



SOCIAL WORK

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Message from the Department Chair

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Greetings! The 2015-2016 academic year represents an exciting new chapter in the life of Winthrop University as we welcome new President Dan Mahony, First Lady Laura Mahony, and their family to campus. President Mahony has been hard at work leading, among other things, a university-wide strategic planning process. We in social work are delighted that First Lady Laura Mahony is an M.S.W.-degreed social worker. I think you will enjoy our newsletter article about Mrs. Mahony's social work practice background and her interest and enthusiasm for contributing to the life and wellness of the Winthrop community.

I hope you will also enjoy our article about Kori Bloomquist, Ph.D., our newest assistant professor of social work. Kori is an accomplished teacher and scholar whose research is focused in the area of child welfare. She comes to us from the University of Indiana where she recently completed her doctorate degree.

Also in this edition of our newsletter is an article by B.S.W. student, Amber Paige, detailing her study abroad

experience in St. Vincent last summer under the leadership of faculty members Monique Constance-Huggins, Ph.D., and Simone Camel, Ph.D. Yet another study abroad trip is scheduled for this spring when faculty members Wendy Sellers, Ph.D., and Duane Neff, Ph.D., will lead a group of B.S.W. and M.S.W. students to Nicaragua.

In addition to our continuing emphasis on student learning, Winthrop social work faculty remain actively engaged as researchers and scholars in partnership with human services agencies across the region. You will see in this newsletter that current projects include partnerships with Agape Senior's York assisted living facility, the United Way of York County, Affinity Health Center, and the South Carolina Department of Social Services. A number of these projects involve social work students as research assistants.

In closing, I want to thank the 300-plus regional agencies and their professional social workers who support our students through field internships. Internships are a signature feature of social work

education and we simply could not fully prepare our students for professional social work practice without our community-based partners. Thank you for guiding our interns in making classroom theories and methods come alive in real world practice.

Happy Holidays!
Deana F. Morrow

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Laura Mahony believes being Winthrop’s first lady gives her the chance to empower people, a perspective inspired by her background in social work.

Growing up in northeast Ohio, Laura knew she wanted to experience the world beyond her own community. And while she has pursued opportunities to travel around the globe, Laura pursued an insightful approach to the world that would allow her to be a participant as well as observer.

Laura was drawn to social work by her interest in understanding the human condition and her desire to help people. Doing so requires being able to appreciate a person’s culture while also understanding that different individuals respond to their environment based on their personal circumstances.

“By pursuing a master’s degree in social work I was able to combine my interest in the theory of human behavior with my desire to make the world better, one person at a time.”

Through her studies, Laura learned to understand the whole person in order to create an environment in which they can thrive. And her professional experience focused on working with survivors of abuse and helping them to overcome the emotional and physiological traumas they have endured.

“Even after a bruise has healed, the victims of abuse carry with them physiological scars. How their brain works – how they perceive and process the world changes, and they need help adjusting.”

The diversity on the Winthrop campus is a source of great pride to Laura and something her background in social work helps her to promote. As the spouse of Winthrop’s president, Laura can offer support to many members of the campus’ diverse community as well as the organizations on which they rely. But how to effectively interact with them? As a licensed therapist Laura is qualified to assess individuals, provide a diagnostic impression and offer a treatment plan. That training is a great advantage in her work as Winthrop’s First Lady.

“There’s nothing more rewarding for me than getting to know people in their own environment and being able to provide support to them so that they may experience their lives more richly. That’s true empowerment.”

Laura Mahony: First Lady and Social Worker

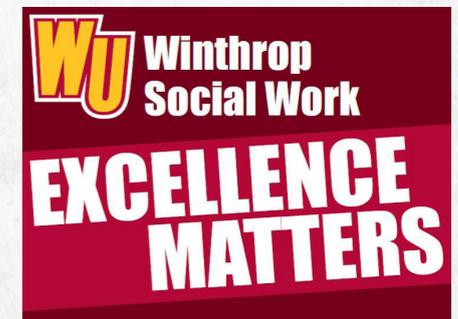
L. Jeffrey Perez, Ph.D.

