

E-NEWSLETTER

Fall 2014

Issue 6

Winthrop University  
Department of  
**SOCIAL WORK**

# Message from the Department Chair

Deana F. Morrow, Ph.D., LPC, LCSW, LISW-CP, ACSW



Welcome to the fall edition of the Winthrop Social Work Newsletter! We are delighted that our BSW and MSW programs continue to grow and flourish. This fall marked the beginning of our new Advanced Standing MSW Weekend Program. This program is designed specifically for BSW-level professionals who wish to complete the MSW degree while continuing their employment. With the addition of this program, we now have four different MSW degree options.

On the BSW front, we recently launched our first ever BSW research symposium under the direction of Monique Huggins, Ph.D. Students presented their independent research on a range of topics including international studies, media portrayals of African American men, and diversity among faculty. We are also looking forward to offering a social work study abroad trip to St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the summer of 2015.

Our social work student organizations have been quite active in civic engagement this fall. They initiated a fund raiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in Rock Hill, and they are presently engaged in fund raising for the Breast Screening Source of York County. In addition, social work students spent Election Day participating with the organization, Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, to assess voter polling locations across the state for their accessibility to voters with disabilities.

Several new full-time faculty colleagues joined the Department of Social Work this fall: Dr. Allison Gibson, assistant professor; Mr. Perry Owen, associate field director; and, Mr. Sam Caldwell, instructor. Our new colleagues are already making a significant impact in their respective roles.

In closing, I join with the faculty of the Department of Social Work in wishing you a meaningful holiday season and a Happy New Year. As this year comes to a close, I also invite you to consider supporting the Department of Social Work by making a financial gift to the Winthrop Foundation and earmarking your gift specifically for social work. Your gift will help us support students in reaching their career goals and making their professional dreams come true.

Sincerely,  
*Deana F. Morrow*

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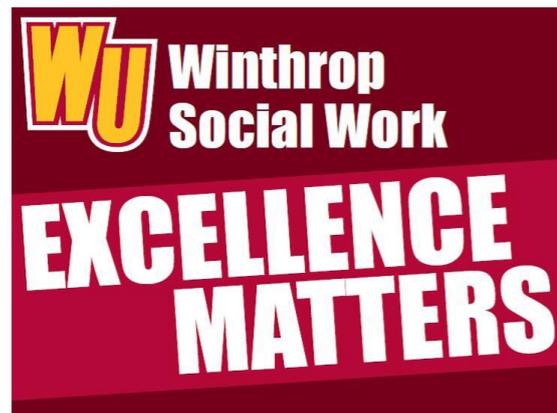
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# MSW Admissions

Applications for the MSW program are now being accepted. Full-time and Weekend Program cohorts are admitted for August enrollment; and the full-time Advanced Standing cohorts are admitted for May enrollment. **Review of applications begin February 1.** Review ends on April 30 for summer admission and June 15 for fall admission. Admission is competitive and only applicants with fully completed application packets will be reviewed.

Want to learn more about the MSW Program? Come to one of our [Information Sessions](#) this spring.



## Give the Gift of Excellence

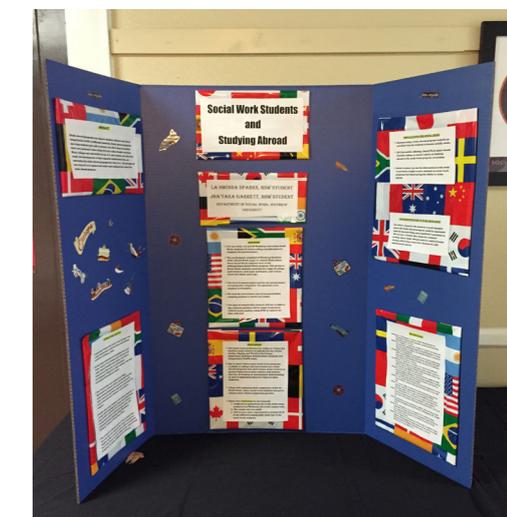
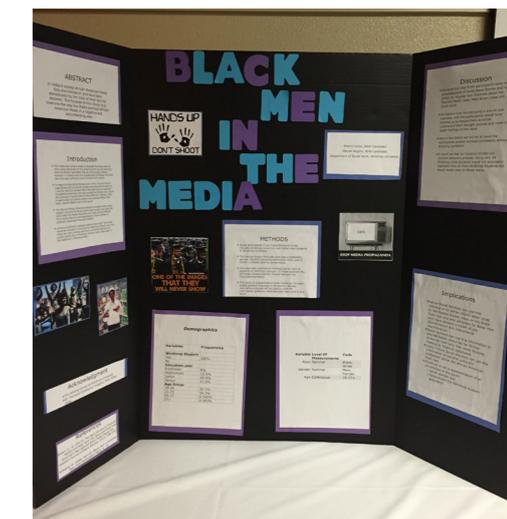
As this year closes, please consider supporting the Department of Social Work by making a financial gift to the Winthrop Foundation and earmarking your gift specifically for social work. Your gift helps us support students in reaching their career goals and in making their professional dreams come true.

