

Year in review

2018



SCHOOL OF
**Social
Work**

University
of Pittsburgh



Dear friends & colleagues,

As the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work celebrates its 100th anniversary, I am thrilled to join with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners to help make the school's second century as impactful as the first. This first month of my journey as Pitt's new dean has been a whirlwind of meeting people, learning about the school's many activities, visiting and connecting with community partners, and coming to understand how all that we do impacts so many organizations and lives. I came to Pitt because I have long-admired the school's productivity, areas of focus, and reputation. Now that I am here, I have been thrilled to discover even more to be excited about: the delightful and productive faculty, staff, and students; commitment to core domains within social work;

extensive involvement with partners throughout the community; and clear potential to build upon what has already been accomplished. I am energized by all that I see around me.

Pitt has always had a reputation for excellence in education and research, and I am now seeing those accomplishments firsthand. The school is building on educational excellence and preparing our students for a rapidly changing world. Faculty members are conducting cutting-edge research with a wide range of partners to address the problems facing our communities and the broader world.

Our society is in desperate need of the core values that drive our field: respecting human dignity, fighting for social justice, building bridges between people and groups, and

servicing others. This commitment to core values is palpable in everything we do here at Pitt and in our sense of urgency to actively help shape the future of the field and of the world around us.

I look forward to building upon all of the wonderful work that the school is currently doing and thinking about ways to expand this into the future. With your support, we will move our profession forward and work to tackle the challenges our society faces. I am thrilled to be joining with all of you in this quest!

Yours,



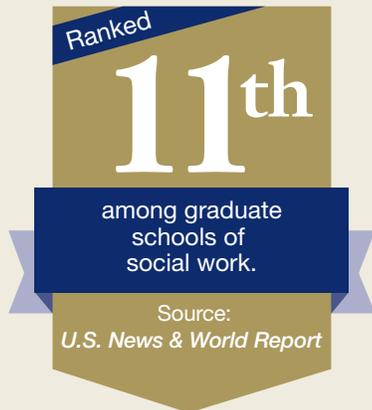
Elizabeth M.Z. Farmer
Dean



Social Work Dean
Elizabeth M.Z. Farmer

About the Dean Dr. Farmer comes to the Pitt School of Social Work with a distinguished career that includes extensive experience in cross-disciplinary, community-engaged research. Before beginning her academic career, she worked as a treatment foster parent, respite care provider, and group home parent, which engendered her National Institute of Mental Health–funded program of research on improving treatment and care for youth in out-of-home placements. Over the past several decades, she has worked with a wide range of colleagues, agencies, policy makers, families, and youth to understand and improve services and systems for youth with mental health problems who have extended and complex trajectories through the child-serving systems. Farmer most recently served as associate dean for research at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Social Work. Prior to her years at VCU, she was on the faculty at Case Western Reserve University (Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences); Penn State University (Department of Health Policy and Administration); and Duke University (Department of Psychiatry), where she earned her PhD in sociology. Since 2011, she has been co-editor of the *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*.

School of Social Work “At a Glance”

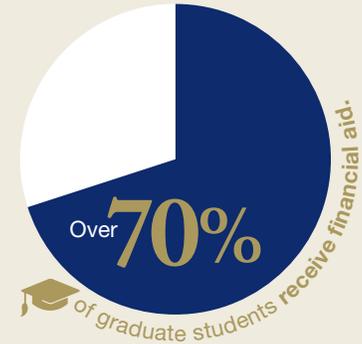


Students collectively provide more than

350,000

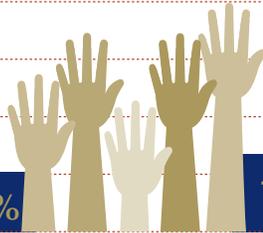
field placement hours to service agencies and organizations worth more than

\$ 8.4 million annually.



Students of color make up **26%** of the student body.

26%



Over 35% of full-time faculty members are faculty of color.

+35%



center on race in an American school of social work



community organizing program in the country

International Initiatives

Social work students are navigating an increasingly global society but often are left behind by study abroad programs at universities and colleges.

The new Social Work Study Abroad program, funded by the U.S. Department of State and administered by Partners of the Americas, aims to increase international opportunities for historically underrepresented social work students. With this support, faculty traveled to Israel, Ghana, Hong Kong, Denmark, Germany, and Cuba to identify prospects for social work student field placements and international learning opportunities. Through the program, BASW student Amber Jones interned in Cologne, Germany, at Lobby fur Madchen (Lobby for Girls), an organization that provides an open and safe space for girls to receive education, health, mental health, and other supportive services. Faculty partners at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences (KatHO), a private institution in Germany enrolling more than 4,000 undergraduate social work students annually, supported her locally. ●

BASW student Amber Jones in Germany



“ Studying and interning abroad in Germany was extremely pivotal in making my college experience an impactful one. It was important that I experienced social work systems and diverse social issues from the perspective of a true outsider so that I could recognize elements that may be overlooked in places more known to myself. I had the opportunity to meet and learn from youth and professionals from around the world, increasing my cultural competency and development as a humanitarian.”

