a great source for race-related research and other center activities, but with its new searchable database, you can connect instantly to 10 years’ worth of videos, publications, and other center information—a treasure trove of data helpful for research, grant preparation, and teaching. It is truly a unique repository for race-related information from top researchers, scholars, educators, practitioners, and policymakers.

Users can access information on CRSP’s seven areas of focus: education; economics; criminal justice; race relations; health; mental health; and families, youth, and the elderly.

Among the resources included in the directory are more than 100 videos of lectures from the speaker series, summer institutes, and Race in America conference; pilot studies and other research projects at the center; hundreds of publications, including the journal Race and Social Problems; educational resources, such as graduate course listings and award-winning student papers; and a listing of all center activities.

Clicking on any of the seven topic areas or any speaker or author name will direct users to all related information. The site will be continually updated.

“We are thrilled to offer this exceptional resource,” says Larry E. Davis, director of the center and dean of the School of Social Work. “For more than 10 years, we have been gathering work from the country’s top scholars, but our goal has always been to make it available to the widest possible audience. It is our hope that the directory will be used to share some of the very best race-related research being done today and to make a difference in policy, research, and education around the globe.”

The new directory contains race-related information and resources such as:

- More than 100 videos of lectures from the speaker series, summer institutes, and Race in America conference
- Pilot studies and other research projects at the center
- Hundreds of publications, including the journal Race and Social Problems
- Educational resources, such as graduate course listings and award-winning student papers
- A listing of all center activities

In 1974, Koeske came to the school with a degree not in social work but in psychology from Northwestern University. Back then, Koeske says, “social work was not presumed to have as sophisticated a level of research as our allied disciplines.” Koeske took it upon himself to change that.

“The foundation of the science of social work for me started with Gary,” reminiscences Koeske’s former student Ram Cnaan (PhD ’80), associate dean for research, professor, chair of the doctoral program in social welfare, and director of the Program for Religion and Social Policy Research at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice. “His philosophy was that social work researchers should know about research as much as or more than researchers from other social sciences. He set new bars.”

Koeske’s work on quantitative methods in social work and social worker burnout brought an entirely new perspective to the field. “For my entire academic life,” Koeske says, “what has unified my work has been my work with moderator variables in social work and social research. It still fascinates me.”

Koeske, who coteaches Research Methods II for many years with Professor Emeritus Esther Sales, strove to move the field forward as well as to impress upon his students how critical good analysis is to their work.

Edward Sitz, an emeritus professor at Pitt’s School of Social Work, recalls that several years ago, a few faculty members decided that they could use a research methodology refresher and took Koeske’s class. “We were blown away,” says Sitz, “by the clarity Gary could bring to even the most complicated concepts.”

Koeske’s teaching in the field of multivariate statistical analysis revolutionized the subject at the school. He taught more than 20 research methodology and statistics courses in the Master of Social Work and Doctor of Philosophy programs, and he served as director of the doctoral program from 2004 to 2007. “I never liked teaching in big groups,” says Koeske. “So for me, it was really rewarding to work with individual students in the PhD program, help shape their dissertations, and watch them develop work they could be proud of.”

His mentoring philosophy and practice have always been of a hands-on variety that seeks to encourage, guide, and help students reach beyond their comfort zones in order to reach their fullest potential.

Even now, when speaking about his former students, it is obvious that Koeske feels great pride in their many accomplishments.

“Dissertations are important,” says Koeske. “They mean something. So there was a lot of feedback and a lot of revisions. I don’t know if the students appreciated it at the time, but I hope they do now.”

And they do.

“Throughout [the dissertation process], I vividly recall numerous meetings with him in his congested office, numerous telephone calls, and numerous revisions and their pain,” says Michael J. Holosko (PhD ’94), Pauline M. Berger Professor of Family and Child Welfare in the School of Social Work at the University of Georgia. “Over this process, I came to respect Gary immensely, and he was the inspiration for my pursuing an academic career with a specialization in research methodology. I was very fortunate to have been impacted by him.”

Koeske respected his students’ ideas and theories and encouraged them to think analytically. He made sure he was always available to his students.

“Obviously, he had his own work to attend to, classes to prepare for, and other students who wanted to talk to him,” says Michael A. Patchor (PhD ’80), dean of and professor in the Indiana University School of Social Work. “Nonetheless, when I or any of my classmates knocked on his door seeking advice, he always made time for us—always. When [you were] with him, he had the knack for making you feel like you were the center of his attention and he wasn’t occupied with anything other than assisting you.”

