Continuing A Tradition of Excellence

The Year in Review: Sociology and Social Work

Within the pages of this year’s newsletter you will find a common thread. That thread is the dedication by students, staff, and faculty as they continue Texas Woman’s University’s time honored tradition of commitment to excellence.

Mentoring, presentations, publications, research, campus service, community service, and teaching are a few of those areas of excellence.

This past year a diversity of recognitions were bestowed. Faculty, students, and the Department were recipients.

Changes occurred: A new program was created, and faculty experienced a passing of the torch as two members prepare for retirement.

We invite you to peruse these pages and join us in the celebration of Sociology and Social Work as we seek to share knowledge and honor the mission and goals of TWU.
Change seems to be the dominant theme this year in the Social Work Program, so this column is going to address some of the changes (and other news) happening in Social Work. From personnel changes, to a new Joint MSW, to a relocation, change can be seen in almost all facets of our program.

Programmatic Changes - Finally! An MSW at TWU!

After several years of planning and preparation, the Joint TWU-UNT MSW (JMSW) program has begun. We started with a small cohort in the Fall of 2017, but anticipate bringing in about 55 - 60 new students for the Fall of 2018.

The Joint MSW (JMSW) program is a partnership between Texas Woman’s University and the University of North Texas (UNT). Both TWU and UNT have enjoyed well-respected BSW programs for decades. The two BSW programs have a strong relationship and have worked collaboratively on a number of initiatives over the years, including the training of field instructors.

A joint program makes perfect sense for both universities and for the community. The population of Denton County is approaching 800,000 and an MSW program for our own community is desperately needed. Through the partnership, the strengths and resources of both institutions are available.

Ours is the first joint MSW program in the state of Texas. We anticipate being granted candidacy status in early summer, 2018. The entire accreditation process takes three years, but graduates will be eligible for licensure while we are in candidacy. The MSW is considered by many to be one of the most recognized and marketable social services degree. Graduates are eligible to sit for licensure as an LMSW and, with two additional years of supervision, become an LCSW, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

Our first Program Director, Dr. Mahasin Saleh, is a UNT faculty member, and our first Field Director, Dr. Alex Colvin, is a member of the TWU faculty. Dr. Dhrup Mukherjee, from UNT, rounds out the first year faculty. Each university will be bringing in another faculty member in the Fall of 2018, and TWU will be conducting a search for the sixth and final JMSW faculty member next academic year. Our specialization for the JMSW is “Advanced Generalist Practice,” a rapidly growing MSW specialization area.

Many TWU and UNT faculty and staff have put in countless hours of work on the new program. In addition to the faculty members previously mentioned, Dr. Abigail Tilton, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Claire Sahlin, Associate Dean of the college, Dr. Nila Ricks, Social Work faculty member, Dr. Jennifer Martin, Executive Vice Provost, and many others at TWU have been involved in making the MSW a reality.

Applicants to the Joint MSW must meet the general admissions requirements of the Graduate Schools at UNT and TWU. Admission to the “Advanced Standing” program of study, completed in one academic year, requires an earned Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) degree within the last seven years. Admission to the “Generalist” program, completed in two years, is available for graduates of other bachelor’s degrees, as well as BSW graduates with degrees more than seven years old. The GPA must be 3.0 or higher. Students may attend the JMSW on a full time or part time basis. For more information, please visit the TWU Social Work webpage at https://twu.edu/social-work/ or contact Mark Sandel at msandel@twu.edu

New Woolf Scholars

The Woolf Scholar’s Program was established by the Woolf Foundation to benefit BSW students. Mrs. Woolf was a 1937 graduate of TWU and the foundation decided to support TWU students in Sociology and Social Work. The Scholars program is for new transfer students or rising seniors majoring in Social Work, with high academic credentials, leadership potential and financial need. This scholarship provides a significant financial award, and eligible recipients may continue for a maximum of two years.

Our wonderful relationship with the Woolf Foundation began five years ago, and a number of outstanding students have been designated Woolf Scholars. In early 2017, the Foundation again funded the BSW Scholar’s program for another cycle. Additionally, the Woolf Foundation committed to providing assistance to TWU students in our new Joint MSW program with UNT. An initial gift of $25,000 was made in 2017 with the goal of an endowment of $100,000 in mind.

Three Woolf scholars are graduating in 2018: Manal Al-Khateeb, Kameshia Dean, and Arlet Martinez. We congratulate these outstanding young scholars.

Our program is truly grateful for the relationship we have with the Woolf Foundation; we believe that Ms. Woolf would be proud of the legacy she has left at TWU and impressed with the quality of the scholars the foundation has assisted.
Location, location, location...

Not all change is welcome. The Social Work program has, to the best of our knowledge, been in the same location, #203 in the Old Main Building, since 1946 when it was organized as a major in the Sociology department. Sadly, we will be moving to an unknown location later in the summer.

The university will be turning the entire second floor of OMB into the Center for Women’s Leadership in Business, Politics, and Public Policy. Our spacious offices, decorated in true shabby chic fashion, are somewhat unique on campus. A fashionable mix of mismatched 1950’s - 1970’s era desks, second hand chairs, broken mini-blinds, 16-foot tall ceilings, slip covers, and over 2,000 books... it all comes together in a Victorian Steam Punk sort of way. We will miss our ancestral home as we fold ourselves into 10 X 12 cubicle type offices with off-the-rack new furniture and Amazon.com accessories.

Social Work Faculty Changes

Last spring, we lost Professor Sandra Brackenridge to retirement. And in May, 2018, Dr. Linda Marshall, long time Social Work faculty member and former program director retired. Her husband, Math and Computer Science professor Dr. David Marshall, retired at the same time. Linda Marshall will leave a void in the program and the university that will not be easily filled.

Dr. Marshall has had a tremendous impact on her students, her colleagues, TWU, the profession and the world we live in during her career. She has received numerous awards for teaching excellence over the years, and in 2011 was honored with the Jessie Humphries award, which recognizes outstanding dedication to TWU. Additionally, Dr. Marshall was named “Social Worker of the Year” twice: in Amarillo and in Denton, and in 2016 was honored with the NASW Lifetime Achievement award.

On a personal note, I consider Linda Marshall a friend and mentor. She hired me to come to TWU, and she and I have co-led a number of workshops and professional trainings together. I recall a rainy Sunday afternoon, many years before I joined the faculty at TWU, when the two of us were scheduled to meet at her home to prepare for a workshop. She called and asked if I would mind meeting her at her office in Old Main Building instead. The reason for the change was that she had agreed to meet a prospective student and her family from Dallas; Sunday was the only day the parents had off work. As the Social Work Program Director, she often met prospective students on the weekends and after hours, and even made trips to Dallas and Fort Worth in her personal car to meet with and personally welcome students to come to TWU. Her students’ needs have always been more important to her than her private time. She will be deeply missed, but her legacy will live on in the lives of the hundreds of social workers that she taught, and in the lives of the thousands and thousands of clients that those former students impacted.

One Final Change

Dr. Nila Ricks will be taking over as BSW Program Director in the Fall of 2018 as I step down in preparation for my own retirement in January. I have been a social work educator in some capacity for over 25 years, and it is time to hand the reigns over to someone else.

TWU has been a wonderful place to teach and work. This university is such a warm and nurturing place, and our social work component is a rare program. I will be forever grateful to have been at TWU and being part of the history of this program as a faculty member and program director has been an honor and a privilege.

Mark H. Sandel
May 8, 2018

TWU’s Dr. Marshall to Retire

The years that I have spent at TWU have been beyond gratifying. I go into my retirement with so many positive, warm memories of students and colleagues. I feel incredibly lucky to have been at a university like TWU where students really matter, where civility is the norm, and where individuals can flourish. And I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to teach here in three different fields — sociology, social work, and women’s studies. Reflecting back and adding up the numbers, my husband David and I have a combined 76 years teaching in higher education! It is time for us to pursue new adventures and experience more of the world, despite how much we will miss TWU. We depart with decidedly mixed feelings, grateful to all of you for the shared experiences and treasured memories, knowing that our years at TWU have given us a wonderful professional life. Now: we shall forge ahead to find other aspects of ourselves in Santa Fe! My deepest thanks to the Department of Sociology and Social Work.
This arrangement continued until Fall 1983, when TWU began to offer Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in Criminal Justice. Two other milestones in the development of criminal justice at TWU were in 2011, when the first criminal justice degree online degree completion program was offered, and most recently in 2015 when we began awarding only the Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice.

Not only has our program grown substantially in enrollment in recent years (our enrollment almost doubled after we introduced the online criminal justice option), our focus has also expanded. Originally our program was designed to “provide students interested in the area of law enforcement with a broad general education with emphasis on the social sciences and a basic knowledge in the field of law enforcement.” Today we define our focus much more broadly and provide a broad, social science based education to train students for professional careers throughout the field of criminal justice.

In addition, as our mission has expanded, we have increased our coverage of important new areas and issues in criminal justice, such as criminal justice ethics, community corrections, and comparative criminal justice, adding new courses in each of these areas. In addition, to reflect our emphasis on diversity, we have increased coverage of important areas such as race and crime and women and crime, also introducing new courses in these areas.

