Bridges

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

MAGAZINE SPRING 2017



Social Issues in Cuba

A Unique Study Abroad Course Highlights the Social Justice Parallels Between the U.S. and Cuba

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THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
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ACCORDING TO *U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT*
2016 RANKINGS.

Bridges

Bridges is the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work magazine. We selected the name Bridges largely because of its symbolism. The term provides an important metaphor for both our profession and our school. Social work is a profession that has, as part of its mission, the goal of building and sustaining bridges among individuals, families, groups, neighborhoods, and communities, and we felt that the title Bridges captured this part of our professional mission. At the same time, the city of Pittsburgh has more than 450 bridges, and Allegheny County has almost 2,000, suggesting an uncompromising desire of the city's inhabitants to remain connected with one another. In keeping with this heritage, it is the school's goal to sustain and build bridges among those needing social work services; our students, alumni, faculty, and staff; the community; and corporate and governmental partners. We believe that the information in this magazine is an important way to achieve this goal.

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Bridges magazine is published biannually and is sent to alumni and friends of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work.

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ABOUT THE COVER: On the outskirts of Havana, Cuba, a woman walks past a painting of the image of Marxist revolutionary Che Guevara. The text "Hasta la victoria siempre" translates to "Until victory, always," which was Guevara's well-known saying. Portraits of Guevara can still be seen on many walls and buildings throughout the country. Taken by Alberto Korda in 1960, the iconic image "Heroic Guerrilla Fighter" has been called the world's most famous photo because versions of it have been reproduced more than any other image in photography*.

*Source: Maryland Institute College of Art, Victoria and Albert Museum

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Greetings, alumni and friends,

Much has changed since our last issue of *Bridges*. Foremost, America has a new president who is hostile to much of what we as social workers do. There is little doubt that funds and services to our constituents will be cut, and such cuts to the social safety net will bring unique hardships to thousands of poor families and their children. Social workers are now grappling with how to move preemptively against the reduction of social supports to our constituents. It would be unwise for us to stand and wait to be hit by what are sure to be reductions in social services. We must look back on our history to see how we have addressed similar challenges in the past.

The school continues to do well. The faculty is on a roll with a very high rate of grant submissions and acceptances. Our student body has proven to be one of the best we have had. Now, more than ever, many of these students are committed to social advocacy and community involvement. The University of Pittsburgh has recently committed itself to the creation of a number of community engagement centers, of which the School of Social Work has been asked to be a part.

This issue of *Bridges* features Cuba. For about 10 years, our Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP) has taken a group of students and faculty members there as part of Cuban Social Policy Issues, a unique study abroad course through which students—and faculty—have the opportunity to confront their preconceptions about the country's culture, government, and people. You will find the feature story on Cuba both interesting and informative. It has been fascinating to note changes in Cuba over time.

We continue to increase our commitment to international engagement, enrolling more international students than ever in our programs and launching a new undergraduate international field placement program. Associate Professor Sara Goodkind has just recently received a grant from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs that is intended to increase the numbers of Bachelor of Arts in Social Work students who can partake in field placements abroad (see story on page 19).

This past year, we have been fortunate to bring on board new faculty and staff. Leah Jacobs has come to us from the University of California, Berkeley, with a research focus in social welfare and criminal justice policy. Abel J. Koury, also a very welcome addition, will work as a data analyst. Karla Perelstine is the new project coordinator for the Cannon Fellowship Program, and Michelle Zorich is the new project coordinator for the Leadership in Public Health Social Work Education Training Program.

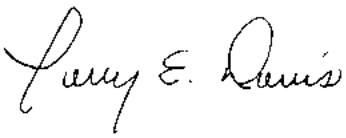
Our graduates are doing well, with licensure rates above the national average. It is also the case that our retired alumni have remained committed to their social work values and have retained close contacts with the school. We have highlighted three such individuals in this issue: Dorian Mintzer, Alan Momeyer, and Bob Schwartz. Each talks about what retirement really looks like in 2017 (see story on page 18).



"SOCIAL WORKERS ARE NOW GRAPPLING WITH HOW TO MOVE PREEMPTIVELY AGAINST THE REDUCTION OF SOCIAL SUPPORTS TO OUR CONSTITUENTS. IT WOULD BE UNWISE FOR US TO STAND AND WAIT TO BE HIT BY WHAT ARE SURE TO BE REDUCTIONS IN SOCIAL SERVICES."

As always, we invite you to come visit the school. Please plan on attending one of the CRSP or school lecture series talks. You will enjoy it.

Sincerely,

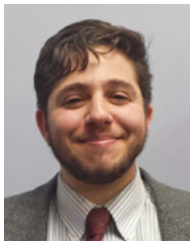


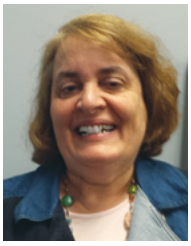
Larry E. Davis, Dean and Donald M. Henderson Professor, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

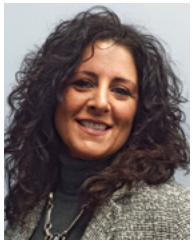
Director, Center on Race and Social Problems

WELCOME, NEW FACULTY AND STAFF


Leah Jacobs


Abel J. Koury


Karla Perelstine


Michelle Zorich

Leah Jacobs has been appointed an assistant professor. Her area of research is social welfare and criminal justice policy.

Abel J. Koury is the new data analyst working with Assistant Professor James Huguley.

Karla Perelstine is the new project coordinator of the Cannon Fellowship Program in Integrated Healthcare working with Valire Carr Copeland, associate dean of academic affairs.

Michelle Zorich is the project coordinator for the Leadership in Public Health Social Work Education Training Program, which is supported by the Juanita C. Evans Fellowship Program. Zorich also is working with Copeland. ■

SPRING 2017 SPEAKER SERIES

All lectures are from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the School of Social Work Conference Center, 2017 Cathedral of Learning. Lunch will be provided; registration is not required.

CENTER ON RACE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS REED SMITH LLP SPEAKER SERIES

MONDAY, JANUARY 23

"Objection! How Evidence Law Perpetuates Racism in the Courtroom"
JASMINE B. GONZALES ROSE, Assistant Professor of Law, School of Law, University of Pittsburgh

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

"White Privilege: Not So Invisible Anymore?"
PAUL CROLL, Associate Professor of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Welfare, Augustana College

MONDAY, MARCH 13

"For the Sake of All: Translating Evidence into Action for Community Health"
JASON Q. PURNELL, Assistant Professor, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

"Who Are You? Racial Classification and the Instability of Race"
MICHAEL OMI, Associate Professor of Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies, University of California, Berkeley

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK SPEAKER SERIES

SIDNEY A. TELLER LECTURE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

"Radical Love in an Age of Racial Oppression: Social Work, Social Change, and the Politics of Unflinching Inclusivity"
JOHN L. JACKSON JR., Dean, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice

WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

"The 'Greening' of Social Work: Striving for Environmental Justice"
MICHAEL CRONIN, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Monmouth University

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

BASW Program

2017 BROWNE FELLOWS SELECTED

Congratulations to the 2017 Browne Leadership fellows! The interdisciplinary Browne Fellowship is aimed at preparing students to be engaged civic leaders working for economic and social justice. The purpose of the fellows program reflects the School of Social Work's mission: to advocate for social policies and resources that meet basic human needs; to create accessible, responsible, and accountable human service programs; and to deliver quality services to those in need of support.

These students were selected from a pool of strong candidates from throughout the University of Pittsburgh community and represent academic program areas that include biological sciences, engineering, computer science, and economics.

