

Catch the Social Work Spirit!!

Volume 14, Issue 1
Fall, 2012

Graduation Day 2012



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May 21, 2012 was a day to remember for social work graduates, their families and friends. With over 200 people in attendance, students were recognized for their academic achievements and future career paths.

Kathleen Algire-Fedarcy, president of the Social Work Student Association (SWSA) began the celebration with a welcome and introduction of faculty, staff and Community Advisory Board members. Kathleen was assisted throughout the ceremony by Stacie Parker, Rachel Stein, Joanna Frazier, William Renderos and Michael Alknsis, all members of SWSA.

Special award winners included: Anasia Coates (*Shirley Bemby Scholarship*); Kathleen Algire-Fedarcy (*Dr. Gust W. Mitchell Scholarship*); Lauren Linn (*Tejal Khajuria Memorial Scholarship*); Mira Wachs (*Steven and Rachel Eidelman Award*); Rebecca

Black, (*Outstanding Student Alumni Award*). Elba Rivas-Tetana (*Shady Grove Outstanding Student Award*); and Nancy Hernandez (*Title IV-E Student of the Year*).

Each year the social work faculty select six students for the *Outstanding Social Work Seniors Awards* based on academic performance, achievement in field education and service to UMBC and the Social Work Program. The 2012 award recipients were: Nancy Hernandez, Adrienne Kilby, Wendy Nguyen, Kaitlyn O'Donnell, Casey McIntosh and Marta Mendendez-Voss.

Dr. Daphne McClellan, Executive Director of the Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), presented all graduates with a token gift.

Karen Kraft and Conor Alysworth, the administrative staff, are acknowledged for their effort in making the celebration a huge success.

Save the Dates!

Pizza Party
September 5th
12:00 - Noon
Academic Building
IV-B, Room 334

CEU for Field
Instructors
October 25th
9:00-12:15
ITE Building,
Room 456

Plan to attend!

Adrienne Ekas-Mueting, Assistant Dean for Field Education

A special welcome to the new Assistant Dean for Field Education! As of July 1, 2012, Adrienne Ekas-Mueting, LCSW-C, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the State of Maryland for over 12 years, assumed the position and already is busy working with students and field instructors.

Dean Ekas-Mueting has extensive experience in both social work education and direct clinical practice. Her previous employment was with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) as the Field Associate and BSW Program Coordinator, a position she held for eleven years. Dean Ekas-Mueting will be completing her PhD in Higher Education Leadership in December, 2012 from UNLV.

As a clinical social worker, Dean Ekas-Mueting has worked in an inpatient setting with children and adolescents as well as providing outpatient individual and family therapy and in-home services to children and families. Her areas of interest include foster care, adoption, childhood trauma and social work student supervision.

Along with Katie Leiser, Field Coordinator on the campus of the Universities at Shady Grove (USG), Dean Ekas-Mueting has been organizing orientations for field instructors, reviewing and revising the program's *Field Education Manual* and conducting site visits to area agencies.



During Fall semester Dean Ekas-Mueting will teach SOWK 240 (*Information Technology in Social Work*) on-line at USG. She will also assume some field liaison responsibilities to better understand the field placement process and to meet more agency-based field instructors.

In terms of support for field instructors, Dean Ekas-Mueting announced that during Fall semester the Community Advisory Board will be sponsoring an ethics training on CPS reporting. Scheduled at 9 am on October 25th on the UMBC campus, this training is open on a first-come first-serve basis with donations being accepted for the student scholarship fund. The presenter, Gisele Ferretto, is a member of the Title IV-E faculty with the School of Social Work and an expert in child welfare.

Dean Ekas-Mueting is greatly impressed by the quality of field placement agencies with which UMBC has been working and asks for any feedback and suggestions regarding improving the Field Education Program. If there are any agencies that are not currently approved field placement sites, please contact Dean Ekas-Mueting so that a plan can be made to place students at the agency sites.

Please contact and welcome Dean Adrienne Ekas-Mueting at aekasm@umbc.edu or calling 410-455-2008.

Phi Alpha Honor Society Induction

Monday, April 9, 2012 marked the annual Phi Alpha Induction ceremony. Held in the UMBC library, the event featured comments from the organization's faculty advisor, Dr. Laura Ting and Phi Alpha officers, Nancy Hernandez, Elba Rivas-Retana, and Kara Rosenstrauch. Present were over one hundred friends and family members.