The criminal justice program continues to add important new opportunities for students through new special topics courses such as Environmental Crime (scheduled to be offered for the first time this fall), as well as Sexualities and Crime, and Drugs and Crime, both of which were recently offered.

Major Accomplishments of Sociology Graduate Program, 2010-18

This year, our Ph.D. Program and M.A. Program are being reviewed for the period of the last seven years by an internal review committee and external reviewers appointed by the Graduate School. For the purpose of review, we have produced reports of self-study. Based on these reports and awards received recently, I would like to highlight major accomplishments of our graduate program for the last seven years and also to make some special recognition of our department, graduate program, faculty, and graduate students.

First and foremost, we have built a unique sociology graduate program. We are the only sociology graduate program in the United States and in North America with a special mission of providing sociological training primarily for nontraditional, female, minority, and underprivileged students, though students from all backgrounds are welcomed. Our faculty decided to adopt this new mission in 2012 because we found that more than 90% of our graduate students belonged to one of these four categories: nontraditional, female, minority, and underprivileged. This is our niche. This mission makes our program unique and distinctive. This mission has guided the growth of our graduate program for the last six years.

Second, our Institutional Effectiveness plans are well designed, and most of our objectives in the plans have been achieved. Our curriculum is directly linked to the objectives of the Institutional Effectiveness plans and the missions of the program and the University.

Third, our faculty members are student-friendly; deeply committed to excellence in student training; highly productive in publications, presentations, and securing of grants; and actively involved in professional organizations and services. In the last seven years, our six core sociology faculty members have produced 6 books; 93 refereed journal articles, 10 book chapters, 11 book reviews, 30 encyclopedia entries and other non-refereed journal articles, and 23 newspaper and online publications. They have also delivered 177 presentations at international, national, and regional conferences. Our faculty have won quite a few prestigious external and internal awards and nominations. For instance, Dr. Philip Yang’s refereed article “A Theory of Asian Immigration to the United States” won the Research Paper Award of the Asia and Asian American Section of the American Sociological Association (ASA) in 2011. Dr. Yang’s Asian Immigration to the United States published by Polity Press in 2011 was nominated for the Best Book Award for Asia and Asian American Section of the ASA in 2012 and for the Association for Asian American Studies in 2013. Dr. Jessica Gullion’s Fracking the Neighborhood:
Reluctant Activists and Natural Gas Drilling released by the MIT Press in 2015 was a finalist for the 2016 Eliot Freidson Outstanding Publication Award of the ASA’s Medical Sociology Section and was also nominated for the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry’s 2016 Qualitative Book Award. Dr. Gullion’s October Birds: A Novel about Pandemic Influenza, Infection Control, and First Responders was nominated for the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry’s Qualitative Book Award in 2015. Drs. Philip Yang and Celia Lo won the TWU Distinction in Scholarship Award in 2017 and 2018, respectively.

Fourth, our graduate program has experienced large growth in the last seven years. The growth rate in Ph.D. enrollment from 2005/06 to 2016/17 was 61%, and the average annual number of enrolled Ph.D. students has increased by 10 to about 37 in the last seven years compared to the average annual number of 27 in the previous evaluation cycle. The average annual M.A. student enrollment during this evaluation cycle has increased 127% compared to the average annual M.A. student enrollment during the preceding evaluation period of 2005/06-2009/10. Our total graduate enrollment was at the low 30s before 2011, but we now are at the mid-50s. Moreover, since fall 2015, every semester the number of our enrolled graduate students has surpassed the number of UNT sociology graduate students, which used to be two to three times of our number.

Fifth, our graduate students are also very productive in scholarship and have received many prestigious external and internal awards. In the last seven years, our graduate students have published 42 sole-authored or co-authored articles in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes. One Ph.D. student published her dissertation as a book, and three Ph.D. students published their M.A. theses as books. Many of our students presented papers at numerous national and regional professional conferences as well as symposiums. Our graduate students also received awards. For example, our recent Ph.D. Andrea Laurent-Simpson won 2 prestigious awards: the Jane Goodall Award for Distinguished Graduate Student Scholarship from the Animals and Society Section of the ASA, and the Herbert Blumer Graduate Student Paper Award from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. This is the first time our graduate students in sociology have won this kind of prestigious awards. In the last three years, four of our graduate students won the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award, Outstanding Graduate Research Assistant Award, and Outstanding Graduate Assistant Award from the TWU Graduate Student Council. Allison Ray won the 3rd place in the category of Education, Humanities, Social Sciences and Business at the 8th Annual Federation Graduate Student Research Symposium in 2017. This year, Petina Powers won the first place in Book-in-Common essay contest. William Ash-Houchen has been selected as a recipient of the 2018 Graduate Council Award for Exceptional, Original Scholarship. This is the first time our graduate students in sociology have won this highly competitive university award. Kyndal DeBruin and Vanessa Ellison are the vice Presidents of the Graduate Student Council, which was named one of the Outstanding Student Organizations of the Year at the 2018 Redbud Award Ceremony.

Sixth, we have observed a high level of diversity among our Ph.D. and M.A. students in terms of race/ethnicity and gender. About half or much more than half of our enrolled Ph.D. and M.A. students were African American, Latino, Native American, Asian American, and international in the past seven years. We have also witnessed a high enrollment of male students who comprised one thirds to about 40% of our graduate students in the past seven years, but a large majority of our students were women.

Seventh, we have seen increased quality of our new graduate students, especially new Ph.D. students, in terms of GPA, GRE, life experience, post-admission performance, and progress toward degree. Now, basically all of our new Ph.D. students have met our minimum GPA requirement (3.5). In the past seven years, we got students from top-tier research universities such as Duke University, the University of California, UT-Austin, New York University, the University of Florida, and the University of Maryland that we have never seen before. We also got some students with very high GRE scores (e.g., 1200+, 1300+ on the old scale). We also had students with very rich life experiences and in high positions. They have performed very well as shown in their average GPAs. They have made good progress toward the degree and completed their degrees faster.

Eighth, the average numbers of our Ph.D. and M.A. degrees awarded per year in the last seven years have more than doubled compared to the last evaluation cycle in academic years 2005/06-2009/10. Since academic year 2010/11, we have graduated on average five Ph.D.s per year and 5.3 M.A.s per year. We have graduated about the same numbers or more numbers of Ph.D.s and M.A.s compared to mid-size sociology Ph.D. programs in the nation with 20 or more full-time faculty.

Ninth, our program graduates have found excellent job placements. Most of our Ph.D. graduates have landed jobs in higher education. All M.A. graduates during this period were placed in jobs or continued on for further higher education.

Finally, this year, our department won the Distinguished Department Supporting Graduate Students Award from the Graduate Student Council, which recognizes a department for overall contributions to the support of graduate students, including excellence in teaching, availability of research opportunities for students, TWU community relations, graduate mentoring, outreach and professional development, administration, and staff support. - Phillip Yang:
It has been another year of memorable events and achievements in the Department of Sociology and Social Work, as 2017 made its way to 2018 and we moved closer to our goals.

As I reported to you in our last newsletter, Texas Woman’s University and the University of North Texas have joined forces to develop a joint master of social work program. New students began enrolling last fall, and a full cohort of 60 students is anticipated by next fall.

To support both this new program and our existing BSW program, we brought two new assistant professors into the department. A Ph.D. graduate of Texas A&M University specializing in curriculum and instruction, Dr. Alex Colvin came to us from Prairie View A&M University, having served there since 2006 as an adjunct assistant professor and coordinator of field education. Dr. Colvin has been our director of field education on-site since August and was the first faculty member hired for the TWU-UNT joint program.

News arrived recently that Dr. Linda Marshall will retire at the end of spring semester, and Professor Mark Sandel will retire in December 2018. Dr. Marshall’s career in education and research has focused on violence against women and feminist social work practice, while Professor Sandel has served our social work students with rare commitment, for the past six years as director of the BSW program. We are grateful to both of these faculty members for their hard work benefitting the social work discipline and Texas Woman’s University. Both have our best wishes for a very happy retirement!

Sometime this summer, prior to formally retiring, Professor Sandel will step down as program director. This will free him to provide needed facilitation for the fledgling collaboration with UNT, which we have prevailed on him to do. Moreover, retired though he will soon be, Professor Sandel will continue to teach social work courses for us, through the Retirement Teaching Option. The new BSW program director will be Dr. Nila Ricks, with whom our sociology and social work faculty are most excited to work. Dr. Ricks has been part of the social work program at TWU for some six years. (Please look over this newsletter for additional news of the joint MSW program and BSW program.)

There has been plenty for TWU’s sociology students and faculty to celebrate during this eventful year, as well. As the fall semester began, Dr. Jessica Gullion had received tenure and the rank of associate professor of sociology, approved by our Board of Regents. In addition, we welcomed to the TWU campus a new graduate dean, Dr. Carolyn Kapinus.