The 2017 fellows are **Sarah Atta, Michael Calhoun, Lindsey Gorman, Virginia Lefever, Daniel Porter, Chelsea Rader, Sam Ressin, Isaiah Spencer-Williams,** and **Daly Trimble**.

To learn more about the Browne Leadership Fellows Program and each of our 2017 fellows, please visit **socialwork.pitt.edu/academics/bachelor-arts-social-work-basw/browne-leadership-fellows-program**.

"Being from Pittsburgh, I have a huge heart for seeing this great city develop even further and grow into a place where everyone can blossom into their full potential. I'm excited and grateful for this amazing opportunity!"

- ISAIAH M. SPENCER-WILLIAMS, Civil/Environmental Engineering



WELL-DESERVED RECOGNITION



Bachelor of Arts in Social Work student **Saskia Berrios-Thomas** received a 2016 Iris Marion Young Award for Political Engagement. The award annually recognizes a University of Pittsburgh faculty member, graduate student, staff member, and undergraduate student for their work to advance various social causes.

Berrios-Thomas is a committed advocate for those affected by child abuse and sexual violence. In addition to her course work at the University of Pittsburgh, she recently completed an independent research project that examined the effectiveness of parent-centered programs on child sexual abuse prevention. Berrios-Thomas—also a Brackenridge Research fellow in the University Honors College—studied the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs at seven Pennsylvania academic institutions. She works as an intern in Allegheny County's Office of Children, Youth and Families and volunteers as a sexual assault peer educator and a therapy dog handler.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued from page 5)



Students from universities throughout the Pittsburgh region—including Pitt—participated in the 2016 DHS Local Government Case competition. Pictured above are the four finalist teams, one of which included Pitt MSW student Ashley Pesi (first row, fourth from right). She was the only social work student on one of the four final teams.

MSW Program

MSW STUDENTS COMPETE IN 2016 LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE COMPETITION

Once again, a group of University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work Master of Social Work (MSW) students competed in the annual Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) Local Government Case Competition. This case competition is open to graduate and professional students from universities in the Pittsburgh region and many of the schools within those universities that produce future managers and leaders for the human services sector.

The competition provides an inter-university and interdisciplinary team experience in responding to a challenging case. This year, student teams competed to develop strategies for enhancing employment opportunities for vulnerable populations, including immigrants, youths aging out of the child welfare system, and those in reentry from incarceration. Students worked over three days to develop their ideas and present a recommendation to a panel of local community, human services, university, and foundation leaders who judged the competition. Four finalist teams were selected to compete for cash prizes.

Competing in the 2016 DHS case competition were Pitt MSW students **Abigail Godollei**, **Cassandra Hourlland**, **Wendy Paddock**, **Luis Perez**, **Ashley Pesi**, and **Rachel Vinciguerra**. Pesi finished on one of the final teams in the competition. All students gained invaluable experience that they can add to their professional portfolio. ■

PITT SOCIAL WORK GRADS SURPASS NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR LICENSURE PASS RATE

The School of Social Work has celebrated learning that the social work licensure pass rate for our graduates is higher than the national average. This speaks well for the knowledge and skill preparation of our students in the Master of Social Work (MSW) curriculum as well as the caliber of our students. Recent results from a survey of our graduates demonstrate that the educational culture at the school, supportive environment, and student satisfaction with the program are rated very highly. We continue to improve the environment in which our students learn, and the results let us know that our efforts are on track.

This past December, 77 of our MSW students graduated ready for the field of professional social work. Sixty-nine students were from the Direct Practice concentration and eight were from the Community, Organization, and Social Action concentration, including the student speaker, **Tina Marie Jones**, who addressed her fellow graduates at the recognition event held at the O'Hara Student Center. ■

PROGRAM ATTRACTING STUDENTS FROM ABROAD

This past fall, we welcomed 227 new MSW students to our Pittsburgh campus, 16 to our Bradford campus, and 14 to our Johnstown campus. We continue to attract students from across the country, and this year, we also have international students from China, Nigeria, and Israel. ■

NEW COURSES, CURRICULUM MODIFICATIONS

In order to train students in relevant competencies for professional practice in all arenas of social work, we continue to review and improve our curriculum. Three new courses have been successfully piloted and approved by the faculty to be added to our inventory of courses. These are a generalist course, Poverty and Income Inequality: Social Justice Responses; an advanced skill elective for Direct Practice students, Social Work and Spirituality; and an advanced Community, Organization, and Social Action (COSA) skill course, Human Resource/ Financial Management and Supervision.

Additionally, we are piloting two new courses, with Social Work with Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families under way during the spring 2017 term and Social Enterprise, Social Marketing, Social Media targeted to run in fall 2017. With regard to the former, we have learned that Southwestern Pennsylvania has the second-highest concentration of active military members and veterans in the United States. Therefore, it was important to develop a course that offers our students a preliminary understanding of military life and the experience of military families.

MSW program graduates will work in various roles as service providers and leaders, so it is important that we are preparing them to be educated consumers of research rather than producers of research. With that in mind, first- and second-level research students from both MSW concentrations—Direct Practice and COSA—will find colleagues from the other concentration in their classes. Previously, second-level research was organized by concentration, as is most of the curriculum. Students will continue to engage in a research project while in their advanced course. ■

PhD Program

DOCTORAL STUDENTS CONTINUE ON SUCCESSFUL PATHS

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program had an eventful fall and winter. Our students continue to be productive, and we have an excellent group of emerging scholars. During the fall, six of our students successfully defended their comprehensive exams and are now working on their dissertations. **Rachel Woodson Goode** defended her dissertation this winter and accepted a faculty position from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. We wish her the best of luck.

Our students continue to publish and present at national conferences. We also enjoyed a strong applicant pool this year, and to ensure that we continue to attract and develop social work scholars, we are instituting a new recruitment plan based on feedback from and discussions with our faculty. ■

MICHAEL CRONIN DELIVERS WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY LECTURE



Michael Cronin

Michael Cronin, associate professor at the Monmouth University School of Social Work in West Long Branch, N.J., presented "The 'Greening' of Social Work: Striving for Environmental Justice" on March 14, as part of the School of Social Work's 2017 Spring Speaker Series.

In addition to teaching, he coordinates the International and Community Development concentration within the Master of Social Work program at Monmouth. Cronin holds a PhD from Yeshiva University and an MSW from Columbia University. His research interests are international social work, health care and social policy, disaster management, social gerontology, international humanitarian law, cultural competence, and diversity—all subjects on which he has published. He has received grants to investigate, design, implement, and assess psychoeducational programs in disaster preparedness for older and vulnerable residents in the Atlantic coastal area.