Former students still fondly and enthusiastically recount the tremendously positive influence Koeske had on their own mentoring styles, and his influence is seen throughout universities and research centers across the United States.

“I believe without hesitation or reservation that the field would not be as well off as it is today but for Gary Koeske,” says Kevin Corcoran (MSW ’76, PhD ’80), who today is a professor in the School of Social Work at Portland State University. “His students have gone on to do outstanding things, chiefly because they stand on his shoulders and are therefore able to see new horizons and obtain new accomplishments.”

Now that he has some free time, Koeske plans to start working on a book about his research on mediation and moderation. He will continue to edit the center’s journal, Race and Social Problems.

But, says Koeske, “I will miss teaching most of all.”

For more student recollections about Gary Koeske, please visit www.socialwork.pitt.edu/news/retiring-professor-gary-koeske-will-be-missed.
The racial achievement gap in education remains one of the United States’ most persistent, nagging challenges. It’s a gap that continues to remain high, says Larry E. Davis, Professor and dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. An alarmingly large number of students from economically distressed families and communities are falling behind academically at an early age, and, sadly, many ultimately fail to complete high school or attend college. The numbers paint a grim picture for African American students in particular.

But if you think teachers are the reason, think again, says Davis. “Just don’t blame teachers and schools for students’ failures,” he says. “The achievement gap also is a function of numerous factors that occur outside the classroom—most of them economic—that manifest themselves through poor academic performance.

“It takes a village to raise a child, but that village must be functional. Many of our educational issues are really social problems. And social workers are among the professionals best suited to help educators address these issues.”

For Davis, taking a more direct and active role in closing the achievement gap offers a unique opportunity for social work professionals—and for furthering his school’s three-part mission of research, teaching, and practice.

“I want our school to be a major player in developing the solutions and creating the models for social work’s role in closing the gap,” he says.

**Numbers Tell the Story**

African American students tend to score lower than White students on standardized tests or are less likely to achieve at levels comparable to those of White students, says Davis. An exponentially higher number of African American male students are suspended or expelled each year compared to White male students. Students from economically distressed communities also tend to be concentrated in low-achieving schools.

“This stark reality is evident in cases such as that of the Pittsburgh Promise. Now in its sixth year, the program offers every student attending city schools and meeting basic criteria up to $40,000 in noncompetitive, nonincome-based financial aid. Of those city school students who have qualified for scholarships, only 15 percent were African American males, while African American females made up just 27 percent of those eligible, according to a September 2013 article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

“Discouraging information surfaced at the recent conference A Call to Conscience: Effective Policies and Practices in Educating African American Males, hosted by the school’s Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP) and the Heinz Endowments. Alan Johnson, superintendent of the Woodland Hills School District, located in the eastern suburbs of Pittsburgh, reported that African American males constitute one-third of the high school population in the district but account for 70 percent of all dropouts and just 7 percent of the district’s 400-plus Advanced Placement students, according to a July 13 article in the Post-Gazette. He noted that African American male students are 20 times more likely to be expelled than White male students.

**A Nurturing Environment**

Look beneath the numbers and you’ll see the reasons why the numbers are so discouraging, says Davis. Violence at home, in school, and in the community. Lack of adequate transportation that makes getting to school on time difficult. Poor nutrition at home. Bullying fears. Homelessness or lack of proper clothing for school. Indifferent parents or parents who lack the skills to motivate and assist their children academically. Lack of a quiet place to study in the evening.

The need for students to forego homework to watch younger siblings while parents work long hours or multiple jobs. Physical problems resulting from a lack of basic health care.

“Because of their training, only social workers view students in the context of the environment; that’s our edge.”

DEBORAH ROBINSON

“The resources that all students need—proper health care, nutrition, a structured home, a safe community—directly affect this,” says James Huguley, a postdoctoral fellow at CRSP.

Through community partnerships, research, and nimble curricula, the School of Social Work is working to help narrow the achievement gap.

The school and CRSP work closely with a wide range of constituencies, including foundations like the Heinz Endowments (see story on page 11) and organizations like the Homewood Children’s Village, which was founded by and continues to receive support from school faculty and students.

The village partners with residents, local government, schools, philanthropic foundations, and faith- and community-based organizations to fill gaps in all aspects of children’s lives: Preschoolers learn ABCs, colors, and numbers to prepare them for kindergarten. Students who don’t qualify for the Pittsburgh Public Schools’ school buses are provided with a ride on a private bus to ensure they’re not walking to school in the dark of an early winter morning to make it there in time for breakfast. First-year college students are visited by mentors who help them to navigate what for many is a first-generation experience in higher education.