A sociologist by training, Dr. Kapinus holds the rank of full professor in sociology. Upon arriving, she announced that TWU’s sociology graduate programs would undergo program review during the 2017-2018 academic year. We devoted significant time and effort, this year, to collecting the materials needed to complete required self-study for each graduate program in sociology. Two external program reviewers guided the review of our doctoral program; one of these two also took charge of the review of the master’s program. A site visit was part of the doctoral program review.

Dr. Philip Yang and Dr. Jim Williams wrote a self-study for each graduate program. The documents illustrate that, since the preceding program-review year, 2011, we have grown sociology graduate study at TWU in five ways particularly worth mentioning.

First, the current annual average of four sociology Ph.D. graduates is two more graduates than we averaged for the last program review-doubled, in a word. Last year, moreover, the department awarded six master’s degrees in sociology and six doctoral degrees in sociology. Second, our graduate student enrollment is up by twenty percent. Third, TWU graduates have continued to quickly enter employment in positions within and outside academia. Fourth, our graduate students of sociology are bringing home unprecedented numbers of awards and honors and being chosen in record numbers to present and publish their scholarship. And fifth, the core membership of the sociology faculty has become the numerically top-producing TWU doctoral faculty in terms of published research articles and books per capita (please see the “18 doctoral characteristics” specified by the TWU Graduate School).

The department’s undergraduate programs have much to celebrate, too. This spring, we are serving no fewer than 135 sociology majors and 150 criminal justice majors. Last year, records show, 51 sociology students graduated, representing an increase of 122% from the previous year, with a further 47 TWU students earning bachelor’s degrees in criminal justice. We firmly expect similarly strong graduation numbers in coming years.

The growing number of graduates we proudly claim has clarified the importance of our work to facilitate employment of sociology and criminal justice alumni. The summer of 2017 saw the department establish a sociology alumni advisory board, seeking advice on the best ways to bridge academic preparation and professions.

Founding board members Andrea Laurent-Simpson, Heather Gerling, Maggie Jordan-Bohm, and William Ash-Houchen have lined up two workshops for students this spring semester. Additional activities from the board will benefit students in the near future.
It is, lastly, very exciting to be able to tell you that our department recently became the recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Department Supporting Graduate Students award, recognition from TWU's Graduate Student Council. The department was nominated by Allison Ray, who is a doctoral student in sociology. She has described for me how TWU and the department changed her life and those of her three children and we have been grateful for the opportunity to support her in her studies. At the award ceremony, Dr. Philip Yang accepted the award on the department's behalf.

Thanks to the inimitable support of sociology faculty members and graduate students, I can also share with you that I received TWU’s 2018 Distinction in Scholarship Award. I am simply humbled to follow in Dr. Yang’s footsteps by receiving this award, which the university uses to note distinguished records of scholarship accompanying sustained dedication to the deepening of knowledge. This second Distinction in Scholarship Award to a TWU sociologist means that fully one-third of our sociology faculty has a record of publication whose excellence the university has officially recognized. I find this statistic to be very gratifying, and I hope you do too. (You will find further news of departmental achievements—undergraduate and graduate, criminal justice- and sociology-related—in other parts of this newsletter.)

As we celebrate many decades of this department’s accomplishments, we want to reiterate that alumni are among our most important affiliates, supporting TWU and its students with financial gifts. The university and the department rely on the generosity of alumni. Direct contributions to the Department of Sociology and Social Work or any of its academic programs are welcome. In light of the financial burden of higher education today, it is a department priority to raise funds for new scholarships to help deserving undergraduate and graduate students afford school. The scholarships will boost the student recruitment efforts so vital to achieving our goals for growth and diversification of our enrollment.

Please consider making a financial gift. Any amount is appropriate—and tax-deductible as federal and state laws allow. Gifts may be made through the Office of University Advancement. The faculty of the department are especially grateful for your generosity.

You can use the secure link below to donate. The “s” at the end of http means that the information is encrypted for security.

**TWU Sociology/Social Donor Link**

**Instructions**

1. Under “Designations” select the last option “other”.
2. Once you select “other” as your designation an additional box will appear; “Other”.
3. Please type in Sociology or Social Work in that box.

In closing, I warmly thank Petina Powers and Ivy Naude for their work putting this newsletter together. I also extend my gratitude to the entire sociology and social work faculty, and to the department’s undergraduate and graduate students, for their contributions to and suggestions concerning the newsletter.

**Sociology wins the Distinguished Department Supporting Graduate Students Award**

On April 6 at the 4th annual Pioneering Spirit Awards Banquet, the Sociology Department was honored by being recognized as the recipient of Distinguished Department Supporting Graduate Students Award. Department chair Dr. Celia Lo’s enthusiastic response was, “I am so excited about this award. I wish to thank all of you (faculty, staff, and students) who have helped create a supportive environment for our graduate students to thrive and succeed. Proud to be part of this department at TWU”. Several graduate students took this opportunity to reflect upon their positive experiences in the department.

**Mentoring - Danielle Barber** “The Sociology Department at TWU has consistently been a mentor to me since I was an undergraduate. Each faculty member in the Sociology Department is dedicated to the success of their students. During my first year as a graduate student, the Sociology Department has provided me with the opportunity to develop and improve my skills in teaching, writing, research, and publishing. I love my family in the Sociology Department at TWU!”

**Mentoring - Heather Gerling** “The mentoring I have received in this program has been profoundly life-changing, because it has gone well beyond helping me simply navigate graduate school. The faculty have given of themselves tirelessly and selflessly, advocating for my personal and professional growth, and encouraging me to explore opportunities I did not know existed. Best of all, I have an amazing model for how I hope to mentor others.”

**Mentoring - Soheil Sabriseilabi** “Dr. Sadri’s mentoring of me as a graduate student makes me feel less alone. Having someone from my own culture with similar frames of reference makes me feel more comfortable and able to succeed as I work toward my PhD.”
Availability of Opportunity for Research - Will Smith “As a second year sociology Ph.D student, I have had the opportunity to research sociological areas such as theory, education, religion, and terrorism. Not only have my professors consistently provided meaningful feedback and mentoring, they have cultivated an expectation that students publish in a way that has cultivated my confidence. That my sociology professors encourage my diverse research interests has encouraged and widened my intellectual curiosity.”

Availability of Opportunity for Research - Allison Ray “Professor Gullion was willing to proofread my transcripts, provide feedback. Also, some professors are willing to co-author research which is a huge asset. Additionally, the Department offers workshops to assist us, for example, how to publish in academia.”

Teaching Opportunities - Prauttus Konte “I enjoy teaching in the Sociology Department. Our faculty is very supportive and encouraging as they foster graduate students’ initiatives in creating new courses with special topics. Over the past few years the diversity of that student generated subject matter has included; criminology, gender, sexuality, and sports. The faculty focus is not solely on teaching dynamics, and course content. They (faculty) encourage grad students to develop personalized opportunities to truly engage with our students. Our department’s approach reflects the motto “Learning by Doing.”

Teaching Opportunities - Amelia DeLuna-Owsley “The opportunity to teach has reaffirmed my love for Sociology and for enlightening minds; that would not be possible without the Sociology Department. The chance to get work experience while still in school is invaluable to the future success of my career.”

TWU Community Relations - Victor Palacios “Without departmental support, we would not have been able to host our networking events, such as the Introduction to NVIVO with Stacy Kelk, Careers outside of Academia with Dr. Jessica Gullion, and Selecting a Research Topic with Dr. James Williams.”

Outreach and Development - Michael Winters “The department is always willing to help students travel to professional conferences so that they can better themselves as scholars and professionals. The department also routinely brings attention to possible career paths related to the degrees that we earn. The department’s tireless support of AKD and their students have also made a positive impact on the community by gathering food and school supplies for the Denton community.”

Outreach and Development - Kyndal DeBruin “The faculty and staff have been very supportive of student development in a variety of ways. This includes: support in participation in the Graduate Student Council, numerous academic and non-academic career workshops, as well as providing several opportunities to further student skills in course construction and management, teaching, and research opportunities.”

Staff Support - Michaela Wilson “Ivy is great; she’s always willing to go the extra mile to help with student organization events and even helping us get our own tasks accomplished!”

Staff Support - Stacy Kelk “Faculty is always willing to stop and discuss issues, problems, or ideas with and for us. They are always concerned about how things are going for us and what we are doing. With so few faculty, we see them frequently, even if just in passing and they know each and every one of the doctoral students. Smiles, cheery hellos, and quick enquiries about how it’s going go further than surface pleasantries and invite the students into what, in other universities, is a ‘closed club’. We are definitely considered part of the department, and not simply the reason for its existence. One of the best parts of Sociology at TWU is the easy access we have to the staff. In addition to this, I would like to say that we are incredibly blessed with our departmental admin assistant, Ivy Naude. I have no idea how she keeps track of us all but she does a stellar job. Ivy is our go-to person to figure out who is where and when.”