# Social Work Undergraduate Research Symposium: Unleashing Student Potential

[Monique Constance-Huggins, Ph.D.](#)

Undergraduate research is a great way to stimulate the intellectual curiosity of students around social issues that can impact social work practice. The Department of Social Work held its first Undergraduate Research Symposium on November 18 and 20. The symposium, which was comprised of poster and oral presentation sessions, gave students the opportunity to showcase their research projects in front of faculty and fellow students. There were 11 research projects including topics such as: “Diversity among College of Arts and Science Faculty,” “Social Work Students and Studying Abroad,” “Satisfaction of International Students with Services,” and “Perception of Black Men in the Media.”

The research symposium was a very worthwhile endeavor for students and allowed them the opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge to real world situations. The Department of Social Work plans to explore opportunities that will allow students to develop and unleash their research potential! We hope that this will be the first of many more to come.



# Social Work Club

Shenelle Bibbins, Julia Swidzinski, and  
Krystal Frisbie

The Winthrop Social Work Club aims to bring about awareness to social, economic, and educational issues and to promote social justice. We reach these goals by hosting cultural events, volunteering, and fundraising throughout the community.

The club meets every Thursday at 11 a.m. in Owens G07. Once a month, we invite a guest speaker to inform members of volunteer opportunities. We also get together once a month to encourage participation and create a sense of community, fellowship, and support within our group. We have had a bowling night at Strikers. One night we met for dinner at Charanda's followed by dessert at Amelie's French Bakery. We also hosted a game night on campus.

Our first big project was raising money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society during the month of September where we raised more than \$400. We also participated in the "Light the Night" walk for Leukemia and Lymphoma held on October 9 in Cherry Park.

The next major project was hosting a play to raise money for The Breast Screening Source of York County. We raised \$289 for this organization to assist with their mission to "provide financial assistance to the uninsured and underinsured women living in York, Lancaster, and Chester counties for mammograms and other diagnostic screenings."

In an effort to serve those in need, we volunteer at various agencies throughout York County. We volunteer twice a month at the Adult Enrichment Center where we assist with distributing snacks and playing Bingo. During the month of November we helped the York County Christian Women's Job Corps at their fundraising event "Uncle Phil's Diner" to raise money for providing services for women to become self-sufficient.

The Social Work Club will continue to provide community service as well as educate students on issues within our society. Our goal for next semester is to better prepare club members for their careers by inviting professional social workers come speak at our meetings.

## Linda M. Ashley Annual Scholarship

Linda Ashley '95 came to Winthrop as a non-traditional student ready to establish a new career in social work. She quickly fell in love with Winthrop University and the social work profession. She served Winthrop's Department of Social Work, first as a field instructor, and then as the department's director of field and continuing education before retiring this past summer.

She has established an estate gift, the Linda M. Ashley Endowed Scholarship for Social Work, to benefit nontraditional undergraduate and graduate social work majors. In addition, Ashley's friends have created the Linda M. Ashley Annual Restricted Scholarship for Social Work so that Ashley can see students receive scholarship support during her lifetime.

If you would like to contribute to the annual restricted scholarship, please contact the Development Office. The scholarship will be awarded this spring.