Prior to his position in academia, Cronin worked as a social worker for more than 18 years in New York, N.Y., assisting individuals and families in a variety of settings. ■



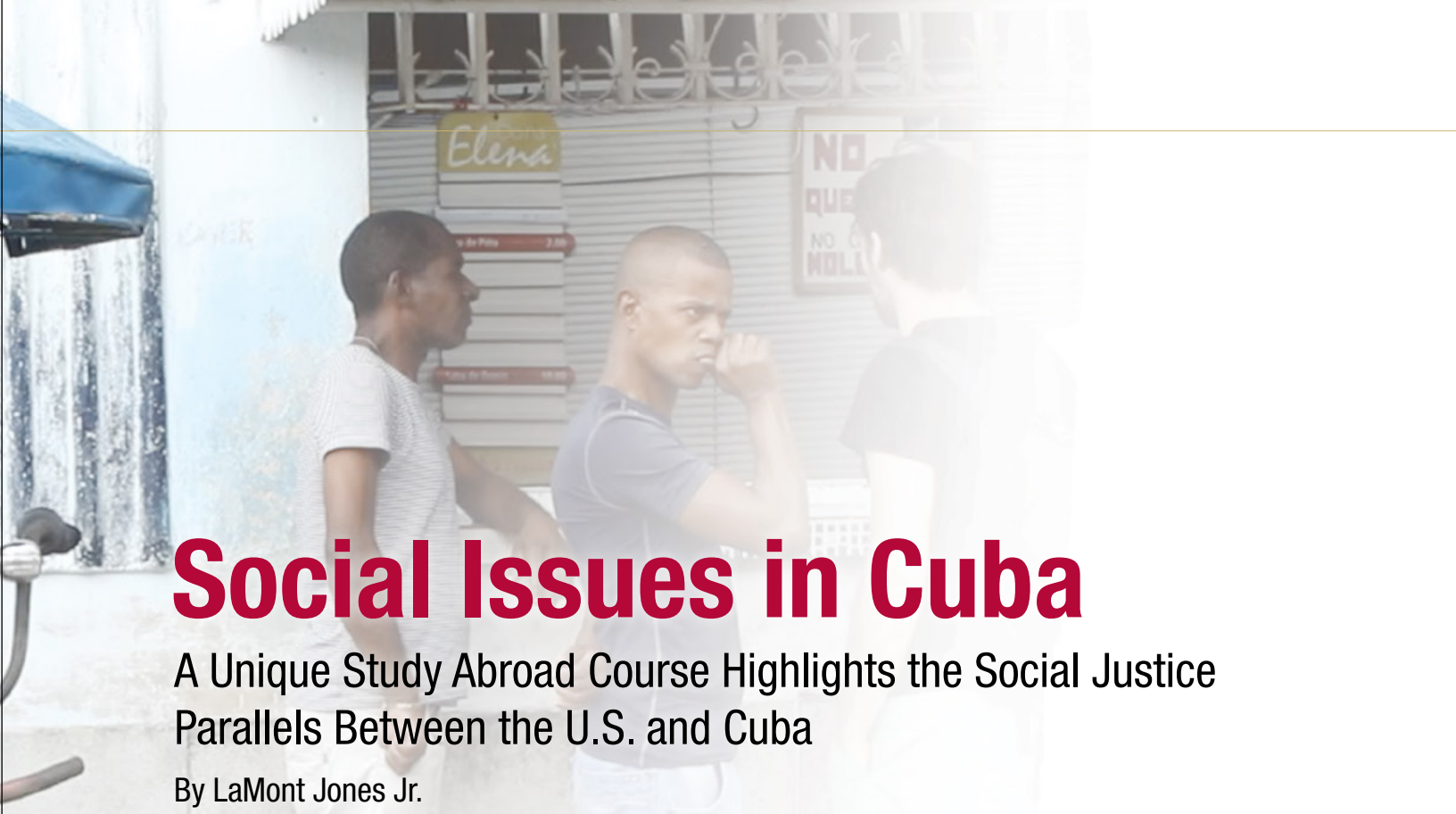
"DEAN LARRY DAVIS AND HIS FACULTY HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN DEVELOPING A TRULY UNIQUE STUDY ABROAD OFFERING, AND WE APPRECIATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO BRINGING PITT TO THE WORLD AND THE WORLD TO PITT."

ARIEL ARMONY

Director, University Center for International Studies (UCIS)

Brian Cook/Golden Sky Media

A bike taxi driver, known primarily as a rickshaw, flanks men in line to purchase food at an empanada stand in Havana, Cuba.



Social Issues in Cuba

A Unique Study Abroad Course Highlights the Social Justice Parallels Between the U.S. and Cuba

By LaMont Jones Jr.

Flanked by U.S. and Cuban flags and wearing a gray suit, white shirt, and black necktie reminiscent of 1950s elegance, then-President Barack Obama stood onstage in the auditorium of the Gran Teatro de la Habana in Cuba and made history.

"As the decades rolled by, our governments settled into a seemingly endless confrontation, fighting battles through proxies," he told a packed house of 1,500 Cubans on March 22, 2016. "In a world that remade itself time and again, one constant was the conflict between the United States and Cuba. I have come here to bury the last remnant of the Cold War in the Americas. I have come here to extend the hand of friendship to the Cuban people."

Although a ban on casual tourism for U.S. citizens and an official economic embargo remain in place, the olive branch extended a year ago by Obama after 18 months of secret communication and negotiation included the reopening of the U.S. embassy in Havana and other efforts to normalize relations that began deteriorating during the Cuban revolution in the 1950s.

While U.S. citizens still must meet one of 12 visa categories to qualify for travel to the island nation 90 miles south of Florida—and a trip there is something most Americans have never experienced—the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work has cultivated an educational connection with the University of Havana for years. Beginning in 2010, graduate students in the school's study abroad course, now titled Cuban Social Policy Issues, have traveled to Cuba's capital city to study the formulation and effects of social policy and the delivery and impact of social services. In addition to meeting with key officials, they take field trips to various social service organizations that provide programs ranging from after-school opportunities for students to vocational training for the deaf.

After returning to Pittsburgh, students draw on their research, firsthand observations, and course materials to write a final paper about a chosen social policy issue. Topics covered in the past have ranged from public health and gender concerns to education and social security. The papers, like the course, are informed by the social justice aspect of social work.

The program is one of the best examples of collaborations between Pitt and the University of Havana that go back 50 years, says **Ariel Armony**, director of Pitt's University Center for International Studies (UCIS).

"Dean Larry Davis and his faculty have been instrumental in developing a truly unique study abroad offering, and we appreciate their commitment to bringing Pitt to the world and the world to Pitt," Armony says.

The program, offered in conjunction with the University's Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP), is a trailblazer among university study abroad programs, notes **Jeffrey Whitehead**, director of the Pitt Study Abroad Office. It was one of the first that Pitt began offering during spring break; Pitt's first study abroad program designed specifically for graduate students; the first short-term study abroad program offered by a U.S. university in Cuba; and among the first,

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he notes, "to use experiential learning as its primary focus, allowing students to complement traditional classroom-based experience with field experience."

Pitt works directly with the University of Havana rather than through a third-party agent to provide the academic content and logistics. The result is a unique experience, one enhanced by Davis' routine participation in both the classroom and trip experiences. "He is highly involved," Whitehead says, "using his expertise in race relations to guide academic content and making a point to accompany the students when he can. It is rare for a dean to be this involved with a study abroad program, and we are grateful for it."

Davis, who also is CRSP director, traces his fascination with Cuba back to his high school years and his inability to reconcile television images of White Cubans in Miami, Fla.'s, Little Havana community with those of dark-skinned athletes dominating Cuba's delegations to the Olympics.



Residents of Matanzas, Cuba, play several rounds of dominoes in a parklet to pass the time.

His curiosity about how race influences Cuba continued into his adult years and professional life as he saw connections between Black civil rights militants in America and Cuba and its longtime leader, Fidel Castro. Davis became more interested in how race affects social services and social policies there, and the spring break study abroad program was born.

"I wanted Pitt to be one of the first schools to start a real research beachhead there," says Davis. "I had taken scholars there for cross-cultural research efforts years ago. At that time, Cubans had difficulty coming here. The whole social work thing kind of doesn't go along with socialism. Socialism was supposed to have cured social problems, but they have all the problems America has. So this is a challenge to their ideology."