Sociology wins the Distinguished Department Supporting Graduate Students Award

Sociology Ph.D Student Wins 1st Place in Book-in-Common Essay

Ph.D sociology student Petina JD Powers received first place in the graduate student division in this year’s Book-in-Common program. *My Beloved World* by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor was this year’s Book-in-Common. Powers’ essay, “She said, Some Women Need to Be Hit” was a story of surviving trauma and moving forward to build a better life while effecting positive change in society.
William Ash-Houchen, a doctoral candidate in Sociology, was named a 2018 recipient of the Graduate Council’s Award for Exceptional, Original Scholarship. This award recognizes graduate students who have exhibited exceptional, original scholarship, and recognizes a current graduate student who has evidence of peer-reviewed scholarly activity and has actively engaged in original scholarly activity at TWU.

When asked about his reaction to the award, William said, “I’m very proud to have won! It has been a lot of hard work, and I could not have done it without the support of the faculty in the department. Dr. Lo and I have collaborated on several manuscripts, and it’s special that she won an award for her scholarship this year as well.”

As part of the award, William presented his research at the Showcase of Student Research as part of the 2018 TWU Student Creative Arts and Research Symposium. William is graduating in May 2018 with a Ph.D. in Sociology and has accepted a tenure-track position at Delta State University. In addition to his dissertation examining substance use and mental health among adolescents, William has published research related to bullying victimization, substance use, and health risk in four scholarly, peer-reviewed journals such as Computers in Human Behavior, Substance Use & Misuse, and Ethnicity & Health, and has presented at national conferences such as the American Sociological Association and the American Society of Criminology.

When asked about his motivation toward publishing research, William said, “I think it’s about two things: finding meaning in what you do and building good habits. Finding something that you can work with for hours on end will help. Relatedly, no matter what research you’re doing, it takes time. You have to carve the time out of your schedule every week (or even every day).”

Dr. Celia Lo, Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Work, was recently named winner of the 2018 TWU Distinction in Scholarship Award, which is awarded to TWU faculty who have evidenced distinguished records of scholarship and dedication to improving knowledge and understanding in their discipline.

Dr. Lo received her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Alabama in 1993, and has since published more than 100 scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles in outlets such as Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, Ethnicity & Health, and Crime and Delinquency.

When asked about her motivation toward publishing research, Dr. Lo said “Scientific research is the path I chose to change unknowns into knowledge, to outshine old ideas, and to power new public policies. Disseminating research findings in well-received journals enriches my contribution to scientific discovery. Such discovery is what can, eventually, see health disparities minimized regardless of social statuses.” Her research areas include alcohol and drugs, disparities in health-risk behaviors and health, drugs and crime, and scholarship of teaching and learning.

Dr. Lo was also recently elected as Councilor for the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug (ATOD) section of the American Public Health Association. In this role, she will help guide conference programming and craft policy for the more than 1,200 members of the conference section.

When asked about her advice for upcoming scholars, Dr. Lo suggested, “It’s important to first learn the important steps of the research process and then to be able to write professionally, using the formats that peer-reviewed journals in your research areas have adopted. When you find yourself interested in a certain research topic, you should read about it extensively in the literature. Shadowing a mentor and working with colleagues interested in questions that interest you can help. Keep at it, even when it feels frustrating. Publishing is a craft that requires long nurturing.”
Michele Bland, MSSW, LMSW, Associate Grant Program Director

My personal viewpoint of Human Rights is akin to Merton which declares that the, “Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world”. We must value the individual’s human rights, their worth, dignity. Social justice is the belief and foundation of the social work profession—ensuring that all individuals, groups and community’s rights are protection and advocated for. The relationship between Human rights and Social justice is, as I stated, the social work core value is for social justice for all-inalienable rights.

Paul D. Bones, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Sociology

To put it simply, I believe human rights are what allow an individual to live free from oppression. Human rights include access to food and water, safe shelter, safe work environments, freedom to worship and love in our own manner, and other things that allow us to live free. I feel like for a lot of Americans, myself included, when we hear the term “human rights violation,” we tend to think of problems overseas like wage exploitation in sweatshops, child labor, hazardous working condition, and other social problems we think of as happening somewhere else. It’s a frame we have moved away from in the US. Human rights are still very much an issue in the here though. For example, access to clean drinking water is probably one of the most basic human rights. One we associate with developing nations. But in the US, this is still an issue for many communities. How long has Flint, MI been without clean water? About four years? That’s a human rights crisis. A number of rural communities are also facing a clean water crisis. One that has been exacerbated by fracking, agricultural waste runoff, and industrial/energy contamination. This too is a human rights issue, but environmentalism seems to have taken a back seat to economic concerns. It’s a tricky situation because these communities need clean water, but they also need jobs. I think that maybe if we examine our own culture in terms of human rights instead of seeing this as an “elsewhere” problem, maybe we would be more willing to step in and help communities in trouble.

To me, social justice is the belief that regardless of our sex, gender, race, religion, class background, ability status, age, or any other demographic marker we should have the same opportunities to attain social rewards. A commitment to social justice then means actively working to break down barriers that favor one group at the expense of another. As a sociologist, social justice is very important because our research subjects are human beings. Much of my research has been on persons with a disability, and the ultimate goal is improving the lives of these individuals by challenging the ways our society is not built for different levels of ability. I see human rights and social justice as very interconnected. Where we see populations denied their human rights, we need to advocate for social justice. We, as a country, have defined a number of things as privileges when in fact they are human rights. More and more we are seeing a growing split between classes that is affecting access to clean water, nutritious food, safe affordable housing, and medical care. I think that social justice can be instrumental in defining the inequality we see as an issue of human rights.

Alex D. Colvin, LMSW; Ph.D., JMSW Director of Field Education on-site

From my point of view Human Rights are the legally protected rights we are entitled to as humans which include the right to freedom of association, expression, assimilation, etc. These are rights we should be assured regardless of our country of origin, language we speak, belief systems, ethical make-up and background and status. Social Justice is the measures to ensure that all individuals are afforded fair and just relations in society. I certainly believe there is a relationship between Human Rights and Social Justice. It is my assertion that they are not mutually exclusive. One cannot have social justice without practicing good human rights.

Jessica Smartt Gullion, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sociology

Human rights are those things we consider to be inherent to all human beings. These are often codified into areas such as liberty, freedom from slavery or torture, freedom of self-expression, and so on. Some things that I think should be human rights but aren’t in this country include the right to access clean and safe drinking water and the right to healthcare. Social justice involves ensuring that people have those rights. For example, Flint, Michigan has been without safe drinking water since 2014. This is a terrible violation of human rights. Social justice activists have been working to remedy that violation; in a socially just world they wouldn’t need to, the problem would be fixed.

Celia C. Lo, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Work

Fundamental rights that all human beings deserve simply because of their status as human beings should be considered human rights. I am currently directing a dissertation that involves issues of human rights, which has provided me with the opportunity to learn about human rights from an academic perspective. Since the International Bill of Human Rights was codified, proponents’ focus has evolved from declaring individuals’ civil and political rights, and their economic, social, and cultural rights, to, most recently, declaring collective environmental and cultural rights for our species. All human beings are entitled to the various kinds of rights and resources named in that document. The attention paid to civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and collective environmental aspects of human rights means that certain basic rights and resources should be equally enjoyed by people of a variety of backgrounds and social statuses, including gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, immigration, language spoken, and religious belief. Often, human rights and social justice are discussed side by side. However, while social justice is concerned with equity, human rights is concerned with equality. Typically in the United States, equity or fairness is more strongly emphasized than equality is, as public
(Celia C. Lo, Ph.D., Continued)

Policy is developed and implemented. For example, federal programs including Medicaid and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families reserve benefits to United States citizens. No matter their level of need, immigrants new to the country do not, this policy suggests, deserve assistance equal to that available to citizens. It is fair, the policy implies, to view immigrants differently, because they are new to the society to which others were born and raised.

What is thought of as “social justice” in a society is a reflection of that society’s values and ideals. When those values and ideals identify certain people or groups as unworthy of fundamental entitlements, then human rights may suffer within that society.

Fortunately, some societies frequently criticize and work to inhibit the “social justice” approaches that limit human rights. Recently, the mass exodus of people from countries such as Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan is forcing powerful western countries to reevaluate the meaning of “social justice,” as they seek to strike a balance between the needs and desires of their own citizens, and an authentic respect for the full slate of human rights independent of national borders. Perhaps a more conspicuous example is the human right to the basic necessity of life in the form of healthcare. But in the United States, particular groups of residents have seen their right to health care blocked by marginalization and other disadvantages—even though other western countries prove every day that health care is a right that can be secured for all. Indeed, some of the fifty states seem also to prove it is possible, endeavoring on their own to find ways to facilitate residents’ access to and use of health care.

Scholarship—research—can provide information useful in the construction of societies that are respectful of human rights. I take seriously the opportunity that being an academic provides me to espouse human rights. As I conduct my research, it is always my underlying hope to identify the ways that a given public policy leads to or away from the fullest realization of human rights. In my understanding, the ideal of social justice vitally complements the ideal of human rights, allowing us to contextualize our decisions on the development and implementation of public policy.