For Huguley, the Homewood Children’s Village offers both a laboratory for research and an incubator for best practices and solutions that might then have school, and community life impact achievement and the role of parenting. He cites research into cultural competence—how a teacher’s understanding of students and their families results in more effective instruction.

**(continued on next page)**
specialized graduate degrees in education and social work. Davis notes. “Training them to recognize these issues, understand them, and approach the teaching process with the added value of a social work perspective not only helps students but also makes [these teachers] more effective educators.”

Davis also calls for a change in the way social workers are deployed in school systems. “Today, social workers placed in schools function primarily as truancy officers,” he says, referring to home visitation programs. “I’d like to see that role expanded to encompass more interaction with families to bring more services into the home.”

While studies demonstrate that strong social services by themselves do not ensure academic achievement, Pittsburgh School of Education Dean Alan Lesgold says that “a safety net must be part of the solution.”

Looking Ahead

Can applying social work principles and practices alone close the achievement gap?

“The core issues are pretty clear,” Lesgold says. “It’s unlikely that the achievement gap can be closed simply by what takes place inside our schools. A social support structure not make the achievement gap disappear, but it’s definitely part of the solution.”

Davis adds. “We can’t solve it all. What’s needed is a Marshall Plan. But we need to infuse a much greater social work perspective into the educational process and address the social determinants of achievement.”

Of course, challenges remain. School districts continue to grapple with ever-tighter budgets that force hard choices and discourage out-of-the-box thinking. Lesgold notes that positive, lasting change is more likely to happen in regions with larger countywide or statewide school districts with greater resources than Pennsylvania’s much smaller and cash-strapped community-based districts.

The only way to create an effective social work substrate is to build it over time so that there’s consistency and social workers are no longer interchangeable pawns at budget time,” Lesgold says. “Schools have to work with the funding is no longer an annual spasmodic decision.”

“Both the school and our field have an unprecedented opportunity to tackle the achievement gap and engage in meaningful corrective action that is solutions focused,” Davis says. “We have ample research, but we’re underutilizing the information we have. Of course, it’s a question of money, but it’s also a question of will.”

The Right Tools

The School of Social Work also has developed a certificate program to certify the role of social work in education.

A social worker’s ability to interface with students and families is determined largely by the job description, says Deborah Robinson, field education coordinator and director of the school’s Home and School Visitor/School Social Worker Certificate program. “A school district has a lot of freedom to determine how it employs social workers,” she says. “One district may restrict you to truancy and court work, while another may create a position that requires more traditional social work practices. In one Pittsburgh middle school, the social worker is pulled from his or her responsibilities to act as the vice principal in the principal’s absence.”

Educators and social workers alike can gain invaluable insight from the certificate program along with job skills that improve career opportunities in education, Robinson notes. “You see people come to school as social workers, educators, psychologists, English as a second language teachers. Because of their training, only social workers view students in the context of the environment; that’s our edge.”

Adding that perspective to a teacher’s formal education is another area where Davis sees the School of Social Work taking a more active role. “To develop educators equipped to take better use of social work principles and practices, Davis says, the School of Social Work’s Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP) and sponsored by the Heinz Endowments. But hundreds of attendees also heard something even more important—and hopeful: educators detailing successful efforts to provide students with positive role models, reduce absenteeism and dropout rates, develop leadership skills and self-confidence, and offer alternatives that can bridge the gap inside and outside the classroom.

Keynote speaker John Jackson, president and CEO of the Schott Foundation for Public Education, and a group of local and national school superintendents worked to identify the challenges school districts face with regard to improving educational practices for African American males.

Research. Best practices. Information exchange leading to positive, lasting change. These are the goals of CRSP, a center that aims to provide leadership and help to define a pathway to social justice through race-related research and by mentoring scholars and disseminating research findings and scholarship.

“The center provides essential forums for the broader community to identify issues and solutions,” says Stanley Thompson, director of the Heinz Endowments Education Program. “Gathering community leaders lets us blend our assets, zero in on best practices and policies, and help them envision school changes that can lead to better-educated students.”

The Call to Conscience conference was the first of several summer summits to be hosted by CRSP and sponsored by the Heinz Endowments. Upcoming events will continue to explore more systemic solutions to inequity in education and the development of specific action plans needed to strengthen educational efforts for African American males.