“There’s nothing more rewarding for me than getting to know people in their own environment and being able to provide support to them so that they may experience their lives more richly.”



Congratulations Wendy Sellers, Ph.D., for being awarded the Lynn Harand Outstanding Advisor Award for the 2014-2015 academic year. Wendy was presented with the award at the Opening Faculty Assembly of the College of Arts and Sciences on Aug. 18. She was nominated for the award by BSW students for her exemplary advising skills during the past year.

The Department of Social Work is currently accepting applications for an MSW Admissions Coordinator and Instructor of Social Work position. For more information, please see the Winthrop University Human Resources website.





Kori Bloomquist, Ph.D.

"I embody a genuine excitement for the work students will do as practitioners in the field on behalf of clients, communities, and the profession. This excitement drives me to work diligently to prepare students for ethical, effective practice."

The Department of Social Work would like to introduce and welcome Kori Bloomquist, Ph.D. Kori joins the department after receiving her BSW, MSW, and Ph.D. degrees from Indiana University. Kori's background includes employment, research, and publications in child welfare including foster care and adoption practices. Kori's long-term goal is to "develop and evaluate permanency practice models with an emphasis on practices associated with adoption from foster care."

Kori believes that "education is not merely a product to be consumed or achieved, but instead is a collaborative and on-going process, acknowledging the past, present, and future of the teacher and learner." As a result of her excellent teaching, she was awarded the "Excellence in Teaching Award" in 2013 and 2014 by the Indiana University School of Social Work and the "Favorite Professor Award" by the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis Athletic Association. Kori's relational and value-based teaching style aligns with the department's "Excellence Matters" motto. We are so honored and pleased to have Kori join our department this year. We are excited to see how her knowledge and expertise will benefit our students and community!

Department Announcements

Save the Date: Summer CEU Workshop

The Department of Social Work will host a CEU workshop on **June 10, 2016**. The workshop will provide six CEUs for those in attendance. More information will be provided in the spring newsletter.

Congratulations Scholarship Recipients

The Department of Social Work would like to congratulate Kristin Belton, Emily Herrmann, and Sandra Rettis for being awarded scholarships through the College of Arts and Sciences this fall.

New Graduate Associateship Positions

The Department of Social Work has added three new graduate associateship positions: BSW Program Associate, Field Program Associate, and Program Assessment Associate. Like the current MSW Program Associateship positions, they include a tuition grant as well as an hourly wage and are available to MSW students.

Continuing Education Meetings at Winthrop

The Department of Social Work partners with Catawba Area Agency on Aging and Interim Healthcare to host monthly social work continuing education meetings. These meetings are part of the department's 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 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Shack. There is no fee to attend the meetings, but a donation is collected for the Linda M. Ashley Annual Scholarship. For more information, please contact Jennifer McDaniel 803/323-3385.



My St. Vincent Experience

Amber Paige, BSW Candidate

Riding in the taxi van filled to overcapacity with students and suitcases, I clung to the seat as we glided around the twists and turns of the hilly landscape. It was then I knew the experiences I had while in St. Vincent and the Grenadines would be memorable.

I had the privilege to travel with the first group of students led by Monique Constance-Huggins, Ph.D., and Simone Camel, Ph.D., to the cluster of islands. The first morning I stood on the balcony of the hotel and saw sailboats scattered across the sea off in the distance. As we drove beside the coast, I noticed the colorful houses perched alongside the mountains, the clear blue-green ocean, the abundance of fresh fruits and the goats that seemed to be everywhere. It was one of the most beautiful places I had ever seen. The sheer beauty of St. Vincent struck me.