Linda L. Marshall, Ph.D., MSSW, ACSW, Associate Professor

Human rights is a concept that reflects the premise that all people, regardless of race, culture, national origin, gender, age, ability or sexual orientation, are entitled to basic rights and treatment. These include civil rights (life, liberty, and personal security, as recognized in most democratic societies), as well as rights of access to food, shelter, health care, education, paid employment, freedom from violence and oppression, and freedom to pursue dreams and aspirations.

Human rights are only fully possible under conditions of social justice -- the ideal of all citizens having the same rights, protection, opportunities, obligations, and social benefits as all other citizens. This ideal does not include the right to equal outcomes in life. But the concept emphasizes equal access to the means of having a fulfilling, dignified, and productive life.

Critics of these concepts attempt to cast proponents as wanting guaranteed outcomes of equality for everyone in life, and often frame these issues as individual liberty vs. socialism or social engineering. A close reading of these definitions refutes that position, yet the debates will undoubtedly continue.

The social work profession supports an approach that emphasizes the redistribution of societal resources to the advantage of the most vulnerable members of society, especially in light of our society's extreme historical inequality. Yet, as many have noted, the fulfillment of the idea of social justice, especially in terms of concrete practice interventions, remains controversial and highly elusive.

Nila Ricks, Ph.D., LMSW, Assistant Professor, Social Work Program

Social Justice: Social justice means that every person, irrespective of their race, class, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, or language, experiences fair distribution of resources, equal access to opportunities, equal worth, ability to exercise their rights to meet their basic needs and equal economic opportunities. While it is illegal to discriminate based on race, class, gender, etc., these factors are often targeted and perpetuate injustice. Therefore, social justice also entails a personal responsibility to eradicate injustice and inequality. Although we have made tremendous progress, the world is far from achieving universal social justice and the protection of human rights. We all have an obligation to promote equality in the world that we live in. Social workers in particular, have a keen responsibility to advocate and remove barriers for vulnerable populations. Social justice also means recognizing and human rights.

Human Rights: Human rights are rights inherited by all human beings regardless of their race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. These rights should be guaranteed by law and everyone should be equally entitled to the same human rights and freedoms without discrimination. Human rights are based on the premise that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity. Human rights; the right to equality, the right education, the right to life, liberty and personal security, etc., are interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. When human rights are denied, people experience discrimination, intolerance, injustice, and oppression. Eleanor Roosevelt, a world-renown humanitarian and First Lady, was instrumental in developing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), a momentous declaration in human rights history. She quoted: “Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.” Eleanor Roosevelt’s quote exemplifies our individual responsibility to promote social justice and advocate for human rights.
(Nila Ricks, Ph.D., LMSW Continued) Relationship Between Social Justice and Human Rights: Social justice and human rights are not synonymous, but they are certainly interconnected. They both focus on equality and human dignity. A life of opportunity and dignity free from discrimination is a basic human right. When human rights are denied, there is social injustice. Discrimination based on race, class, gender, etc. are direct contradictions of fundamental human rights. In essence, human rights are derived and achieved through social justice and justice is implicit in our human rights. Social justice is essential to ensure human rights. Social justice and the human rights of vulnerable populations are at the core of social work practice. As social work educators it is imperative that we equip social work students with adequate knowledge and skills to promote social justice and advocate for the human rights of all. Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere.

Emarely Rosa-Dávila, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Since I can’t distance myself from what I do and what I have become in my professional life, my point of view is based on the Code of Ethics of Puerto Rico’s Social Workers. I was part of the group who reviewed this code in 2016 and these continue to be my point of view. Human Rights are a historical product derived from the struggles for the recognition that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity. They have the character of universality, indivisibility and interdependence through which justice, solidarity, freedom and full human development are made possible. These are defined by the United Nations as “essential guarantees that we can live as human beings”. Without them we cannot cultivate or fully exercise our qualities, our intelligence, talent and spirituality. They include civil, political, social, economic, cultural and solidarity rights that are recognized to all people regardless of their immigration status. (2017:72)

Ratonia Runnels, Ph.D., LMSW, Assistant Professor; Director of Field Instruction

The minimum necessities of life and liberty should be afforded to all beings. Human rights are vested to every individual regardless of race, creed, or country of origin. It is inherent simply due to our living and breathing and sharing this planet together. These human rights include the right to food, shelter, good health, and clean water. Bruce Jansson states that professionals who do not engage in policy-sensitive and policy-related activities are morally deficient, and that social workers are even more morally deficient than other professionals if they do not engage in policy-sensitive and policy-related practice, because they occupy a unique position in the human services system. Advocating for human rights and social justice is at the core of our profession.

Mahmoud Sadri, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology

The philosophical purport of Human Rights is shrouded in mystery and controversy. How do we know human beings have a “right”? Who guaranteed these rights? God? Nature? Some social convention? You may imagine further questions that each one of these answers would create! However, there is a practical (if tautological!) answer to the question: Human Rights are the rights that are specified in the Universal Charter of Human Rights that every nation on the face of the planet has recognized. That is good enough for me.

Mark Sandel, LMSW, Professor; Program Director, Social Work Program

Human Rights: Certain rights, opportunities, and privileges should be available to all humans, regardless of their country of origin, their religion, their gender, and their circumstances. I see these as fundamental human needs. I believe these should be above the law and they should have been part of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (he said with a chuckle).
often most likely to be deprived their human rights; children, women, the poor, people of color, religious minorities. These citizens are
around the globe and we should not be isolationist in our thinking or our policies.

Social Justice: Social Justice is the degree to which a society or people acknowledge and support these human rights, these universal
needs. Therefore, Human Rights are fundamental concepts or issues and justice is the degree to which those rights are carried out.

Justice efforts should be about the implementation and sustainability of human rights. Sometimes, however, we develop these big
policy initiatives related to human rights, but the implementation of these policies fail short. For instance, the Civil Rights Act of 1964
was a landmark piece of legislation that promised to provide all Americans with the same civic rights and legislative power. But over 50
years later, Americans of color and other marginalized populations continue to struggle for basic rights against an oppressive American
society that favors the dominant culture in countless ways. Gerrymandering, voter ID laws, and other maneuvers threaten access to the
ballot box as the promises of the Civil Rights Act are forgotten by many.

The problem with social justice in our country, as in others, is that those people who have the smallest voice are the ones who are
often most likely to be deprived their human rights; children, women, the poor, people of color, religious minorities. These citizens are
the ones who are least likely to have human rights because of the way society is structured.

Rights, Justice, and Social Work

Social Justice and Human Rights are really part and parcel of the philosophical principles upon which the Social Work profession
is built. In America we generally think only about American social justice. The reality is that there are human rights infringements all
over the world. Our world is smaller today than it was a generation ago. Americans should be concerned about human rights issues
around the globe and we should not be isolationist in our thinking or our policies.

Daniel "Boone" Taylor, Visiting Assistant Professor

Human Rights

All human beings have the right to live. Basic Human Rights includes human society making available to each
individual that which enables life: food, water, shelter, health care, education and love. Liberty and justice must
accompany society's provision of the basic right to live.

Social justice will have been achieved when: A) all human beings' human rights are being satisfied, and B) each
human being has an equal level of opportunity to earn more than their basic right to live would provide. In the
United States, we have come fairly close to achieving political justice with respect to equality in voting for our
leaders. We are nowhere near achieving economic and social justice, and we may well be headed in the wrong direction.

James L. Williams, Ph.D., Professor and Criminal Justice Director

Sociologically, notions of human rights and social justice are complex and historically contentious constructs that
have evolved over time and as such reflect various sociocultural, economic, and historical factors present in
societies. As a sociologist I also recognize that my understanding of human rights reflects the sociocultural and
historical circumstances under which I was socialized. With this said, I see human rights as inherent in all people.
These rights include the right to food, clothing, and shelter, the right to safety, the right to education, the right to
education, the right to health care, the right to meaningful work, and the right of individuals to maximize their
potential.

Conceptualizations of social justice too are affected by cultural and historical circumstances, as well as modes of economic
organization. In thinking about social justice, it is helpful to me to think about the notion of what we are due from society. That is,
aside from questions about historically and culturally contingent expectations concerning the duties of citizens to society, social justice
seems to me to encompass such critical questions how the resources of a society are distributed. These questions are also bound up for
me with questions about how equitable and just a society is. A just society is one that recognizes the basic human rights of all of its
citizens and is organized in a way that helps all of its citizens to meet their needs, and to maximize their potential. In short, human
rights and social justice are inextricably connected.

Philip Q. Yang, Ph.D., Professor and Graduate Program Director

“Literally, human rights are the basic rights of all humans to live, to work, to be educated, to freely express, to
freely associate, and to be treated equally. Social justice means equity provided by a society to treat and protect
individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, and so
on. Human rights and social justice are intertwined. Human rights can be considered baseline social justice, but
social justice requires more than just basic human rights to cover broader areas of equality beyond fundamental
human rights.”
My name is Emarely Rosa-Dávila. I’m a new faculty within the Bachelors on Social Work Program (BSW), here at TWU. I’m happy to say just that I successfully completed my first year of my tenure-track position as an Assistant Professor of Social Work. What can I tell you about myself?