“Educators, social workers, religious leaders, and others are connected through a wide range of touch points that tie a community together,” says James Huguley, a postdoctoral fellow at CRSP whose research focuses on how parenting practices and school culture initiatives can narrow race- and class-based disparities. “By their nature, solutions that succeed must incorporate not only schools but also churches, businesses, and other institutions tied together by shared interest.”

Engendering broad-based community support also provides an essential element for that critical transition from theory and discussion to action, Davis adds.

“Our work must be more than intellectual exercise; it needs to be a problem-solving endeavor that brings together researchers who are learning things with educators and other practitioners who are doing things.”
# A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT and ALUMNI AFFAIRS

Welcome to the School of Social Work’s Office of Development and Alumni Affairs. We are dedicated to serving alumni, the profession, the school, students, and the community. Our office supports and advances the mission of the school by offering professional, educational, and social activities and services that benefit students, faculty, and alumni as well as the social work profession. We encourage you to visit the alumni Web site, www.socialwork.pitt.edu/alumni, where you can learn about upcoming events and how to get involved with the school’s Alumni Society. The school is so grateful for the generosity of alumni, corporate and foundation supporters, and friends whose steadfast loyalty and commitment to our mission help make the school outstanding. The Office of Development and Alumni Affairs helps our devoted constituencies to consider how they might enrich the lives of students over the course of the next year, and in the future, with a tax-deductible gift. Please visit www.socialwork.pitt.edu/alumni/donate to learn more about the school’s fundraising initiatives.

Gratefully,

Bobby Simmons, Director of Career Services and Alumni Affairs

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**ALUMNI CORNER: A LOOK AT THE LIVES AND CAREERS OF SOCIAL WORK ALUMNI**

**Annette Giovanazzi**

One can’t help but feel the passion for school social work when talking to School of Social Work alumnus Annette Giovanazzi (BSW ’82, MSW ’84) about her 29 years as a school social worker in the Baldwin-Whitehall School District. She currently works at Baldwin High School with a population of 1,500 students. She sat down with us to share how school social work is one of the most dynamic practice specialties within the field of social work and how her days are filled with many unique challenges that require specialized skills, knowledge, flexibility, persistence, and creativity.

**WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE THE BASW AND MSW PROGRAMS AT PITT?**

“I initially, social work was not my first choice as a profession. I wanted to work in a school setting but as a social studies teacher. This all changed after a conversation with Professor Mable Hawkins from the School of Social Work. After learning more about social work and the home and school visitor’s certificate, I transferred from [Pitt’s] School of Education to the School of Social Work. This decision not only gave me the opportunity to work in a school environment but also equipped me with the knowledge and skills needed to work with students in a unique setting.”

**WHAT MAKES SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER STUDENT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS?**

“A school system is a host setting for social workers in that the primary purpose is not social work but education. We work alongside educators and other student support professionals, but our training, education, knowledge base, and skills are different from that of our colleagues. Therefore, the role of a school social worker can sometimes be ambiguous. And although school social workers work closely with guidance counselors and school psychologists, we are often the first line of defense in helping students deal with a variety of problems that span well beyond the classroom.”

**TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR WORK IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM.**

“My primary role is as a direct service practitioner, providing services to students experiencing academic, social, emotional, and behavioral problems. A school social worker must be prepared to wear many different hats depending on the situation. On any given day, I function as a therapist, case manager, broker, educator, crisis intervention specialist, and advocate for students and families. I also serve as a consultant to teachers and administrators regarding what may be occurring in a student’s home environment. The link among a student, his/her home environment, and the school is important to understand if the student is to reach his/her greatest potential. As a school social worker, you get to work at all levels of intervention: micro, working with students individually or in small groups; mezzo, facilitating larger groups within a classroom setting or at an organizational or schoolwide level; and macro, working community wide. Also, there is no typical day; every day is different working in a school setting.”

**ARE STUDENT-RELATED PROBLEMS DIFFERENT NOW COMPARED TO WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED?**

“I have seen many changes in my 29 years. Student problems today are more complicated and layered. There are more students in crisis, which can be attributed to a breakdown in the family system and an increase in family stressors such as substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence, financial struggles, child abuse, and homelessness. School social workers provide services to many students who may not otherwise get any help or support. Therefore, my commitment is strong, and I remain resolute that social work as a profession can effect positive changes in the lives of students; their families; and, by extension, their communities as well.”

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A STUDENT INTERESTED IN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK TODAY?**

“I would tell any social work student that the opportunity to enhance the lives of others is priceless, and a school social worker can play an integral role in this endeavor. I would stress that being flexible and creative, [having] the ability to work with diverse populations and needs, and possessing strong communication skills are essential to success in social work. Fortunately, many school districts are now recognizing the importance of school social workers because until their nonacademic needs are met, it will be hard for students to achieve academic goals.”