— Amber Jones, BASW student

Assistant Professor
Jaime Booth



Faculty Research

**Assistant Professor
Jaime Booth is
harnessing new
technology to
understand how the
places where youth
of color spend time
impact stress and
substance use.**

Dr. Booth's National Institutes of Health (NIH) K01 award will fund a five year research and training program to position her to make significant contributions to the ways we approach substance abuse prevention in youth of color. Her \$847,980 grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse will allow her to use new technologies to identify neighborhood spaces that may support youth and prevent tobacco and marijuana use (TMU). Black adolescents are more likely to live in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, exposing them to a variety of stressors that may uniquely impact their patterns of substance use. Some youth, however, may have figured out healthy ways of interacting with their environments, frequenting safe and

supportive spaces. Resisting peer pressure has been the primary target of prevention; however, little attention has been paid to the role of environmental stressors in TMU. Dr. Booth's research seeks to use new technology—specifically the GPS capabilities on cell phones—to understand youth's experiences of spaces in their neighborhoods in real time. "This grant will provide me with the mentoring, training, and research experience necessary to make significant strides in more comprehensively understanding the contextual factors that influence youth substance use," said Booth. "This will lead to the development of prevention interventions that address chronic stressors in their lived environment." ●

Funding for Students

In today's healthcare landscape, social workers need to be prepared to work in an integrated system, which means learning how to serve the best interest of the client.



**Baker Fellows field placements are
in integrated health settings.**

The Edith M. Baker Integrated Behavioral Healthcare Fellowship, a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)-funded training grant secured by Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Dr. Valire Carr Copeland, is bridging the gaps between physical health, mental health, and health behavior. During the fellowship, MSW students complete a concentration field placement in integrated behavioral/mental health care and are part of an interdisciplinary team of healthcare providers serving individuals and groups across the lifespan in medically needy health service areas, both rural and urban. The fellowship connects the School of Social Work, the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Division of Family Medicine, and major healthcare providers of primary care in the region to provide training for social work students in sites that offer behavioral/mental health services. In addition to personal and professional development through this fellowship program, each receives a stipend of \$10,000. Edith Baker Fellows are trained to become behavioral health specialists, mental health practitioners, behavioral disorder counselors, rehabilitation counselors, chronic disease case managers, implementation specialists, integrated behavioral health consultants, and Licensed Clinical Social Workers with a concentration in integrated behavioral health, among others. ●

School Discipline Disparities Report

Assistant Professor James Huguley's "Just Discipline and the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Greater Pittsburgh: Local Challenges and Promising Solutions" report showed that Pittsburgh-area schools suffer from severe racial disparities in out-of-school suspensions with a rate that is double for African-American students compared to their non-Black classmates.



Assistant Professor
James Huguley

As the new school year begins with more law enforcement officers assigned to schools, Dr. Huguley also expressed concerns about the "criminalization of school discipline," whereby school law enforcement officers getting involved in common student discipline increases the likelihood that a student will become involved with the juvenile justice system. "More than 80 percent of our districts have problems with either overall suspension use, racial disparities in those suspensions, or both," said Dr. Huguley. "Our region has a problem that is not only a social justice issue, but also an economic one that is hampering our well-being and our future." The report, funded by The Heinz Endowments, also offers solutions, portions of which are already being used successfully in the Woodland Hills School District. Dr. Huguley, who co-authored the report with faculty from the School of Education, said there is reason for optimism. He noted that some districts are already adapting new policies and shifting practices, and that schools that are making the efforts to move toward positive change will reap the benefits. ●

Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and Department of Psychiatry's new Center for Interventions to Enhance Community Health (CiTECH) launched this year to great success.



CiTECH codirectors
Dr. David Brent and
Shaun Eack

Projects were supported by the Community Care Behavioral Health Organization, National Institute of Mental Health, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, among others. The first official pilot study was awarded in spring 2018 and is an interdisciplinary collaboration between the School of Social Work and the Department of Psychiatry, awarded to Jessica Levenson, PhD, and Sara Goodkind, PhD. The study will focus on improving educational outcomes for underserved youth through adapting evidence-based sleep interventions for use in the community. The

project supports the mission of the center to improve the uptake of evidence-based practices and enhance community mental health services. Says codirector and founder Professor Shaun Eack: "We believe that when we combine the significant and respective expertise of both social work and psychiatry, we will have the scientific, clinical, and community grounding needed to reduce the multi-decade lag between the development of an effective practice and its use in the community. By bringing these worlds together, we will make research advances more relevant and hope to hasten the translation of evidence to community practice." ●

Supporting Foster Youth



Being part of the foster care system creates challenges for youth including family disruptions, changes in school settings, and interruptions in peer relationships.

The School of Social Work Child Welfare Education and Research Programs work with the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board to create positive change in the child welfare system. This summer, almost 100 teens joined together on the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown campus for the 10th annual 2018 Older Youth Retreat—an event that welcomes foster teens from across Pennsylvania for activities and workshops in a college campus setting. “They work on goal setting, planning, ad-

vocacy, leadership, and building relationships, all while experiencing life on a college campus,” said Dr. Helen Cahalane, principal investigator of the Child Welfare Education and Research Programs. The School of Social Work, along with the state Department of Human Services’ Office of Children, Youth, and Families, hosts the event, with support from county agency partners across the state. In its 10 years, the retreat has supported more than 1,000 young people ages 16 to 21. ●

Center on Race and Social Problems

In the current political climate, and with the host of decisions and problematic events that are occurring, the work of the Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP) is needed now more than ever.

Over the past year, the center has continued with its mission: to engage in research, promote scholarship, and disseminate information on race and social problems. Since 2002, CRSP has invited University of Pittsburgh faculty and researchers to submit pilot study proposals that address current race-related social problems within any of its eight areas of focus: health, economic disparities, education disparities, interracial group relations, mental health, families and youth, the elderly, and criminal justice. Since 2004, the center has funded 34 pilot studies, and this year published *Pilot Projects: Return on Investment, 2004-2014*. The report, which can be found on the CRSP website, indicates that for every \$1 awarded, it received over \$6 in return. The center will continue to support innovative projects that address the myriad race and social problems society faces today. For more information visit the center’s website at crsp.pitt.edu. ●