I was born and raised in Puerto Rico, the enchanted island of the Caribbean. I’m originally from the city of Humacao, located in the eastern side of the island. I’m proud to say that I received all my formal education from the Puerto Rico public education system. This includes my elementary and secondary education along with my college, graduate and doctoral education. As per my degrees in higher education, I completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work from Universidad de Puerto Rico-Humacao in 1998. That same year I started my Master’s degree in Social Work (MSW) with specialization in Families with Children and Adolescents at the Universidad de Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras. I graduated in December 2000. Soon after graduation I started working in the mental health services system in the island. I worked at the Correctional Psychiatric Hospital for 2 years, and at First Hospital Panamericano as a clinical social worker for 2 years as well. In the Fall of 2005 I got accepted in the Psychology MS/Ph.D Program at Universidad de Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras. I received my doctoral degree in Social-Community Psychology in 2011. During my doctoral study years I worked as a Community Mental Health Center Director (2004-2009), where I served children and adolescents with severe emotional disorders. In 2009 I started teaching as part of the Adjunct Faculty at Universidad del Este, Carolina Campus. Upon completion of my PhD, I was hired as an Assistant Professor for the School of Social and Human Sciences in the Department of Social Work. As part of the position, I was the Director of Field Education for the BSW and the MSW for one year. After that year I was promoted as the Graduate Program Director, until 2015 when the chancellor asked me to develop the University Community Engagement office. From 2016 to 2017 I did a fellowship in the New Leadership Academy from University of Michigan-Ann Arbor focusing on Higher Education Leadership and Diversity. That same year I was promoted to Associate Professor at Universidad del Este, right before moving to Texas. Currently, I’m pursuing a certification in Sports Psychology, since that is one of my research lines. About my personal life. I’m married to Dr. Jorge F. Figueroa. He is a Visiting Associate Professor in the Teacher Education Program here. We have three wonderful dogs. I’m a high performance athlete in the sport of tennis but my new passions are weight-lifting and crossfit. I’m all into sports. I’m happy for the opportunity TWU gave me to be here as part of this great family.
Social Work Students Making A Difference

Making a Difference in Texas Government

Social Work students Dewey Marshall and Guadalupe Resendiz pictured with Andrew Morris-D, running for Texas House District 64

“One of the joys of campaigning is meeting with constituents, sharing stories, engaging, and coming out with plans, ideas, and policies to start advocating for throughout this district. I didn't know exactly what we would talk about when Dewey Marshall and Guadalupe Resendiz asked to talk to me, but we had a terrific 90 minute conversation about Utah, Housing First, and the Denton County Homeless Coalition. When elected, I will make the housing crisis and this district's homeless population a major priority of mine, including fixing the use of TANF funds, building partnerships with municipal governments, and bringing a Housing First approach to Denton. I don't have all the ideas. But by listening, responding, and implementing, we can all have a part to play in creating the district and the community that we want. Thank you for the opportunity, Dewey & Guadalupe!” - Andrew Morris

Social Work students Guadalupe Resendiz, Dewey Marshall, and Arlet Martinez pictured with Matt Pruneda-D, running for Texas House District 64.

“We had a nice discussion last night, with Dewey, Arlet and Guadalupe, about what can be done to combat homelessness. Did you know that the number of people who are homeless, in Denton County, jumped by 275% from 2011 to 2018? Did you know that we spend, on average, about $20,000 on someone who is chronically homeless? Our state legislature must begin prioritizing a Housing First approach for people who are chronically homeless in Texas.” - Matt Pruneda

Social Work Student Highlights

Dewey Marshall was awarded Student Advocate of the Year at the Social Work Spring Honors Banquet. Dewey has served as the president of Texas Freedom Network and works tirelessly to combat poverty and homelessness in Denton County. His reflections on social justice are below:

"It is integral to my world view that most material suffering is avoidable, but power structures in the status quo repeatedly frame issues of poverty, mass incarceration, ICE raids, police brutality, lack of access to healthcare, income disparity, etc. as necessary to maintain civil society. Throughout my time in the social work program at TWU, I have been repeatedly taught that social workers have an ethical obligation to fight for human rights and social justice. The ethical obligation to advocate is not artificially carved into section six of the code of ethics. Rather, we as social workers come face to face with the obligation to challenge power structures when we are practicing case management with our clients. Systems theory tells us that each micro instance of injustice takes place within a larger system of institutions, which is necessary to recognize when helping our individual clients. When we recognize systems theory, systemic oppression becomes intelligible through our clients; the actual faces of people whom we serve bring us face to face with our ethical obligations of systemic change. If our work as social workers does not lead to effectual change in institutions, then we are responsible for our clients who suffer under such institutions. Often, the tasks of advocating for human rights and social justice seems daunting and discouraging. It is necessary to recognize that the labor intensity of social work is not limited to micro work. Rather, our drive to better our clients should be utilized in long-lasting ways. Not only is it important for us to conserve energy for macro reform efforts, it is vital to our contributions to the profession. The good news is that we are equipped to make effectual change. Through our understanding of practice, theory, cultural competency, interpersonal skills, and societal power structures, there are few in this society who are more prepared to promote human rights and social justice than social workers.” -Dewey Marshall

Jasmin Jackson is an exceptional student and a great asset to the Social Work Program at Texas Woman’s University. Jasmin is a member of the Phi Alpha National Honor Society, Student Association of Social Work, Student Government Association, National Association of Social Workers, and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Jasmin was selected as the TWU nominee for the National Association of Social Worker’s (NASW) Student of the Year. In the last academic year, Jasmin was on the Dean’s List, the Chancellor’s List, and a finalist for the TWU Outstanding Student Award. Jasmin has also been nominated for the Golden Key Honor Society, the National Society for Leadership and Success, and was selected as the Sigma Gamma Undergraduate of the Year. Additionally, Jasmin has been published in the TWU Honors Journal. While excelling academically, Jasmin has served the Denton community as a hospice volunteer and participated in Keep Denton Beautiful. Her current G.P.A is 3.8 which is an accurate exhibition of her organizational, communicative, and leadership skills.
“Social workers have an ethical obligation to promote the advancement of social justice and human rights. In short, we have a responsibility for social change. There is no better time than the present to spark change within our communities, especially in our current political climate. The world surrounding social workers can evoke misguided hatred and pain. Yet, social workers must remain passionate and diligent in their change efforts. Vulnerable populations need empathetic social workers who can stand at the forefront of the fight to end social injustices.

As a future social worker, I challenge myself every day to step out of my comfort zone. By being “uncomfortable”, I allow myself to question policies, speak out against injustices, and reevaluate my own beliefs and values. As I realign my comfort zone every day, I realize that I am being a catalyst for social change by remaining educated, steadfast, and fervent to marginalized communities that desperately need a voice.”

- Jasmin Jackson

CONGRATULATIONS

Social Work Student Awards 2017-2018
Title IV-E Student of the Year
Selene Allison (Fall ’17)
Outstanding Field Student of the Year
Valeria Navarro (Spring ’18)
NASW Social Work Student of the Year
Jasmin Jackson (Summer ’18)
Outstanding Research Project
Elissa Ortiz (Spring ’18)
Best Micro Practice Student
Kameshia Dean (Summer ’18)
Best Macro Practice Student
Juana Montecillo (Spring ’18)
Best Mezzo Practice Student
Patrick Kwong (Spring ’18)
Student Advocate of the Year
Dewey Marshall (Fall ’18)
Spirit of Social Work
Kat Ralph (Spring ’18)
Student Volunteer of the Year
Michelle Carpenter (Summer ’18)
Best Writing
Kelly Loreth (Summer ’18)
Most Congenial
Leah Cortez-Ramirez (Spring ’18)
Top Social Work Student
Cheryl McCutchan (Summer ’18)
Woolf scholars
Manal Al-Khateeb, Kameshia Dean, Arlet Martinez

Phi Alpha National Social Work Honor Society
By Jennifer McGowan
Phi Alpha Honor Society is a national social work honor society. Within the Social Work Program at TWU, we are the Beta Sigma chapter. The purpose of Phi Alpha Honor Society is to provide a closer bond among students of social work, promote humanitarian goals and ideas, and to provide service to community organizations. Phi Alpha fosters high standards of education for social workers and invites into membership those who have attained excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work. This spring semester we inducted nineteen new members who met the requirements of the honor society through their academic excellence.

We collaborated with Chili’s in Denton to raise money for Denton County Friends of the Family. Phi Alpha also received donations throughout the semester of feminine hygiene products to donate to the DCFOF shelter. Phi Alpha will be hosting the social work graduation reception following the May 11 graduation ceremony. This allows social work graduates to celebrate their momentous achievement with friends, family, fellow students, and faculty. These are a few of the accomplishments that Phi Alpha was able to put into action this spring semester. We hope to continue the community outreach and the fostering of educational attainment by social work students.