## Continuing Education Opportunity

Winthrop University's Department of Social Work has been partnering with Catawba Area Agency on Aging and Interim Healthcare for many years now to host the monthly social work continuing education meetings that were once known as the Task Force For The Elderly. Over the years our educational focus has expanded to include much more than just information on geriatrics, and now addresses a variety of social work issues impacting local practitioners. Therefore we have changed the meeting name to SoWu – Social Work Community Meetings at Winthrop University. However, the one thing that has not changed is our commitment to helping local practitioners have an affordable, local venue where they can discuss the challenges experienced in the field of social work and receive education on emerging trends, programs and services. Meetings occur once per month, October through May. There is no fee to attend the meetings, but a donation is collected for the Linda M. Ashley Annual Scholarship. For more information about the meetings, please [click here](#) or [e-mail Jennifer McDaniel](#).



**Top:** *Uncle Phil's Diner* castmembers (back row from left to right): Brittany McTier, Shenelle Bibbins, Julia Swidzinski, and Porsche' Moore. (front row) Bernadette Robinson

**Second from the top:** (Back row from left to right): Ashley Collins, Eric Morrison, Julia Swidzinski, Shenelle Bibbins, and Kerston Delaney (Front row): Kimberly Edwards, Charlee Payne, Misaki Tillis, and Eva Schleicher at "*Uncle Phil's Diner*."

**Second from the bottom:** Charlee Payne, Montrice Chisolm, Shenelle Bibbins, Quintessia Lightner and Teresa Taylor at the "*Uncle Phil's Diner*" fundraiser.

**Bottom:** Porsche' Moore, Bernadette Robinson, Kerston Delaney, Shenelle Bibbins, and Lily Carter at the *Adult Enrichment Center*.

# Welcome New Faculty



Allison Gibson, Ph.D., M.S.W.

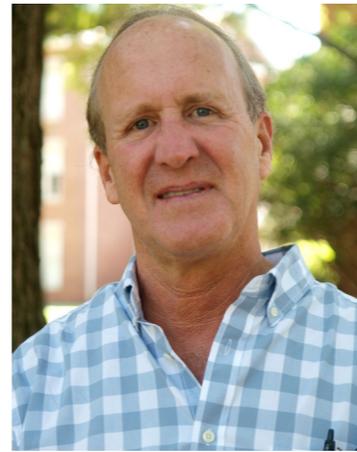
Assistant Professor

Allison Gibson is currently teaching in both the B.S.W. and M.S.W. programs. Courses she teaches at Winthrop University include “Social Research,” “Advanced Social Work Research,” “Introduction to Gerontology,” and “Advanced Practice: Micro Systems.” Currently she functions as the membership coordinator for the Gerontological Society of America’s Special Interest Group for Disasters and Older Adults. She also serves with the American Red Cross, Upper Palmetto Chapter with the Disaster Action Team and the Disaster Mental Health Team.

Gibson has worked as a social worker with the Alzheimer’s Association, as well as conducted program evaluations with the Community and Youth Collaborative Institute. Her work focused on direct practice with individuals and families, geriatric social work, end of life issues, and crisis intervention.

Her research is focused on community-based services for older adults (with emphasis on seniors of diverse backgrounds), gerontological disaster response/mental health services, interventions for rural caregivers, and interventions for persons living alone with cognitive impairment or Alzheimer’s disease.

Gibson has been the recipient of the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference Junior Fellows Travel Award (2014), the Association of Gerontology Education in Social Work’s Pre-Dissertation Initiative (2011), the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship (2011), and the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award (2009).



Perry Owen, M.S.W.

Associate Field Director

Perry Owen joined the Department of Social Work as a full-time faculty member this August to serve as the associate field director. However, he has worked with the department since 2012 as an adjunct instructor for the MSW program, teaching in both the field and classroom setting. In his new role, Owen is overseeing the BSW field program and teaching the field seminar capstone course to our undergraduate students. He has a B.A. in Sociology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and an M.S.W. from the University of South Carolina.

Prior to coming to Winthrop, Owen worked as a school social worker for 23 years with the Charlotte Mecklenburg School District. He provided services and resources to at-risk middle school students in a Title I school setting. During his time as a school social worker, Owen served as a volunteer coordinator; McKinney Vento liaison, assisting homeless students and their families; implemented the truancy court program for Ranson Middle School; and provided supervision and guidance for other middle school social workers across the district. Owen also taught school social work for 14 years at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, preparing both undergraduate and graduate level social work students for the NC School Social Worker certification. In addition, he also worked with the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services for nine years, helping him to build the strong foundation of skills and knowledge needed for a long-term career in social work.