Giovanazzi enjoys talking to social work students about school social work. She gets an opportunity to do so every fall and spring term because she has been an adjunct faculty member at the School of Social Work for many years. Both the school and the Baldwin-Whitehall School District are very fortunate and thankful for her commitment.

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**Oh, What an Evening!**

**MARCH CAREER MADNESS: A NETWORKING EVENT**

On March 21, 2013, more than 100 students and alumni came together for the seventh annual March Career Madness networking event, held in the School of Social Work Conference Center. The event was extremely successful, and alumni from every field of practice were represented. They were eager to share their skills and knowledge. One alumnus drove eight hours from Virginia to attend, and another, who had not visited the school in years, came to be a part of the evening. Students took advantage of the opportunity to network with and its students. See you again next March. Hail to Pitt!”
Did you know?

The Office of Career Services is open to alumni as well as students from the School of Social Work.

Our specialization in social work careers will provide you with the information and connections necessary to empower people, lead organizations, and grow communities. The Office of Career Services hosts student and alumni networking events and career development workshops throughout the year.

Our free job posting service provides employers with a direct connection to the region’s top talent. Visit www.socialwork.pitt.edu/student-resources/career-services.php for full details on upcoming events or to schedule an appointment.

Did you know?

Other alumni. For more information and to sign up, visit www.alumni.pitt.edu/connect.

We are looking for you!

The School of Social Work is seeking alumni who might be interested in becoming field instructors for our students. BASW and MSW interns provide more than 300,000 hours of service to agencies and organizations like yours every year. Being a mentor is a very rewarding experience and gives you a hand in educating and preparing the next generation of social workers for service. If you are interested in becoming a field instructor, please visit www.socialwork.pitt.edu/academic-programs/field-education for more information.

Keep us updated!

Have you become a member of the Pitt Alumni Association’s online community? This online service exists to help alumni connect with each other and with the University. Here you can locate and reach out to other Pitt alumni. If you have been out of touch with your alma mater, you also can update your contact information to begin receiving Pitt news and other materials.

Check out the Pitt Alumni Association online community at www.alumni.pitt.edu/connect.

Alumni Society

Your help is needed!

2013 School of Social Work Alumni Society

If you are interested in serving on a committee or learning more about upcoming alumni activities, please contact Bobby Simmons at bobby@pitt.edu or 412-624-6554.

ROOTS of HISTORY

Downsizing? Need more space?

Want help to save your collectibles for the future?

Help to preserve the history of the School of Social Work!

The School of Social Work and the University of Pittsburgh Archives Service Center are seeking contributions to help document the school’s history.

You can “liberate history” from your attic; closets; file cabinets; dresser drawers; bookshelves; garage; basement; or wherever you store keepsakes, memorabilia, souvenirs, and treasures.

Of value to the collection are correspondence, meeting minutes, brochures, event programs, faculty papers, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, photographs of identified persons and events, and any other items associated with the school’s history.

For more information or to arrange a donation, please contact Professor Emeritus Edward W. Sites at 412-731-5298 or esites@pitt.edu.

TMC and with peace and justice constituents.

Social Work—spoke highly of Rosenberg’s community organizing, and Keith Caldwell, BASW program director at the School of Social Work, gave the nominator—John Wallace Jr., professor at the School of Social Work and president of the Boards of Directors for both Operation Better Block and the Homewood Children’s Village—address environmental issues. Her nominator—John Wallace Jr., professor at the School of Social Work and president of the Boards of Directors for both Operation Better Block and the Homewood Children’s Village, and Jeremy Jackson, executive director of Operation Better Block—spoke highly of Teixeira’s community organizing, leadership, facilitation, and applied research skills, which were strongly demonstrated in her community practice initiatives.

Michael Rosenberg, a BASW student, was recognized for his work with the Thomas Merton Center (TMC) in building stronger youth membership recruitment and internship opportunities for young organizers on core issues of peace and social and environmental justice as well as for enhancing TMC’s communications efforts. His nominators—Diane McMahon, executive director of TMC, and Keith Caldwell, BASW program director at the School of Social Work—spoke highly of Rosenberg’s community organizing, leadership, facilitation, and capacity-building skills, which were demonstrated strongly in his community practice initiatives at both TMC and with peace and justice constituents.