Cassie Hourlland, a Master of Social Work (MSW) student, of Mifflinburg, Pa., was one of the 10 Pitt students who traveled with several faculty members to Cuba in March. Her paper focused on the evolution and possible future of the Cuban government: a Communist-flavored one-party Socialist state.

"It was a very centering experience for me that I didn't realize I needed," she says. "As a social worker, it is important to become culturally competent and to pass that knowledge on to others. The trip taught me so much about Cuba that I was unaware of. I think that as a social worker, I can inform individuals of things happening in Cuba and try to tie them into work happening in the United States. I am fully committed to social work, but now I have a different lens to work through."

As students compare and contrast U.S. and Cuban social policies and practices, Whitehead says, their "primary lens" is race relations. The issues of race and color are as complex in Cuba as they are in the United States, but the Cuban perspective reveals itself differently than that of the capitalist democracy.

A Ripe Research Field

On a warm morning in early March, day breaks in Havana as people make their way to school and work, walking briskly, waiting at bus stops, trying to flag down a taxi or a ride with a sympathetic motorist. A gentle but steady ocean breeze sweeps away the exhaust fumes of vintage American-made cars as drivers zip to and fro along narrow streets, the rumble of heavy metal accompanied by the cautionary toots of horns, the zoom of mopeds and motorbikes, and the rhythmic rattle of biker-pedaled rickshaws.

The nation of more than 11 million people, with complexions ranging from latte to black licorice, may be the most enigmatic and misunderstood country in the Caribbean. Surrounded by the Straits of Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea, Cuba was established as a Spanish colony in 1492. Its dramatic history mirrors that of the United States in ways that make it a ripe research field for social workers interested in issues such as public health, child welfare, and elder care.

For example, Cuba boasts one of the most effective health care systems in the world, with 60,000 doctors caring for approximately 99 percent of the population. They usually live in the communities they serve and typically earn about $70 a month. The Cuban government spends less per capita than the United States on health care, yet infant mortality and life expectancy rates there are slightly better than in the United States. Like no other nation, Cuba for decades has trained doctors and other medical professionals from around the world with the hope that they will return to their respective countries and serve areas most in need.

At the same time, matters of race and color may be more comparable and compelling. Both countries have a history of slavery of Africans. As a result of the Haitian revolution of 1778, upwards of 800,000 African slaves were brought to Cuba to work on hundreds of plantations that were created to meet a worldwide demand for sugar once supplied predominantly by Haiti. Cuba abolished slavery in 1886,



A tour guide in Viñales Valley, Cuba, explains the process of maintaining a tobacco farm, giving details of the process of fermentation. The farm being toured is certified organic by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

21 years after the United States did so. Later, government-orchestrated entry of thousands of White immigrants intentionally shifted the racial demographics, and today, so-called “Afro Cubans”—a term that those individuals themselves do not use—compose only about 9 percent of the population.

Cuba’s revolution from 1953 to 1959 saw the rise to power of a young revolutionary named Fidel Castro, who would serve as prime minister and then president from 1959 to 2008. The Cuban government, once on friendly terms with the United States, nationalized all U.S. companies operating in Cuba, and relations deteriorated as Cuba and the Soviet Union became allies. The United States initiated a decades-long economic embargo that sought to isolate and cripple Cuba, succeeding in the latter.

Castro, who was succeeded in 2008 by his brother Raul and died in November, famously declared after Cuba’s revolution that socialism would end racism in his beloved country. Institutional racism was ended, but colorism has proved to be much more intractable.

The Reality of Colorism

According to Cuba’s 2012 census figures, nearly two-thirds of Cubans are White. Mixed-race individuals, also known as mestizo and mulatto, constitute about 26 percent of the population, while Black Cubans make up a little more than 9 percent. Black Cubans have been labeled Afro Cuban—again, a term they themselves do not use. They, like their fellow citizens, regardless of color, self-identify by nationality rather than race, unlike Black Americans. To Cubans of every shade and hue, they are first and foremost Cubans. Asked publicly or privately about racism, few Cubans will say that it exists. They tend to be reticent about racial differences and disparities.

Some Black Cubans, often young adults, acknowledge colorism. Although the free education and free health care that were introduced postrevolution have helped to improve the quality of life for all Cubans—especially the poorest, who are disproportionately Black—it is not difficult to discern differences that coincide with skin color.

“The color line is real,” says **Valire Carr Copeland**, associate dean of academic affairs at the School of Social Work. She participates as an instructor in the study abroad program, and this most recent trip was her third visit to Cuba. “The party line is one thing,” she adds, “but in practice and reality, there are differences based on skin tone.”

There are, for example, visible differences in standard of living. The darker the skin, the more likely an individual is to be poor. Meanwhile, lighter-skinned and White Cubans generally occupy more prominent and profitable positions in everything from restaurants and taxi services to the hospitality industry and government jobs. They are far more likely than Black Cubans to have relatives living and working overseas and sending back money—called repatriations or remittances—to support a higher quality of life for their relatives in Cuba. The tens of thousands of Cubans who fled the country during the revolution and immigrated to the United States and elsewhere left partly because they could afford to do so, and they were overwhelmingly White.

“You see lots of things happening in Cuba from a racial and economic and social justice perspective similar to what is happening here, especially racial,”

Continued on page 12



Brian Cook/Golden Sky Media

A man stands on the curb during the evening hours in Havana, Cuba. On the left is the half-closed gate of a stand that sells fresh fruit and vegetables.

Continued from page 11

Copeland continues. "As we teach and prepare students, the narratives about Cuba from scholars suggest that race is not an issue. 'There is no Black or White Cuban. Everybody is a Cuban.' If you focus on that narrative, you don't have to focus on the inequalities based on skin tone. But once you get to Cuba, it's very difficult, it's almost impossible, not to see similar trends that you would see in the U.S. in terms of what you would see if you go to a very nice restaurant. So in terms of racial justice and skin tones, you see similarities to the U.S."

Colorism in Cuba negatively affects the quality of life of darker-skinned citizens. Though Castro's regime promoted antiracism, colorism crept in as foreign companies doing business in Cuba, specifically other Latin American and European countries, gave hiring preference to White and lighter-skinned Cubans. The practice has continued and worsened as Cuba has yielded to free-market forces, observes **Larry Glasco**, an associate professor of history at Pitt who has visited Cuba regularly since the 1990s.

Glasco, who specializes in interracial group relationships, notes that Black middle-class Cubans had achieved parity with the White middle class by the 1990s. But because many Blacks entered medical and technical professions that paid with pesos rather than tourism-related jobs dominated by Whites and paid with higher-value foreign dollars, income and wealth gaps persisted.

In fact, the socioeconomic status of Black Cubans "has gone downhill," says Glasco. "If you don't have access to foreign currency—hard currency, as they call it—dollars and euros—you're sunk. To buy anything decent, you must pay dollars. And most [Black Cubans] don't have access to dollars, so they are more shut out than ever."

Glasco predicts that future free-market benefits to Cuba's economy will help Cubans already holding an economic advantage and will hurt the disadvantaged, essentially widening the economic gap between White and lighter-skinned Cubans on one side and poor and Black Cubans on the other. It also, Glasco contends, will accelerate a trend he observes toward increased economic, social, and racial inequalities.

"If there's an opening between the U.S. and Cuba and some optimistic-sounding things happen, it's not going to benefit much the average Cuban on the street," says Glasco. "The advantages will go to those with connections, those already with some money. Poor and Black Cubans will not really benefit. This is sad to think about, but it will probably hurt them as the economy moves more toward a free market."