Owen also served as a field instructor to 28 social work students throughout his practice career! It is quite evident that he has strong commitment to training our future social work practitioners. We are excited to have him join our faculty and share his wealth of knowledge and experience with Winthrop’s social work students.

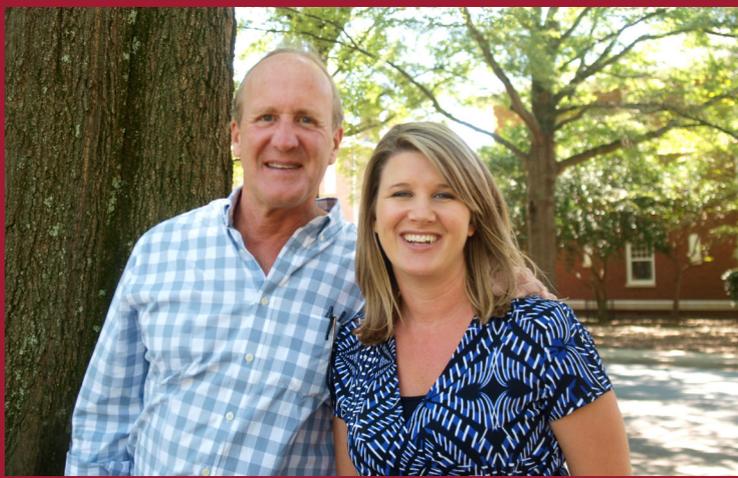


Sammy Caldwell, L.M.S.W.

Instructor

Mr. Sam Caldwell joined the Department of Social Work this fall for a one-year assignment as Instructor of Social Work. Caldwell is recently retired from the Columbia Area Mental Health Center where he served as the staff development and training coordinator. Caldwell also previously served as the chief mental health counselor at Beckman Mental Health Center in Greenwood, S.C., and as the director of social services at Epworth Children’s Home in Columbia, S.C.. He has also maintained his own private clinical practice for a number of years. In addition to his professional practice experience, Caldwell brings to Winthrop an extensive teaching background. Throughout his practice career, he taught on a part-time basis at a number of colleges and universities including Benedict College, Coker College, Columbia College, Johnson C. Smith University, and the University of South Carolina. Caldwell completed his Master of Social Work degree from the University of South Carolina. He is a Licensed Independent Social Worker in Clinical Practice in the state of South Carolina. He teaches a variety of courses in the content areas of direct practice skills, social welfare policy, human behavior in the social environment, and field education.





## Field Update

Jennifer McDaniel, L.M.S.W.

It has been an exciting semester for us in the field office! With the welcomed additions of Perry Owen as associate field director, Sammy Caldwell, Jackie Grignon, and Kelly Mitchum as adjunct field faculty, and Michelle Hearn as administrative specialist, new ideas and enthusiasm are abounding. We continue to look for new ways to reduce the paperwork burden on field instructors and to help students access documents and fulfill the program's high expectations. In the BSW program we are starting the second year of having the field seminar course serve as a capstone course. This course gives students the chance to apply all of their undergraduate social work knowledge to the real-world situations they experience in field. We have been so impressed by the high level of competency our students have demonstrated through this new approach! Our next capstone presentations will be December 12 at 9 a.m. in the Richardson Ballroom, and everyone is invited.

In the MSW program we welcomed the first cohort of advanced standing students in the part-time program. These students jumped right into their advanced field placement and have already impressed us with all they are doing in field. One student has already completed a training video for volunteers that will be used agency-wide and available on the agency's website. Other advanced MSW students are already facilitating and co-facilitating various group meetings, working with individuals to provide counseling services, managing their own caseloads, and assisting agencies with fundraising, grant writing, and program development. We have been so impressed with all of the great learning activities and projects that students have participated in while in the field and can't wait to see what all they are able to accomplish by the time they graduate in May!



## International Social Work & Global Nutrition in St. Vincent & the Grenadines: A Study Abroad Experience

Monique Constance-Huggins, Ph.D.