Past Community Practice Award recipients

2009 Hilary Brown Parcell (MSW ’09)
2008 Natalie M. Grummell (MSW ’08)
2009 Diná M. Cadlottano (MSW ’09) and Shannon Plush (MSW ’09)
2010 GROUP AWARD: Judith Feldman (MSW ’09), Ivonne Howard Herrera (MSW ’10), Hyunmin Kim (MSW ’10), Kristina Klime (MSW ’10), Dinah Peterson (MSW ’10), Maurice Speaks (BASW ’09), and Brandon Trombath (MSW ’10)
2011 Stephen Legault (MSW ’12), Lindsay Legé (MSW ’11), and Devon Patton (MSW ’11)
2012 Civil Action Movement (student group), Rebecca “Reb” Landry (MSW ’12), Mark Plassmeyer (MSW ’13), and Dale Schwartz

To make a gift online, visit www.giveto.pitt.edu and indicate your contribution for the Community Practice Award in the School of Social Work. Contributions also can be mailed to:

University of Pittsburgh
School of Social Work
Office of Development
227 Cathedral of Learning
4200 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
PUBLICATIONS


PRESENTATIONS


NATIONAL AWARDS

Yoonmi Kim, first place award in Presentation Competition, Honoree and Travel Grants, 28th National Conference on Doctoral Research in Social Work, Columbus, Ohio, March 2013.

POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATES

James P. Hagulay

Eun Hee Choi


PRESENTATIONS


AWARDS AND GRANTS


REPORTS

James P. Hagulay, Latino Students in Rhode Island: A Review of Local and National Performance, Providence, R.I.: Roger Williams University Latin Policy Institute, August 2013.
More than 30 researchers and center directors from across the country gathered at the University of Pittsburgh Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP) this past summer for the first-of-its-kind summit of Race, Ethnicity, and Poverty (REAP) centers. Larry E. Davis, dean of the Pitt School of Social Work and director of CRSP, said that he was spurred to organize the June 6 and 7, 2013, event because he knew of no other organization that brought together race-focused scholars and center directors.

The summit aimed to identify and locate existing REAP centers and determine what these centers do and how they function as research entities as well as to create opportunities for future collaboration among centers.

The event began with a reception at Davis’ home, where many of those in attendance found they were familiar with one another’s research but had never met face to face. That’s not surprising, considering that the researchers and practitioners came from all over the country, including Arizona; California; Michigan; Texas; North Carolina; Washington, D.C.; and Massachusetts.

Friday’s summit session began with remarks from Pitt Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Patricia E. Beeson, whose office sponsored the event and who encouraged the group to work together to explore new research opportunities.

Davis then welcomed the group and shared some data on the 70 identified REAP centers throughout the United States—90 percent of which are affiliated with a college or university. While many centers work in several different areas, some were identified by a main area of population focus:

- Twenty-six centers were identified as focusing primarily on African Americans.
- Seven centers were identified as focusing primarily on Hispanics.
- Three centers were identified as focusing primarily on Asian Americans.
- Five centers were identified as focusing primarily on Native Americans.

Each attendee then took three minutes to describe his or her center and its work. There was wide variation in the centers’ structures, methods, and strategies. During this exercise, the enthusiasm was evident, with all participants expressing an interest in future collaboration and meetings of REAP centers.

Attendees then heard from Scott Beach, associate director of and survey research program director at the University Center for Social and Urban Research at Pitt. Beach spoke about poverty in Pittsburgh and the nation with specific topics, including how poverty is measured and poverty patterns in the nation and in Pittsburgh.

The final two presenters of the day addressed the issue of funding. Cleopatra Howard Caldwell of the Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health in the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan spoke about sources of funding, noting that 47 percent of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities budget is dedicated to research centers. She also suggested exploring alternative funding sources, such as the U.S. Departments of Justice, Defense, and Education, among others.

Thomas LaVeist, director of the Hopkins Center for Health Disparities Solutions in the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, also touched upon the harsh toll the recession and spending cuts have taken on funders. He proposed some solutions for centers, including diversifying, expanding partnerships, developing internal revenue sources, and exploring commercialization opportunities.

Additionally, the group discussed center issues based partly on a survey completed prior to the summit. The issues most frequently mentioned were obtaining and sustaining funding, creating partnerships that funders will respond to, and sharing credit and funding within a university.

Another topic broached by several attendees included the complications that ensue when funding goes to a principal investigator and not specifically to the center with which he or she is affiliated—especially in today’s climate, in which many are being pushed by their universities to increase their research dollars. Some participants suggested that centers may want to separate from their university and become a nonprofit entity. Others felt that a center would not be sustainable without a connection to the core mission of a university.