American companies are more sensitive about race and cultural diversity and could help to promote parity, Glasco says, but they are "way behind" the free-market wave that has already arrived at Cuba's shores.

"It could be disastrous for poor Blacks, the growing inequality and growing frustration," says Glasco.

Davis agrees.

"Cuba has done away with institutional forms of racism," he says. "But Cuba has wound up with a two-tier economic system caused partly by repatriations from White Cubans in Florida. Now limits have been lifted on how much money can be sent back to Cuba and how much one can buy. So Cuba will end up looking like it did before."

That would suggest an increased need for social workers who can help to address social, economic, and racial inequities.

Hearing the Other Side

Copeland is not surprised when students return from Cuba with a decidedly different opinion of the country. It's a matter of facts dispelling myths.

"I'm interested mostly in them coming back and realizing that Cuba is not as bad as people have said that it was," she says. "They only heard the U.S. story. They never heard the Cuban story. And when they went to Cuba, they heard the Cuban side."

Whitehead expects the program to be a University fixture well into the future.

"We anticipate that student demand will remain similar to its current levels," he says. "While students are attracted to Cuba, it is really the dean and the school's commitment to high-quality academics that keep it going. It is unclear what the future will hold with regard to relations with Cuba, and we are hopeful that a warming of relations will encourage additional participation." ■

A Different Perspective:

Cuba Trip Deepens Meaning of Social Work for Students

By LaMont Jones Jr.

Abby Carpenter of Lake Zurich, Ill., was a sophomore at Butler University in Indianapolis, Ind., when a three-month study abroad program in South America piqued her interest in social work.

"While there, I learned a lot about economic and social inequality and became passionate about diminishing inequality in the United States and around the world," she says.

Now a student in the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, Carpenter recently went on a 10-day spring break trip to Cuba with nine other graduate students as part of the Cuban Social Policy Issues class, which solidified her commitment to the field.

"It made me realize that there are many different ways to approach social work and that we have so much to learn from Cuba's social policy," says Carpenter, who is working toward her Master of Social Work degree. "I really enjoyed learning from all of the Cuban professors about their take on U.S.-Cuba relations. It made me realize that our government has created a lot of heartache for the Cuban people and that the U.S. has a lot of work to do as a nation."

Carpenter's classmates say that the course, supported by Pitt's Center on Race and Social Problems, which is based in the School of Social Work, reaffirmed their commitment to the field as well.

"The trip highlighted the importance of the special job social workers do as it relates to meeting people where they are and how the people and their environment impact each other," says **Devino Sinclair** of Ocho Rios, Jamaica. "It reminded me of the reason I chose social work: to continue helping others to help themselves."

It was a similar case for **Courtney Gardner**, who spoke of the role of social work in understanding the community and environmental influences on individuals in need rather than blaming them for the challenges they face.

"I have always been very dedicated to community connections and free access to social services," says Gardner, of Concord, Calif. "The trip validated my beliefs and instilled hope that something like this is possible."

Cubans place "a high priority on community and family connections, support, and minimizing stigma for utilizing social services," she says.

"I was happy to see that so many people had access to three meals a day, dental and medical care, and free education from kindergarten to a PhD. These policies would be phenomenal in the U.S., as there is such a disparity in access to one's human rights in this country."

Kendra Browning of Harrisburg, Pa., was delighted to find social programs that could be adapted to serve populations in the United States. She also found affirmation of her decision to become a social worker.

"I was always interested in social work as a child; I just didn't know it was called that," she says. "I just knew that I wanted to help people in some way for a living. It wasn't until I took my first social work class at my undergraduate college that I fell in love with social work."

The trip held special meaning for Browning, who has family ties in Cuba that were lost when her great-grandmother emigrated from Cuba to the United States in search of a better life for herself and her children.

"IT MADE ME TAKE A STEP BACK AND LOOK AT HOW WE DO THINGS IN THE U.S.," SHE SAYS. "IT MADE ME REALIZE THAT THERE ARE SOME AREAS THAT WE COULD IMPROVE UPON IF WE ARE WILLING TO LISTEN TO EACH OTHER AND WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE COMMUNITY. I THINK THAT TAKING THE TRIP TO CUBA REALLY SOLIDIFIED THAT BEING A SOCIAL WORKER IS WHAT I AM MEANT TO DO."

KENDRA BROWNING

"In the midst of their journey, the original last name was changed when my great-grandmother married a man she met on the boat," says Browning. "All of the [family] members that knew the original name have since passed on, so we have no idea what our last name was."

Though she returned to Pittsburgh not knowing if she may have crossed the paths of long-lost relatives, Browning says that the trip was valuable in other ways.

"It made me take a step back and look at how we do things in the U.S.," she says. "It made me realize that there are some areas that we could improve upon if we are willing to listen to each other and work together to improve the community. I think that taking the trip to Cuba really solidified that being a social worker is what I am meant to do."

Continued on page 23



Brian Cook/Golden Sky Media

A Cuban musical artist energizes the crowd during the annual Afro-Cuban festival in Havana, Cuba.

Whitfield Brings Another Dimension to School

By LaMont Jones Jr.

Darren Whitfield wasted no time making good impressions when he joined the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work faculty last fall.

The assistant professor not only plunged into teaching, he also began applying for research grants and initiating interdisciplinary collaborations while filling a gap as an expert on how sexual orientation and gender and racial/ethnic identity intersect with social work issues.

"He hit the ground running," says Dean Larry E. Davis. "He's really a welcome addition. There's nobody else on the School of Social Work faculty with his level of LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] background. He brings a dimension to the school that the school didn't have before he came."

Already, Whitfield has partnered with research faculty at Pitt's Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH) on a current study of how violence affects the health outcomes of Black LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) youths and young adults. He's also collaborating with the GSPH Center for LGBT Health Research on a study of how microaggressions affect the use of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis among Black men who are gay or bisexual and at high risk for HIV transmission. Meanwhile, he's awaiting word on a grant from the National Institutes of Health that supports the work of early career academics.

"It's been great to work with him as a new partner, and we hope that his involvement with the center will foster even stronger collaborations between the School of Social Work and the Graduate School of Public Health," says Ron Stall, director of the Center for LGBT Health Research. "I look forward to seeing how his contributions to the health and welfare of sexual minority populations evolve and continue to grow here at Pitt."

School of Social Work Associate Professor Jeffrey Shook, who chaired the search committee for Whitfield's position, was delighted to find that Whitfield was as impressive in person as he was on paper.

"He definitely had created a foundation where he has sought out opportunities to get training beyond what was in his program, and he had set up a network and continues to do that," says Shook. "He really understands what he needs to do to get his work done and is a really good teacher, bridging theory and a solid practice background in the classroom. He's a personable colleague, and I appreciate his insights and willingness to mentor students."

Whitfield's interest in social work burgeoned when he was a youngster growing up in Saint Louis, Mo., where, as the child of a single mother with health problems, he had positive interactions with school social workers and other human services professionals.

"I got into social work because I've always wanted to help individuals from marginalized groups," he says. "This career is an opportunity for me to give back."

All of Whitfield's degrees are in social work: a bachelor's from Buena Vista University and a master's and PhD from the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work. He previously taught at Des Moines Area Community College, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the University of Denver.

Over the last decade, Whitfield has established himself as an expert on HIV/AIDS and other health, behavioral, and social issues affecting LGBT communities, particularly men of color. His involvement spans micropractice and macropractice, and he has served HIV and AIDS patients as a caseworker in Virginia through a state program funded by the federal Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act. White was only 13 years old when he was diagnosed with full-blown AIDS in 1984. A hemophiliac, White had contracted the disease through a blood transfusion; he died of AIDS complications in April 1990.