The Child Abuse Prevention Society (CAPS)
By Michele Carpenter
During the 2017-2018 academic year, the Child Abuse Prevention Society (CAPS)-enjoyed tremendous success. We welcomed a new officer from a major other than Social Work for the first time in a great while, and while this presented some scheduling conflicts, her fresh perspective and contributions made finding solutions to those challenges well worth it. The officer team did a wonderful job pulling together to establish goals for the year that included raising awareness of issues related to child advocacy, educating the student body on potential related career paths and making a difference through fundraising and service.

In terms of raising awareness and education, CAPS hosted several guest speakers, including Monica Cattau from Denton County Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC), who provided a very informative session on her role at the CAC and the good work happening at that organization. CAPS sponsored a successful Child Welfare Conference in November which hosted professionals and students from all over the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Additionally, CAPS cosponsored the recent Social Work Ethics Conference on human trafficking and is looking forward to hosting a viewing of the film, "Losing Isaiah" during Child Abuse Awareness Month.

In terms of service, in the Fall semester, CAPS members participated in National Adoption Day, setting up the courthouse and collecting donations, CAPS members volunteered to provide kinship caregivers and their foster children with a fun-filled day.

In the Spring, CAPS members worked together to provide donations and support to a resource closet for teen parents at a local high school, affectionately termed a “Love Locker” by its founder who is a Social Work student at TWU. CAPS also raised funds and collected donations to provide prom dresses to teens in foster care. Serving in the CAPS organization has been a wonderful experience and I’m proud of the work officers and members alike accomplished together this semester!
Fall focus: Food Insecurity
The SASW has had a very successful year! In the fall Student Association for Social Work (SASW) primarily focused on food insecurity on campus. The food pantry coordinator worked tirelessly with Student Life to develop food drive initiatives to stock the food pantry. One of those initiatives consisted of a food drive competition between student organizations across campus. The food drive competition resulted in over 3000 food donation items for the food pantry. The top 3 student organizations were provided with a plaque for their participation. First place also received a pizza party. Boo at the U and Stock the Fridge also resulted in a plethora of food donations for the food pantry. The food pantry is vital in meeting food insecurities among TWU students and SASW maintains a sincere commitment to meet this need.

A primary goal of SASW is service to the community.
In the spring of 2018, SASW officers and members volunteered at "The Big Event", a partnership between Texas Woman's University and Keep Denton Beautiful to clean up the Denton community. In addition, SASW adopted a family for Easter and provided five Easter baskets and an Easter dinner.

Guest Speakers Enrich Student Learning
SASW has also kept social work students abreast of current needs in the community and the profession of social work by inviting a variety of speakers to general meetings. A social worker from Health Services of North Texas spoke about her role in serving clients with HIV/AIDS. A representative from the North Texas Food Bank spoke about the prevalence of food insecurity and hunger in our local community and how students can get involved in service. A social worker from the Child Advocacy Center spoke about her role as a forensic interviewer and the importance of self-care when dealing with an emotionally heavy workload. The new SASW officers are excited about the next academic year and already have plans for an amazing year.

Sociology Student & Alumni Organizations

Founding & Future Direction of the Sociology Alumni Advisory Board By: William Ash-Houchen
This year saw the development of the Sociology Alumni Advisory Board (SAAB) within the Department of Sociology and Social Work. Founding members of the organization and its current leadership include: Dr. Andrea Laurent-Simpson (TWU '16) as President, Heather M. Gerling as Vice-President, William Ash-Houchen as secretary, and Dr. Maggie Böhm-Jordan (TWU '16) as treasurer. This collaborative effort between the department and four graduate students (current and former) was created to bridge the gap between experiences and learning in graduate school to what is usually considered the most challenging aspect of graduate school: finding future employment. Aware of the rarity of tenure-track academic positions as well as high-paying non-academic jobs, our organization wishes to help our students achieve greatness, whatever their post-degree employment plans may be.

Broadly, the Sociology Alumni Advisory Board aspires to operate as a resource for current graduate students by synthesizing and providing information about post-graduate career options and marketability through (a) advising on trends, patterns, and skills necessary for successful job searches and employment, (b) consulting with the department in the creation of relevant coursework additions to the rotation, and (c) providing periodic workshops to assist students in career-specific job searches.

In support of our third major goal, we organized two workshops for the Spring 2018 semester centered around the theme of “Putting your sociology degree to work.” These two workshops helped support knowledge of changing trends in the job market, with the first event (January 2018) focusing on the steps required and best practices for timing the academic job search. Our panelists discussed how to develop quality material to submit to universities and departments, as well as when to begin this process to achieve maximum effect. In April 2018, our second workshop for current students invited guest speakers from two different organizations to focus on putting a sociology degree to work outside academia. We wish to extend a special thank you to our speakers for participating and for helping us make these events a success.

In the next academic year, the board plans to invite alumni as well as current graduate and undergraduate students to join our organization, and support our mission and goals. Membership will include networking opportunities with other alumni, opportunities to help guide programming and events offered to current students, opportunities to give back to your alma mater with your newly gained experience, keeping in touch with your faculty mentors, and helping the department grow its reputation, all while generating successful graduate students. We also plan to begin collecting nominal dues from members to support the organization’s efforts to recruit innovative and talented guest speakers for presentations, plan workshops and panels for current students, as well as develop a scholarship for graduate students. These efforts will also be part of the organization’s goal of formal university recognition to help sustain it in the future. More details will be forthcoming, as we plan additional events for TWU students, and we hope you will join us in the coming year, as we continue to work toward our goals.

Social Science Research Lab
The Social Science Research Lab’s (SSRL) goal is development and fostering of graduate-student led social research. Started by former student Joanna Lara in 2014-2015, the lab has been redeveloped by a small group of doctoral students who share three broad goals: First, to connect students who are early in their coursework with students who are further along in skill development and degree completion. Second, the lab also hopes to connect students who may share similar research agendas, and who may be interested in collaborative work. Finally, the lab is intended to be a space that facilitates the exchange of research ideas and best practices at the peer level. This innovative program aligns with a national trend for holders of Sociology graduate degrees to be conversant in both
Social Science Research Lab Continued

pedagogy and research. The lab’s purpose is to respond proactively to the question, “How do I begin doing research?” The SSRL also aims to reinforce the relationships between research skill and future employment opportunities across industries like academics, non-profit work, and government employment.

At the start of their graduate careers, many students understand the need to publish research, but the process can be a challenge. Broad questions like, “What do I do,” “Where should I publish my work,” “Who can I turn to when I hit a bump in the road,” and “What do I need to know,” are common. The SSRL aims to answer these burning questions experientially, and on a peer-level in addition to the skills developed in the classroom as a cooperation-based response to meet and address those underlying student questions and needs.

One of the key points the lab emphasizes is timeliness on social research. The process of publishing research can take years of revisions and interactions with journals, and navigating this process is a challenge.

This academic year, the lab has been under intense development by doctoral candidates Heather Gerling and William Ash-Houchen, lab co-coordinators, who are refining both the form and function of SSRL as they endeavor to conceptualize the culture of the department as one of collegiate and collaborative research. One salient area of their efforts is directed toward reinforcing the role of research skills in various career paths, with the goal of preparing graduate students for their future. For example, one thing the SSRL focuses on currently is the role of research in careers across academic and non-academic career paths. An underlying theme across all career industries is the understanding that research skills are critical. Even in teaching positions, the expectation is that the employee will research or use some form of their research skills—namely analyzing and evaluating. With research skills being advantageous in a highly competitive job market, it is important for students to develop collaborative approaches to research so that professionals with different styles and backgrounds come together on projects. According to the SSRL coordinators, the lab is “…deeply mindful of the pressures of graduate school. At the same time, we want to provide an environment that is encouraging of collaborative and student-led research. The skills developed along the way will be helpful for a variety of career options, and that is really our goal for our colleagues: to broaden and enhance the skills necessary to find work in the industry of their choice.”

In March 2018, the SSRL hosted an event entitled, “How We Got Here: Turning Research Interests into Dissertation and Theses Topics,” which was well attended by sociology graduate students. Doctoral candidates William Ash-Houchen, Ted Babin Jr., Heather M. Gerling, Erin Ellis, and Master’s candidate Michael Winters shared their pathways to success as graduate students, including how they developed their interests and passions into social research topics. Attendees were exposed to a number of different research topics and methodologies, as well as a rich discussion of issues that can crop up along the way during the research process, such as interacting with the Institutional Review Board and handling unexpected delays in research projects, with the panel representing a broad cross-section of the graduate student population in the department. The diversity of those speaker’s interests and their stories provided a broad relatability factor for the graduate students in attendance. As one student said after the event, “This helps because now I know that I am not struggling alone.”

Alpha Kappa Delta By Victor Palacios: Reflecting back on the 2017-2018 academic year, as a representative of Alpha Kappa Delta, I would love to reminisce about the wonderful things AKD did this academic term. One of our major points on the agenda we planned when we discussed the upcoming school year, was working to promote inclusion. As sociologists, we have a deep understanding of the stratification that exists due to a variety of factors. Through this mission, we planned to have a series that focused on diversity and inclusion. Through a partnership with the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Outreach we planned our events to set us up for the year. We held events on Race, helmed by Dr. Philip Yang and Becky Rodriguez; on Disability, helmed by Dr. Paul Bones and Jessica Williams; on Sexuality and Sexual Identity; and finally on Religion.