While on the trip, we had the opportunity to facilitate group interventions with boys at a residential facility. This experience helped me gain a better understanding of the role of group intervention as an important social work practice tool. At first, the boys were hesitant to participate in the group activities because they were not comfortable with us. This, however, changed the more we interacted with them. Through this experience I gained a better grasp of the concepts and theories I learned during my social work courses. Perhaps, most notably, the boys gave me a lesson in being happy despite having little.

We also met with officials in the Departments of Agriculture and Tourism. These meetings made us aware of the challenges the country faces in its economic development. We also learned how agriculture and tourism impact social work-related issues of poverty, employment opportunities, culture and healthcare. Furthermore, the conversations helped to solidify the principles of macro social work and the effects of policies on vulnerable populations.

I will forever remember the welcoming and kind people I met during my stay in St. Vincent. I am honored that I was able to take part in their culture through the songs, games, family gatherings and food that they shared. I feel enriched by experiencing just a small part of life on these islands. This trip has given me a better idea of how important culture is in decisions people make and the role it plays in a country's social justice issues. I encourage social work students to consider participating in upcoming international social work trips and know you will become a better social worker as a result.

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- Top Left:** A banana tree (bananas are the country's main export)
 - Top Middle Left:** Social work and human nutrition students and faculty
 - Top Center:** Students take a boat to Bequia, one of the Grenedine islands
 - Top Right:** MSW student, Keyadd Miller, speaks to students at Liberty Lodge
 - Middle Right 1:** View of St. Vincent
 - Middle Right 2:** Students with the boys of Liberty Lodge
 - Bottom Right:** View of Bequia, one of the Grenedine islands



Faculty-Led Community Projects:

Gibson, A. (2015). Examining assisted living residents' participation in a group-based art therapy program. Agape Senior- York Assisted Living, Rock Hill, SC.

Morrow, D.F. & Bloomquist, K. (2016). Resource/foster and adoptive recruitment partnership. South Carolina Department of Social Services.

Neff, D.R. & Sellers, W.E. (2015). Affinity Health Center community needs assessment project. Affinity Health Center, Rock Hill, SC.

Neff, D.R. & Constance-Huggins, M. (2015). United Way of York County community needs assessment project. Rock Hill, SC.



Student-Led Group-Based Art Therapy Program Offered at York Assisted Living

Allison Gibson, Ph.D.

This past summer three MSW candidates collaborated with Allison Gibson, Ph.D., and the Agape Senior York Assisted Living facility to provide a seven session group-based art therapy program for interested facility residents. Ainsley Hebert (co-investigator), Tanwanda Smith (research assistant) and Danielle Silberman (research assistant) worked to develop a curriculum of art projects for residents that would increase residents' psychological well-being, quality-of-life, social relationships, and sense of belonging in relation to the facility's community. The project was funded by Winthrop University's Research Council grant that offers opportunities for students to engage in research beyond their degree coursework.

Over the course of the seven sessions, residents engaged in easy-going conversation and art activities that pulled from participants' life experiences and feelings of identity. It also allowed for intergenerational relationships to form between facility residents and Winthrop students.

In an effort to triangulate data, participants completed pre- and post-test surveys and one-on-one interviews with the co-investigator. Additionally, research assistants collected inter-rated observation data at each weekly session to provide feedback of the quality of program and the success of art therapy activities.

Results of the study findings, as well as description of art activities, will be made publicly available on the Winthrop University's Digital Commons later this school year. Hebert, Smith and Silberman will graduate with their Master of Social Work in May 2016.



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Top Left: Artwork created by one of the research participants.

Top Right: Tanwanda Smith, Ainsley Hebert, and Danielle Silberman

Bottom Right: Sculpture being created by one of the research participants.





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Read updates from the Department of Social Work on our [News & Events webpage](#). We feature announcements for upcoming CEU opportunities, dates for Information Sessions, and our newsletters.



Please consider supporting the Department of Social Work with your gift to the Social Work Program Enrichment Fund.

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