Inductees included: George Afari, Kathleen Algire-Fedarcy, Krystin Bartynski, Juliana Belsan, Jerica Blue, Soheyla Bolouri, Anne-Marie Brown, Courtney Brown, Anasia Coates, Sarah Drescher, Atefeh Fathnezhad, Emma Fiege, Margaret Grant, Carmen Hernandez, Valerie Hinrichs, Adeline Iamega-Tiengwe, Natanel Katz, Jocelyn Kelly, Adrienne Kilby, Amy Kirby, John Koch, Jessica Lehman, Lauren Linn, Martin Mann, Taylor Mast, Sarah Martin, Montia Medley, Larissa Mendes, Albertina Munoz, Sara Murray, Karen Nalley, April Nelson, Othello Nelson, Olubunmi Okuwa, Stacie Parker, Alisha Patel, Joshua Paul, Amanda Phillips, Tionna Pierce, Katie Piura, Brenda Portillo, Matthew R. Reilly, Nanda Devi Rich, Mary Rivas, Emma Rixmann, Rebecca Seader, Nicole Shah, Ashley Shortt, Christina Simmons, Kaitlyn Snyder, Lisa Stanford, Leona Sullivan, Anne Thacher and Maya Vakas.

Students are eligible to join Phi Alpha if they have: declared social work as their major; achieved sophomore status; completed nine credit hours of required social work courses, achieved an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 in all social work courses and have no grade lower than a "C" in any social work course.

Eligible students may obtain an application for Phi Alpha from the Social Work Program's main office or website: <http://www.umbc.edu/socialwork/>, then click on 'organizations', and enter Phi Alpha.

Phi Alpha includes students on both the UMBC and Shady grove campuses. Please call 410-455-2144 with membership questions or comments.



Students Travel to Nigeria



**CONSIDER
a
Travel
Abroad
Experience**

**CONTACT the
Social Work
Program at
410-455-2144
for details**

Drs. Lee Cornelius and Joshua Okundaye spent more than a year and a half planning an international learning experience to Nigeria. Four students participated in the June, 2012 trip: Valeria Castrillo and Greta Sanchez from the UMBC undergraduate social work program and Robi Rawl Marbury and Emily Van Oeveren from the Graduate Social Work Program.

Initially, Drs. Cornelius and Okundaye formed a research and educational partnership with a clinical organization that has tested more than 1 million patients for HIV/AIDS since 2004. From the partnership, they went on to: retrieve approximately 526 psycho-social assessments from two clinical settings for data; conduct two focus groups of a maternal HIV/AIDS support group; visit two clinic settings, a faith based organization that serves orphans and the mentally ill and the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (the parent National Social Welfare Organization); and meet with the Country Manager for the Clinton Foundation (which funds HIV/AIDS and Social Development Research in Africa) to learn more about their funding priorities in Nigeria.

Although cutbacks in the Institute for Human Virology Nigeria (IHVN) funding impacted the trip, Dr. Cornelius stated that key contacts were very accommodating and enthusiastic about the blossoming partnership. In fact, the staff members from IHVN are interested in working on publishing and developing grant proposals. Consequently, Drs. Cornelius and Okundaye are working on a concept paper for a grant proposal based on the focus groups they conducted at IHVN.

Throughout the trip the social work students developed journals to share their experience with the School of Social Work community. Valeria Castrillo wrote of visiting the "the poorest of the poor" rehabilitation Centre in Gwagwalada, Abuja. The Centre is known as the Anawim Home, which according to one of the sisters who worked there means "rejected people".

Ideally, with a growing interest in international social work, the Social Work Program will sponsor another trip to Nigeria as well as to other countries.

Dr. Shelly Wiechelt, Associate Professor

Special congratulations goes to Dr. Shelly Wiechelt who received tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. Dr. Wiechelt joined the UMBC faculty in 2006. She currently teaches Human Behavior in the Social Environment and a research course.

Dr. Wiechelt conducts research on substance abuse and shame among women and examines the intersection of trauma and substance use in the context of culture.

Spring semester 2013, Dr. Wiechelt will be on sabbatical to work on a book with Dr. Corey Shdaimah, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Maryland. With

a focus on prostitution and prostitution-related issues like poverty, shame and trauma, the book will use data collected from Baltimore and Philadelphia court-based programs.

Dr. Wiechelt also plans to work on manuscripts associated with a program, *Seeking Safety*, designed to address trauma and substance abuse in an integrated fashion. In support of this project, Dr. Wiechelt collected data with Urban Native Americans in Baltimore City.



Social Work at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG)



The Student Social Work Association (SWSA) at USG held their third annual fundraising, members of SWSA (featured in photo) raised \$1500 for A Wider Circle (awidercircle.org). Mark Bergel, founder and director, of A Wider Circle participated in the event and expressed thanks for the support that will help previously homeless families purchase furniture for their recently obtained housing. Anyone interested in SWSA should contact 301-738-6001 for details.

The USG Social Work Program announces that Jeanette Hoover, MSW has accepted the position of Clinical Instructor. Ms. Hoover earned her BSW from the University of the District of Columbia and her MSW from Catholic University. She has spent twenty years as a social worker with Pathways Schools, an alternative high school. As a long-term field instructor for UMBC, Ms. Hoover is familiar with both the program's course content and field education component. She will teach Social Work Methods I and II along with Human Behavior in the Social Environment. Ms. Hoover can be reached at jhoover@umbc.edu or at 301-738-6108.

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