Whitfield also served as director of prevention and supervisor for care services at the AIDS Project of Central Iowa and on community advisory boards of several local groups, including the Iowa Gay Men's Health Workgroup and Iowa HIV Community Planning Group.

Effective social workers, Whitfield says, understand that "everything is intertwined," that thinking across micro and macro levels and shifting political landscapes and diverse cultural milieus are essential to helping those they serve overcome structural barriers and gain access to what they need.



"I GOT INTO SOCIAL WORK BECAUSE I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO HELP INDIVIDUALS FROM MARGINALIZED GROUPS," HE SAYS. "THIS CAREER IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO GIVE BACK."

"A good social worker," he adds, "is one who understands that disenfranchised communities have everything they need to be successful and that it is our job to help leverage those innate skills and talents [of those community residents] to better serve them and better serve their communities. My personal philosophy is that I don't have the answers—the communities have the answers."

It's a perspective Whitfield brings to the classroom and the research lab as he helps to educate the next generation of social workers and adds to the body of literature on pressing social problems.

"We want to be culturally responsive to the community and better prepare students to leave school and go into the social work profession," he says. "What's unique about Pitt is its pride in community engagement. I'm looking forward to working on mutually beneficial projects for the community and Pitt research." ■

Darren Whitfield

Terry Clark Photography

From the VanKirk Career Center



The VanKirk Career Center at the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work officially opened its doors to our social work students and alumni in October 2015, and the response has been outstanding.

At the center, we do our best to help our students hear these two words: "You're hired."

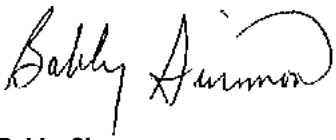
We offer a variety of career development workshops devoted to topics such as résumé writing, effective interviewing, salary negotiation, and licensure preparation. We provide video mock interviews for students and alumni as well as individual career consultations as requested.

As the director of career services, I ask you, our alumni, to e-mail us any social work job opportunities that you may know about. We can then add those to current job listings on our Web site and tweet them to our Twitter followers. Also, many of our graduates relocate to other cities and states. I would ask that they let us know of opportunities in their cities or regions and also consider networking with current students or other graduates who might be considering the same path. Being able to communicate with fellow alumni can be a critical part of the job search process.

Our students receive a first-rate education at the School of Social Work, and it falls on all of us to help them move forward so that they, too, can help to bring about change in our society. Please e-mail job descriptions, names of agencies, and any job-related information to me at bobby@pitt.edu. You also can feel free to call me at 412-624-6354.

Thank you in advance for your assistance, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Hail to Pitt!



Bobby Simmons
Director of Career Services



School Honors Distinguished Alumni

The 2016 Distinguished Alumni recognition program was held on October 5, 2016, at the School of Social Work. The following awards were presented at the luncheon: Distinguished Alumni Award in Social Work Education, **Michael Lindsey** (MSW '01, PhD '02), McSilver Associate Professor of Poverty Studies, New York University; Distinguished Alumni Award in Social Work Practice, **James Bernardo** (MSW '76), executive vice president and chief operating officer, Presbyterian Senior Living; Outstanding Alumni Award, **Rodney Rutkowski** (BASW '75, MSW '80), director of health management, UPMC St. Margaret; Outstanding Field Instructor Award, **Carol Brackett** (MSW '79), prevention division chief, Allegheny County Department of Human Services/Area Agency on Aging; and Rising Star Award, **Benjamin Bishop** (BASW '10, MSW '11), founder and coordinator, nature-related programming, Pittsburgh Mercy Health System. For more information on the Distinguished Alumni awards program and to submit nominations for the 2017 awards, please visit **socialwork.pitt.edu/alumni/distinguished-alumni**.

FIND US ONLINE!

Find us on **Facebook** by searching for PittSSW

Follow us on **Twitter**: @PittSocialwork

Stay connected to the School of Social Work!



Pitt Career Network

Register to serve as a mentor to a current student or to network with fellow alumni.

The Pitt Career Network is an online networking service for Pitt alumni and students that provides the opportunity to discuss careers and job prospects, learn about your field in new places, have a positive impact on someone's future, and make valuable connections with other alumni.

For more information and to sign up, visit **alumni.pitt.edu/alumni/resources/career-resources**.

Many MSW Alumni Now Retroactively Eligible for NSWM Certificate

Effective 2017, alumni of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work Master of Social Work (MSW) program whose concentration was in Community Organization and Social Administration (now known as Community, Organization, and Social Action, or COSA) and who pursued the social administration track or received the School of Social Work's Human Services Management Certificate can now apply to the Network for Social Work Management (NSWM) to receive its national Human Services Management Certificate.

In 2016, the Pitt School of Social Work was approved as one of the initial 14 partner schools of social work whose curriculum met the NSWM competencies and was able to award NSWM's national Human Services Management Certificate to its social administration concentration graduates. Three graduating groups have now received this national certificate and are invited to become part of the growing network of social work managers. This year, NSWM is inviting alumni from these partner schools of social work to apply on their own to receive this new certificate retroactively.

COSA alumni are encouraged not only to retroactively seek this Human Services Management Certificate but also to consider joining NSWM to further build connections with other social work managers nationally and internationally.

For more information about the NSWM certificate, call Lakeya Cherry at 213-553-1870 or visit **socialworkmanager.org**.

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 **socialwork.pitt.edu/academic-programs/field-education** for more information.

Keep Us Updated!

PITT
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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 can update your contact information to begin receiving Pitt news and other materials.

Check out the Pitt Alumni Association online community at **alumni.pitt.edu/alumni/resources/alumni-resources**.

Did You Know?

The VanKirk Career Center 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 VanKirk center 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 **socialwork.pitt.edu/student-resources/career-services.php** for full details on upcoming events or to schedule an appointment.

The Changing Landscape of Retirement in the 21st Century

By Dorian Mintzer (MSW '70), Alan Momeyer (MSW '72), and Bob Schwartz (MSW '67)


Dorian Mintzer


Alan Momeyer


Bob Schwartz

We've decided to write this article for all of you who have been impacted by the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, whether you are a recent graduate or—like us—graduated many years ago. Much has changed in the 21st century. What is constant for all of us and all of you is that through our education and training, we've developed important skills and competencies that we put to use in social work or related fields. Some of us have used our skills and training in other pursuits. In short, each of us has been inspired to live a life of social work beyond our employment, and we hope our conversation will inspire you to do the same as we reflect on how we live, work, and play.

Dorian Mintzer: "I graduated from Pitt in 1970 and put my social work degree to work in Pittsburgh with a stint as chief social worker at the Developmental Clinic at Children's Hospital [of Pittsburgh of UPMC]. I moved to Massachusetts to pursue a PhD, and I opened a clinical practice [that] led to my portfolio career. I became a mother later in life, but my entrepreneurial spirit allowed me to consult, speak, and become a personal and professional coach and so much more in the 'second half' of my life."

Bob Schwartz: "I'm a traditional social worker, having majored in group work, and [I] served as a social work officer in the [U.S.] Army, discharged with the rank of captain. I served as a social worker and executive in Jewish communal services for 42 years. Social work is who I am."

Alan Momeyer: "Beyond graduate school at Pitt, I never practiced social work. I was the chief of human resources for the Loews Corporation for 36 years, helping some 25,000 employees access and utilize various benefits. I always considered how I could take action for the good of the individual and the good of the community. I was driven by the principles that drive our profession."