A center’s relationship with its home institution was a frequently discussed topic. Some felt that a center should stay on task and conduct research, while others believed that centers have a responsibility to transform the institution in some way—helping to increase the number of underrepresented faculty members, for example. Many felt that their centers gave them an opportunity to sit on university committees that could be used to make a difference.

Several commented on the link between effective communication and effective fundraising and the importance in connecting the two. The message? Today’s centers must be creative and entrepreneurial.

Foundations were mentioned as being possible resources for administrative overhead in some instances, but other sustainability ideas included pursuing a full or partial endowment, cultivating partnerships that funders will respond to, and sharing credit and funding within a university.

The last discussion fueled the question, “Where do REAP centers go from here?” Davis suggested that, at the very least, the group should create a USTRIC to keep the lines of communication open. He also proposed hosting one more meeting in Pittsburgh, with subsequent meetings being hosted by other centers. In the meantime, Davis said, perhaps a panel or a task force could be formed to assist in developing future plans.

Please feel free to join us here at the center at any one of our lectures or to view our activities online. As always, we appreciate your continued support.
RESEARCH UPDATE

Smart planning helps PATIENTS COPE after PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL closing

As a Pittsburgh-area psychiatric hospital prepared to shutter its doors, requiring the discharge of its patients, the School of Social Work’s associate dean for research, Catherine Greeno, co-conducted a research study aimed at following a random sampling of discharged Mayview State Hospital patients to track the outcomes they experienced as they transitioned out of the hospital and into new residences.

What Greeno found is that many of the patients’ psychiatric symptoms improved significantly over the four-year study period, and she says that the collaborative planning and closing processes developed and implemented in 2008 by mental health and public welfare officials as well as stakeholders in all five affected Pennsylvania counties—Allegheny, Beaver, Greene, Lawrence, and Washington—were key to providing Mayview’s former residents with the treatment, support, and resources needed to reintegrate into smaller community-based settings.

Greeno conducted the study with Courtney Kuza, a research principal in the School of Social Work, and Sue Istoroff, a professor of social medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The study was supported by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

As part of the planning process, issues critical to the successful closing of a hospital, like mental health services and patient housing, were specifically addressed. Additionally, very thorough discharge procedures were developed and implemented. Finally, prospective plans for outcomes monitoring and reporting were created, including but not limited to, the evaluation conducted by Greeno and her colleagues.

The four-year study followed a random sample of people discharged from Mayview. (Random samples like the one used in this study enable investigators to accurately track outcomes at much less expense than if all former Mayview residents had been followed.) In this study, 42 people, or 76 percent of those approached, agreed to participate.

Pitt social work master’s and doctoral students trained in both qualitative and quantitative research techniques conducted the assessments for this study. These student researchers visited patients in their own homes every three months. At half of the visits, participants completed validated standardized assessments of psychiatric symptoms, social functioning, quality of life, progress toward recovery, and satisfaction with services. At the other visits, research team members conducted informal interviews to learn how participants perceived their new homes and whether their needs were being met. Over the four-year study period, Pitt student researchers made hundreds of visits to participants’ homes to collect this information.

Greeno and her colleagues’ data revealed that participants strongly preferred the freedom and choice that their new residences gave them and that their psychiatric symptoms improved over the four-year study period. In fact, 50 percent of participants met a longitudinal criterion for remission—that is, their psychiatric symptoms were all rated at a level of mild impairment or less at both time points in the final year of the study. It is important to note that they met this criterion for remission in the setting in which they were living, which often included a considerable amount of treatment and support. Social functioning, quality of life, progress toward recovery, and satisfaction with services, which were stable at two years, had improved by the conclusion of the study.

Greeno’s students also found that a small number of people experienced negative outcomes—some abusing substances and some being incarcerated. At least one of the participants was very active in the study and regularly reported that his life was much improved since departing Mayview; however, his incarceration cannot be considered a positive outcome.

“This study demonstrates the usefulness of the collaborative planning process that was used in closing the hospital,” says Greeno. “Although it is difficult to give up the security represented by a long-stay institution, results clearly show that people were happier where they moved to smaller community-based settings. Even though there is some risk for negative behaviors with enough planning and support, people can be very well served in community settings.”

Christopher Robinson (MSW ’07) recently received a Vanguard Diversity Award from the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) in Pittsburgh, where he serves as an assistant professor of social work and a campus diversity officer at CCAC’s South Campus. This award recognizes Robinson’s ongoing commitment to providing culturally diverse and relevant educational programs and events to the students and staff of CCAC’s South Campus. His awareness of and personal interest in diversity and global issues have enabled him to serve as a strong role model and mentor to his students.