Apart from this major series, we sponsored a child through TWU Holiday Gift program. As an organization, we provided a child of a student at TWU with several gifts to celebrate Christmas with.

Finally, we partnered with Friends With Benefits, a local 501(c)(3) in Denton, Texas that benefits North Texas charitable organizations that help provide assistance for local charitable organizations to help raise funds. We held a winter coat drive to benefit the area homeless that were then later taken to Our Daily Bread, a local soup kitchen that was in dire need of clothing.

To serve our student community, we held two can food drives to benefit the student food pantry. Though we did not participate in the spirit of competition, but rather to help serve our community, we placed in both drives.

Without departmental support, we would not have been able to host our networking events, such as the Introduction to NVIVO with Stacy Kelk, Careers outside of Academia with Dr. Jessica Gullion, and Selecting a Research Topic with Dr. James Williams.

Scholarship & Research Notes: This past year 28 Presentations and 16 Publications authored by Faculty and Students have been shared via a monthly email communication. Associate Professor of Sociology Jessica Smartt Gullion’s new book, Diffractive Ethnography: Social Sciences and the Ontological Turn, recently was published with Routledge. Additionally, Dr Jessica Gullion was invited by the editors at Oxford University Press to write a new book tentatively titled Qualitative Methods in Health Research.
OPENING CEREMONY: Celia C. Lo, Ph.Dm, Chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Work and Professor of Sociology opened the evening and guided the speakers and events of the night. The guest speaker was TWU Provost and Vice-President for academic affairs Alan Utter.

Other distinguished TWU guests were Carolyn Kapinus, Ph.D., Dean of the Graduate School, Barbara Lerner, Ph.D., Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Partnerships, and Major General Mary Saunders, Executive Director for the TWU Center for Women in Business. Distinguished guests from UNT were also in attendance: Joseph Oppong, Academic Associate Vice-Provost, UNT-Toulouse Graduate School Dale Yeatts, Professor, UNT-Department of Sociology

ALUMNI SPEAKER ANDREA LAURENT-SIMPSON

Andrea Laurent-Simpson President of the Student Alumni Advisory Board gave a warming speech on the goals and purposes of the advisory board and what they have achieved thus far. As attendees enjoyed their main courses The Sociology Department, Dr. Lo, And William Ash-Houchen were acknowledged for the high honors they received from the University this year; Distinguished Department Supporting Graduate Students Award, Distinction in Scholarship Award, and Graduate Council’s Award for Exceptional, Original Scholarship respectively. Laurent-Simpson is no stranger to awards. Over the past two-years she has been a recipient of two national awards.

IMPRESSIVE DEPARTMENTAL GROWTH: Philip Q. Yang, Ph.D. Professor and Graduate Program Director gave an informative speech on the history and substantial growth of the Sociology Department. This review focused on the past 7-years with impressive statistical support of the depth and breadth of growth for the Sociology department. Dr. Yang concluded by opening the evening into the recognition and awarding of outstanding student achievements.

DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Every year the Department recognizes endeavors and accomplishments by students on the Graduate & Undergraduate level. These students have demonstrated a commitment to Sociology through their scholarship, leadership, service, teaching or overall dedication to their goals and are reflections of the goals and missions of the Department. The honors were bestowed upon students by Sociology Department Faculty: Professor Paul Bones, Ph.D., Professor Celia Lo, Ph.D, Chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Work, Professor Mahmoud Sadri, Ph.D., AKD Advisor, Professor James Williams, Ph.D., Criminal Justice Director, and Professor Phillip Yang, Ph.D., Graduate Program Director and AKD Advisor.

“Outstanding” Graduate Level Recipients

**Master’s Students in Sociology:** Kyndal DeBruin & Michael Winters

**Student in Service:** LaWanna Fant

**Teaching Assistant:** Allison Ray

**Student in Scholarship:** Hollie Teague

**Leadership:** William Ash-Houchen

**Doctoral Student:** Heather Gerling
Undergraduate Level Recipients

Outstanding Portfolio in Sociology: Madyson Plummer
Outstanding Student in Sociology: Kristy Burden
Outstanding Criminal Justice Student: Alondra Hernandez

Scholarships
Professor Bones had the honor of presenting numerous sociology students with scholarships including the Ann Lindemann Starnater Endowed Scholarship, Evelyn Davis Graduate Fellowship, Bertha & Morris Levy Endowed Scholarship, and the Jessie H. Humphries Endowed Scholarship.

Current Graduates Recognized
As the dessert course was served the Department acknowledged the 2017-2018 graduating classes. This year saw a total of 87 students graduate with Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees in either Criminal Justice or Sociology.

The current AKD Board presented Ivy Naude with recognition.

Alpha Kappa Delta
As advisors to the student Sociology Honor Society Professor’s Yang and Sadri assisted Alpha Kappa Delta Board member Mia Kirby induct its newest members.

2018 Spotlight Class of 1958
The Women Behind the Ann Lindemann Starnater Endowed Scholarship
Recently I had the privilege of speaking with Kay (Williams) Goodman who is a TWU alumni class of 1958. Every year the Class of 58 offers a scholarship to the Department of Social Work and Sociology. Goodman, who was a local student from Denton, said that she was friends with the woman for whom the scholarship is named, Ann Lindemann Starnater since they first met as freshmen sitting together in the front row of English class. 1958 is one of the few “classes” that offers its own scholarship. The scholarship is awarded annually to a major in the Department of Sociology or Social Work. The recipient must be an outstanding student who has exhibited leadership qualities and service to the University.

Ann Lindemann Starnater was the senior class president for Texas Woman’s University in 1958. At the time, if you were the senior class president then you became the class “agent” for that year’s alumni. Unfortunately, Ann passed away in 1979. By 1981 the Class of 58 offered a scholarship in her name. That scholarship was later endowed. This means that it was made permanent by making the scholarship off of the interest so that the principal remains the same. Therefore, the amount of the award varies year to year. Goodman’s memories of Ann are that, “She was a campus leader, selected as Who’s Who, and had a very strong emphasis on school loyalty. She was just a neat person.”
SOCIOLOGY BANQUET 2018 COHORTS, COLLEAGUES, AND CAMARADERIE

CONGRATULATIONS

Graduating Classes of 2017-2018


Masters for Sociology: Kyndal Debruin, Tanya Faglie, Kelli Muno, Jesse Patrick, Michael Winters.

National & Regional Presentations 2017-2018

American Sociological Association: August 2017 Montreal
Southern Sociological Society: April 2018 New Orleans

American Public Health Association: Fall 2017

Texas Woman's University Presentations April 2018

Department of Sociology & Social Work Research and Scholarship Showcase

Professor Paul Bones: If a Tree Falls: Exploring the Rise and Fall of Eco-Terror in the US
Professor Jessica Gullion: Assemblages and Entanglements
Professor Nila Ricks: Assessing Barriers and Resources of Teen Pregnancy Prevention in Dallas
Professor Mahmoud Sadri: Iran and US in Trump Era: The Love, Hate, Distrust Cycle
Professor James Williams: Reimagining General Strain and Intimate Partner Homicide
Professor Phillip Yang: Generational Differences in educational Attainment Across Asian American Groups.

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
August 2017: Teaching and Learning With Technology 12th Annual Symposium

Amy Clark: “Emerge Victorious Through the Peer Review Process of Your Online Course.”

April 2018: Student Creative Arts & Research Symposium

William Smith: Why They Choose What They Choose: Factors Influencing High School Students’ Postsecondary Choices.
William Ash-Houchen: Strain, Depression, and Adolescent Substance Use a Temporal-Ordering Analysis.

Former Sociology Graduate Wins Second National Award

Andrea Laurent-Simpson, Ph.D., a December 2016 graduate of the Texas Woman's University sociology doctoral program, received the 2017 Herbert Blumer Graduate Student Paper Award. This award is presented annually to the author of the best graduate student paper in the tradition of symbolic interaction by the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction.
Laurent-Simpson's winning paper, "Considering Alternate Sources of Role Identity: Childless Parents and Their Animal 'Kids,'" explores the formation of role identity in non-human animals through interviews with childless and childfree companion animal owners. Previous winners include students from the University of Colorado-Boulder, Northwestern University and Indiana University. This award is the second national award won by Simpson, who also received the American Sociological Association's Animals and Society Jane Goodall Award for Distinguished Graduate Scholarship in 2016.
TODAY WE WORE PURPLE to stand with Puerto Rico. Today people in Puerto Rico are on national strike. Since Hurricane Maria the governor, the legislature and the fiscal board are “selling” (privatizing) almost all services on the island. They are taking away children’s rights to a public education, housing, people’s retirement money, and selling public services like the electricity company and the mental health services among a lot of other things. Social workers in Puerto Rico are supporting this strike. Dr. Rosa-Davila (center) left Puerto Rico just one week before Hurricane Maria to join the TWU Social Work faculty. The TWU Social Work program stands with her and supports their effort in advocating for Puerto Ricans’ human rights.