Mintzer: "My social work and psychology principles and values are so internalized that they're part of my core. Giving back and trying to make the world a better place is important to me. As I continue to love work at age 70, I am engaged and connected, and I feel a deep sense of purpose and meaning in my life, both personally and professionally. I'm reading, traveling, taking up new hobbies, and rekindling my activism during and following the recent election. There are only 24 hours in a day, and I've had to learn to say no a little more than I used to."

Momeyer: "Unlike Dori, I've decided to retire, but I'm still quite active. The big retirement dilemma to me is the 'to/from' equation. Instead of focusing on where I've come from—a satisfying career—I'm basing my life now on what I want to go to—adventures that challenge my skills and perspective. I'm embracing the opportunity to turn interests into passions. I'm exploring cooking techniques and culture around the globe; driving an Uber in New York City to experience work from a different perspective; cycling in new territory across the country; and blogging about it to share my experiences and appreciations about life after viewing it through a different lens. It's my way to come full circle and continue to grow in my field without holding onto my career."

Schwartz: "I'm the busiest retired person I know. I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease several years before my retirement. I made up my mind that I would concentrate on assisting others who have Parkinson's, and I now volunteer extensively with the National Parkinson Foundation. I'm also volunteering with the local Jewish Community Center and consulting with the Israel Cancer Research Fund. I find using my social work skills in retirement is a stimulating and rewarding experience because I'm helping others grow and gain confidence in their abilities to make good decisions for the betterment of their lives and [the lives] of those they love. It is very important how I go about my work."

We offer three different models for life during these retirement transition years. There is no right way. What we all have in common is having trained at the School of Social Work and developed skills that have been with us throughout our professional lives, regardless of what we did or still do. We invite you to learn from us and take time to think about how you want to live this next stage of your life.

As the School of Social Work looks forward to celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2018, we want to ask you, our fellow alumni, to tell us your story. How are you living a life of social work as a young or young-at-heart alumnus of our great school? Share your update at **socialwork.pitt.edu/alumni** and help us tout the great work being done across the country and around the world thanks to the common bond we share.

International Field Placement on the Horizon

By spring 2018, students working toward their Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (BASW) degree might be able to complete part of their field placement abroad.

The University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work has received a grant from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. This grant, administered by Partners of the Americas, is one of just 18 awarded last year for the development of study abroad opportunities for undergraduate students from underrepresented groups and fields.

As a result of this grant, members of the school's International Committee and representatives of the BASW program have been working to create opportunities for international field placements that would be available to BASW seniors for the spring 2018 term. Throughout the spring and summer of 2017, faculty members will be visiting prospective field placement sites thanks to the capacity-building grant and additional support from the University Center for International Studies. The school also is collaborating closely with the Pitt Study Abroad Office to secure field placement options in at least 10 countries that are likely to include Argentina, Australia, China, Cuba, Denmark, England, Germany, Ghana, Israel, and Portugal.

Participating BASW seniors would complete the first half of their field placement in Pittsburgh and the second half abroad. The International Committee and BASW program director have met with BASW juniors to inform them of this exciting opportunity.

Associate Professor **Sara Goodkind** serves as principal investigator for this project. ■



Sara Goodkind



CRSP UPDATE

Reflections and Response

Given the state of race relations in this country, the University of Pittsburgh Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP) has much work yet to do. When we launched the center in 2002, the country was flirting with the idea that we had reached a postracial era. However, considering the racial divisiveness and anger that have come with the most recent presidential election, this clearly is not the case.

We have always attempted to make the activities of the center relevant to both scholars and community practitioners. This past fall was no exception. Our speaker series has established a huge following. Each month, we attract new attendees. In fact, we have had to designate an overflow room, which also now frequently overflows.

This past fall, Frank Dobbin, professor of sociology at Harvard University, spoke about some of the shortcomings of diversity training programs. Richard Rothstein, a research associate at the Economic Policy Institute, spoke to us about how the Federal Housing Administration has a history of racial discrimination in its housing policies. We also were very fortunate to have Allegheny County Police Department Assistant Superintendent Maurita Bryant, a Pittsburgh law enforcement officer for more than 30 years, talk to us about how both race and gender have challenged her career as a police officer.

Finally, James Huguley, who is a relatively new faculty member in the School of Social Work, reported on his recent study about racial bias in school suspensions of Black youths. Each of these talks was well received. As is true for all of our events, all of these presentations were videotaped and can be found on our Web site, **crsp.pitt.edu**. We always want to acknowledge the sponsors of our fall lecture series, the law firm of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC. Without its support, the lecture series would not be possible.

Friends of the Center

Every other year, we host a friends of the center reception. The most recent event, held in fall 2016, was well attended. This reception, we believe, is the most diverse gathering of individuals that takes place under the auspices of the University. Those who attend are University staff, faculty, researchers, and graduate students; lawmakers; activists; civic leaders; philanthropists; and other college and University leaders. At this fall's gathering, City of Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto spoke, as did Pitt Chancellor Patrick Gallagher. Both applauded the center for its work in the university and in the community. We greatly appreciate their sustained support.

Summer Institutes

We are at this time in the process of planning our 2017 Summer Institutes. We anticipate doing one on race and child welfare, one on race and education, and finally one on race and criminal justice. As you are perhaps aware, the foremost goal of the Summer Institutes is to disseminate the most up-to-date race-related information to civic and community leaders and practitioners.



PHOTOS FROM CUBA: Pitt students Chih-Ying Liu (far left) and Devino Sinclair (green shirt) join other students to talk with a University of Havana professor.





PHOTOS FROM CUBA: Dancing at the Transformacion de Principe



PHOTOS FROM CUBA: Pictured left to right are Jaime Booth; Camilo Garcia, a professor at the University of Havana; and James Huguley

Race and Social Problems



Now in its eighth year, our journal, *Race and Social Problems*, has been very successful, and it continues to attract top academics from a variety of disciplines who tackle topics that run the gamut. We are very pleased with its increasing appeal to scholars of various disciplines.

Cuba 2017

As part of the Cuban Social Policy Issues course, we took a group of 10 students to Cuba over spring break. The course itself was taught by Dean Larry E. Davis and Associate Dean Valire Copeland with the help of Assistant Professor Jaime Booth. Davis and Assistant Professor James Huguley accompanied the students to Cuba, where they investigated Cuba's approach to social and health services and explored some aspects of Cuban culture. Upon their return, students wrote research papers on a topic of their choice. Photos from the trip are featured above and on the opposite page.

CRSP Fellows

Our CRSP fellows are continuing to do great work in the community. First and foremost, they are working hard at the Homewood Children's Village, where academic and emotional support groups are available for children who attend Homewood schools.

Overall, the fall was a huge success!

PHOTOS FROM CUBA: First row, left to right, Lourdes Margarita Tabares Neira, Cassandra Hourlland, Ariel Goehring, Kendra Browning, Khaira Nieto Ross, Courtney Gardner, and Devino Sinclair. Second row, left to right, Uriel Ramirez, Andrew Perrow, Abigail Carpenter, Tessa Paivanas, Chih-Ying Liu, and Jaime Booth. Third row, left to right, Stephe Sungh Gill, Rosalyn Maldonado, and Victor Diaz, international relations director at the Latin American School of Medicine.