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IN MEMORIAM

SISTER ELIZABETH APEL (MSW ’79)
died on July 25, 2013.

SEYMOUR M. COHEN (MSW ’53)
died on June 19, 2013.

ROBERT S. FOLTZ (MSW ’72),
former president and CEO of the Former Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh, died on April 14, 2013. Foltz turned Goodwill Industries of Pittsburgh into one of the largest social service agencies in the region.

MILDRED INEZ PRATT (PhD ’69),
former faculty member in the school, died on August 6, 2012. Pratt was born on October 15, 1928, in Henderson, Texas. One of eight children of sharecroppers Eula and R.P. Sirls, she earned four advanced degrees, including a PhD in social work. An ordained Disciples of Christ minister, she practiced social work for several years before teaching social work at the University of Pittsburgh and Illinois State University (ISU) as well as in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She had an extensive and productive career at ISU, where her most cherished achievement was cofounding the McLean County Black History Project and serving as its codirector for several years. She retired from ISU as professor emeritus in 1993.

Mildred Pratt (MSW ’69) received a Vanguard Diversity Award from the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) in Pittsburgh, where she serves as an assistant professor of social work and a campus diversity officer at CCAC’s South Campus. This award recognizes Robinson’s ongoing commitment to providing culturally diverse and relevant educational programs and events to the students and staff of CCAC’s South Campus. His awareness of and personal interest in diversity and global issues have enabled him to serve as a strong role model and mentor to his students.

Cara M. Renzelli (MSW ’01, PhD ’04) was promoted to vice president of research and clinical training at Gateway Rehabilitation Center. In her new role, she will oversee the Kenneth S. Ramsey, PhD, Research and Training Institute. Prior to joining Gateway Rehab, Renzelli worked at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, where she received extensive research and clinical diagnostic training in addiction and related behaviors, including abuse of alcohol and other substances, smoking, and eating disorders.

Renzelli has authored numerous papers and leads a variety of workshops necessary for the advanced training of clinicians within the addiction treatment field. She regularly teaches and supervises interns from the University of Pittsburgh. Her primary research interests include treatment outcomes and the sustainability of recovery, the implementation and dissemination of evidence-based practices, and addiction in youth and young adults.

In addition to her Pitt degrees, Renzelli earned her bachelor’s and Master of Science in Education degrees at Duquesne University.

Christopher Robinson (MSW ’07) recently received a Vanguard Diversity Award from the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) in Pittsburgh, where he serves as an assistant professor of social work and a campus diversity officer at CCAC’s South Campus. This award recognizes Robinson’s ongoing commitment to providing culturally diverse and relevant educational programs and events to the students and staff of CCAC’s South Campus. His awareness of and personal interest in diversity and global issues have enabled him to serve as a strong role model and mentor to his students.

Class Notes

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School of Social Work 2013–14 Speaker Series

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2013
“Community Organizing and Policy Analysis as Tools for Closing the Racial Achievement Gap”
CAREY HARRIS, Executive Director, A+ Schools

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2013
“Fulfilling the Promise of Social Work: Current and Future Challenges and Opportunities”
DARLA COFFEY, President and Chief Executive Officer, Council on Social Work Education

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014
“Social Work Interventions to Improve Cognition and Recovery in Schizophrenia and Autism”
SHAUN M. EACK, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2014
World Social Work Day
Sidney A. Teller Lecture
“Recognizing and Supporting the Global Social Service Workforce: Challenges and Opportunities”
ROBIN S. MAMA, Dean, School of Social Work, Monmouth University

Sponsored by Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC

CENTER ON RACE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
“A Glass Half Full? Discrimination against Minority Homeseekers”
MARGERY AUSTIN TURNER, Senior Vice President for Program Planning and Management, Urban Institute

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8
“Race and Culture in the Family: Their Impact on Youth Outcomes of Asian American Adolescents”
YOONSUN CHOI, Associate Professor, School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3
“A Multigenerational Perspective on Neighborhoods and Racial Inequality”
PATRICK T. SHARKEY, Associate Professor of Sociology, New York University

DATE TBA
“Stratification Economics: Implications for Understanding Inequality”
WILLIAM A. DARITY JR., Arts & Sciences Professor of Public Policy and African and African American Studies; Professor of Economics; Chair, Department of African and African American Studies; and Codirector, Research Network on Racial and Ethnic Inequality, Duke University