Becoming a 'global citizen' in an increasingly interconnected world is essential in being an effective social worker. Not only does it allow students to be more culturally competent, but it helps them to analyze issues at a global level. To help social work students develop such skills Constance-Huggins, Ph.D. will lead a study abroad trip to St. Vincent and the Grenadines from July 11 to 19, 2015.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a twin island state located in the eastern Caribbean. The country is 133 square miles and has a population of 102,918. It is a developing country and is sustained mainly by agriculture and tourism.

The study abroad trip to St. Vincent and the Grenadines will provide a cross-cultural experience in which students will learn about Vincentian culture, human rights, social development, and social welfare issues. Through interaction with Vincentians in the rural areas, students will explore the effects of poverty and the physical environment on individuals and their communities. They will also have the opportunity to engage in group practice at a residential facility for youths. Students will visit social service agencies in many of the traditional social work fields of practice (family and children, health, mental health, education, and corrections) and learn about the service delivery approaches in these agencies.





# Election Day Polling

Allison Gibson, Ph.D., M.S.W.

## Center for Social Welfare Research and Assessment (CSWRA)

Rebecca Thomas

This past Election Day, the Winthrop University Department of Social Work partnered with Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc. (P&A) to conduct a statewide assessment of local election polling stations on their observation of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. As noted from the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division,

“The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ... is one of America’s most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life -- to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services, and to participate in State and local government programs and services” (2014, para. 1).

Maggie Knowles, an advocate of P&A, provided training to 22 Winthrop University social work BSW and MSW students on the process of conducting election polling observations using a survey of different criteria to identify related to ADA compliance. Students were asked to conduct observations at local election polling sites among Chester, Lancaster, and York County. Additional students from other universities were also conducting observations across the state. As part of their observations, the students were asked to observe three areas at each polling site: the parking lot and curbside voting station, the entrance to the polling site, and the polling station inside the location.

To help meet ADA compliance, South Carolina is one of many states that allow the option of curbside voting for persons with disabilities. According to the York County Government website, any voter who, because of physical handicap or age (65 or older), cannot enter the polling place in which he is registered to vote, or is unable to stand in line to vote, may vote outside that polling place in the closest available parking area utilizing the vehicle in which he has driven or has been driven to the polls” (2014, para. 6).

First-year MSW student Danielle Silberman said of her experience volunteering to conduct observations on Election Day, “I really enjoyed going out into the community to make sure polling sites were accessible for people with disabilities. It was an enlightening experience that made me feel like I was making a difference!” Students stated that they were very impressed overall at how many election polling sites did meet many of the criteria for ADA compliance.

### References

Protection & Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc. (2014). About. Retrieved from <http://pandasc.org/about/>

United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division (2014). Information and technical assistance on the American with Disabilities Act. Retrieved from [http://www.ada.gov/ada\\_intro.htm](http://www.ada.gov/ada_intro.htm)

York County Government (2014). Absentee and curbside voting. Retrieved from <http://www.yorkcountygov.com/departments/RegistrationandElections/AbsenteeCurbsideVoting>

The CSWRA has worked with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) in order to enhance the lives of people in the Community Long Term Care (CLTC) program through quality assurance, evaluation studies, and research. This year, graduate research assistants (GRAs) and CSWRA staff have begun utilizing results from previous studies to begin researching loneliness within the CLTC population.

Project Coordinator Victoria Charles reports that loneliness has been an area of interest for the CSWRA for some time as research indicates that loneliness is linked to an early death or early entry into a nursing facility. A CSWRA research team, composed of Ron Green, executive director; Mike Bremseth, director of research; and Victoria Charles, project coordinator, have made this area of interest an independent study. In a recent Health and Welfare survey conducted by the current second year GRAs, many survey participants stated they were not lonely despite admitting later in the survey that they had little or no social supports. These findings, along with other previous findings, contributed to the development of the current loneliness project.

Charles, along with GRAs Catherine Auten, Kaitlin David, and Diane Phillips, began researching the causes and effects of loneliness this past summer and presented some of their findings at the eighth annual Creating Caring Connections conference. They reported that loneliness accelerates the effects of aging and chronic illnesses, which for those who work with the CLTC population is a cause for alarm. Therefore, the CSWRA will continue to study loneliness in order to better the lives of CLTC participants. Because of the work done in previous studies, such as Health and Welfare, the CSWRA is able to recognize problems and develop solutions to make today’s community better for tomorrow.



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