CLASS NOTES

- **Karen Clunas** (MSW '92), who also earned a Certificate in Labor and Industry, is celebrating 25 years at Peoples, where she administers low-income universal service programs. She says she has enjoyed "the unique opportunity of utilizing my social work background in a business setting. ... The type of position I hold is very rare, and I am able to provide the business with insights into the aspects of … how poverty impacts limited-income customers' ability to pay utility bills."
- **Maurice Heidish** (MSW '79) has created an online training program, Specialized Family Therapy, based on his 30 years of direct practice with more than 500 families embroiled in custody visitation-related disputes. Specialized Family Therapy (SFT) is focused on reconciliation counseling and coparenting counseling and "gives therapists of all professional disciplines the solution-focused skills to engage even the most troubled families. SFT is an alternative resolution method that is nonlitigious and helps children develop and maintain a solid loving relationship with both parents," Heidish says. SFT was funded by the Albert N. Craig Jr. Award that Heidish received in 2011 from the Staunton Farm Foundation, which provides grants to support treatment, services, and systems improvements for children, youths, and adults with behavioral health issues. The program is approved for four social work continuing education credits by the National Association of Social Workers.
- **Debra Scro Montrose** (MSW '90, PhD '00) was appointed director of research operations at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic (WPIC) in Pittsburgh in December 2016. Montrose has provided administrative and clinical leadership for psychosis research programs at WPIC since graduating with her master's degree in 1990 and, more recently, has been serving in a leadership role for multiple activities related to research infrastructure within the University of Pittsburgh Department of Psychiatry.
- **Sharise Nance** (MSW '06) has published *Walking the Tightrope of Life: Refuel, Renew, and Re-center Your Work-Life Demands*, published by Expected End Entertainment, LLC. The workbook was created for and dedicated to individuals in the health care and helping professions who are experiencing difficulty disconnecting from the workday while at home and/or struggling with the emotional, mental, and physical fatigue or burnout often associated with these fields of work. These individuals give so much, so often, and to so many that they often neglect to invest the time needed for their own self-care needs. *Walking the Tightrope of Life* will encourage these professionals to practice good self-care as well as find renewal in their work in order to experience more balance and satisfaction in their professional and personal lives.

  Nance's first publication, *Vitamin C: Healing for the Mind, Body and Soul*, was among the winners of the first Pittsburgh Author Awards, sponsored by the Authors' Zone.

  For more information about Nance's book, please visit vitaminchealing.com/shop.
- **Deborah Robinson** (MSW '89), field education coordinator and director of the Home and School Visitor Program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, recently was named to the Turtle Creek Valley Community Services (TCV) Board of Directors. TCV provides a continuum of services, care, and support that empowers individuals, families, and communities with behavioral, mental health, substance abuse, and/or developmental issues to sustain their recovery and achieve the important possibilities in their lives.
- **Mark Ruffalo** (MSW '12) recently was appointed an adjunct instructor in social work at the University of South Florida, where he also serves as an affiliate assistant professor of psychiatry. Ruffalo will be developing a new course in introductory psychopharmacology for the graduate social work program. He also is involved in the didactic instruction and clinical supervision of psychiatry residents.
- **Stefanie Small** (MSW '01) recently was promoted to director of clinical services at Jewish Family & Children's Service of Pittsburgh. Small previously served as a clinical services supervisor, case coordinator/psychotherapist, and intern. Small also is a field instructor through the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work's Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education, for which she sits on the selection committee. The Hartford program is designed to enhance both direct practice and leadership skills in gerontology. ■



Graduates Get Accolades from Local Employers

A recent survey of employers who have hired University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work graduates shows high levels of satisfaction with their new employees. According to the survey, more than 95 percent of respondents who hired Bachelor of Arts in Social Work students and more than 93 percent of those who hired Master of Social Work students rated the newly hired graduates as adequate to outstanding. The quality assurance assessment is based on more than 370 employers who hired BASW or MSW students from 2014 to 2016.

"The numbers do not surprise me at all," says Bobby Simmons, the school's director of career services. "I have been told on multiple occasions by employers that our students are well prepared for the job market."

The survey asked employers about the graduates' professional competence in areas such as demonstrating ethical and professional behavior; advancing human rights; engaging in policy practice; and assessing individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

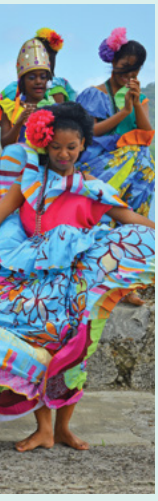
"CHS HAS BEEN INCREDIBLY LUCKY TO HAVE A STRONG CONNECTION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH. THROUGH TEACHING CLASSES, LECTURING, AND ENGAGING IN FIELD PLACEMENTS, THE AGENCY HAS BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY AND CULTIVATE MEMBERS OF OUR EVER-CHANGING WORKFORCE. CHS CHERISHES ITS INTERNS AND HAS FOUND THAT WE ARE ABLE TO PLACE THEM INTO EMPLOYMENT 80 PERCENT OF THE TIME, WHICH IS GREAT FOR THEM AND FOR US."

ADRIENNE WALNOHA
CEO, Community Human Services (CHS)



Terry Clark Photography

Pictured left to right are Amy DeGurian, a field education coordinator with the School of Social Work; MSW student Cassaundra Bredbenner; and Jon Hoffmann, CHS chief operating officer



A Different Perspective

Continued from page 13

Students were required to write a final paper after returning from Cuba. Browning focused on race and culture, and Gardner explored gender and sexuality equality in the Cuban workplace. Carpenter chose to examine how the Cuban government—a one-party Socialist state with Communist leanings—works to reduce food insecurity among citizens. Cuba imports much of its food, and sometimes shortages leave citizens holding monthly ration vouchers that can't be redeemed.

Most of this year's students say that the course changed their perceptions of Cuba.

"I had a few 'wow' moments," says **Ariel Goehring** of Clovis, Calif. "Some were at a time when we were not even discussing social work. Just taking in Cuba and realizing how positive my interactions were with people and what a beautiful and welcoming place it was. I didn't know any of this as an American. We don't talk about it. Reflecting on that and my preconceived notions, it really hit me how little we know and how much there is to learn."

As intended, the course broadened and deepened the meaning of social work among the students.

"I think there is still so much work to be done as social workers," says **Chih-Ying Liu** of Taiwan, whose undergraduate degree is in sociology. "The problems are not easy to solve, but there are other ways that we can explore. From the Cuban experience, we can see how people work at the community level devotedly and continuously and that economic development is not the only way to enhance human well-being."

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK SPEAKER SERIES



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2017

SIDNEY A. TELLER LECTURE

"Radical Love in an Age of Racial Oppression: Social Work, Social Change, and the Politics of Unflinching Inclusivity"

JOHN L. JACKSON JR., Dean, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice



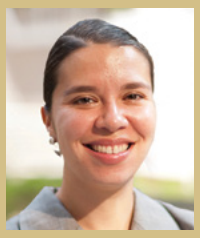
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2017

WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY

"The 'Greening' of Social Work: Striving for Environmental Justice"

MICHAEL CRONIN, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Monmouth University

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MONDAY, JANUARY 23

"Objection! How Evidence Law Perpetuates Racism in the Courtroom"

JASMINE B. GONZALES ROSE, Assistant Professor of Law, School of Law, University of Pittsburgh



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

"White Privilege: Not So Invisible Anymore?"

PAUL CROLL, Associate Professor of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Welfare, Augustana College



MONDAY, MARCH 13

"For the Sake of All: Translating Evidence into Action for Community Health"

JASON Q. PURNELL, Assistant Professor, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

"Who Are You? Racial Classification and the Instability of Race"

MICHAEL OMI, Associate Professor of Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies, University of California, Berkeley