As I drive into work each morning, I am reminded why I became a social worker and why I joined the faculty of the University of Iowa. We are living in a changing world where daily we hear about the rights of others being challenged and the need for people to engage in greater advocacy surrounding a variety of social and political issues. Like many social workers, our student body and faculty have rallied to have a voice in what is happening in the world around us. Since November, we have hosted monthly brown bag events on advocacy, demonstrating and civil disobedience. Our students and faculty have been in Des Moines engaging in lobbying efforts as well as speaking out at town hall meetings about changes that are happening in the state. And...our alumni are leading efforts throughout Iowa and the country, fighting for the rights of the most needy populations. I have so appreciated the updates and emails from alumni sharing what they are doing in their communities and organizations to fight for the needs of their client populations. It is easy to feel overwhelmed and fearful during this time, but as social workers, we must rise up and be the leaders in fighting the oppressive policy decisions that are being thrust upon us. That is our ethical responsibility. Watching this occur around me every day is nothing less than inspiring and I am so honored to be part of a School that has so much energy and commitment to social justice. As we move into 2017, the work for social workers is just beginning. I invite you to PLEASE continue your advocacy efforts and keep the School informed of how you are working for the rights of others. We stand together, supporting each other, as we move forward. Thank you for your continued support and engagement with the University of Iowa, School of Social Work.

On January 21st, millions of people in Washington, DC and around the world, demonstrated for social justice.
Recent Publications

Bern-Klug, M., Walker, Andrea (MSW-DM alum), and BSW-DM student Jacqueline Gloede, and MSW students: Anna Hepker (IC), Lindsey Sinn (IC), Marcelina Cockburn (Sioux City), Bonnie Heikens (Sioux City) Ellen Petersen (IC) and Tarrah Syfert (IC). (December 2016). Final Arrangements Resource Guide: Funeral and Burial-Related Rules and Regulations in Iowa and Summaries of 48 Funeral Home General Price Lists, third edition.


Coohey, C., French, L. & Dickinson, R. Core field instructor behaviors that facilitate student learning. Field Educator Journal, 7 (1).


Sanders, S. & Stensland, M. Agency behind bars: Advance care planning with aging and dying offenders. Death Studies. 8 March 2017


Recent Presentations

Cummings, S. and Kleinschmit, J. (2016), Using a Learning Management System to Support Adjunct Instructors in Distance Education. Annual Program Meeting, CSWE, Atlanta, GA.


Brenda Lee Meincke DuBois, 67, of Moline, IL, died Thursday, November 17, 2016, at Rosewood Care Center, Moline, IL. Brenda DuBois, MSW, PhD, received a baccalaureate degree from Western Illinois University in 1971, a master’s degree in social work from the University of Iowa in 1997 and a doctoral degree in educational administration from Illinois State University in 2002. She taught social work for 20 years at Marycrest College and 15 years at St. Ambrose University, serving as Director of the School of Social Work and retiring in 2012. Brenda made positive contributions to the professional and ethical education of over 500 social work graduates who passed through her classes.

Nancylee Ziese, (MSW 1982) died of ovarian cancer on February 24th. She was 78. Nancylee’s education began at Morningside College in Sioux City, IA, where she received her B.A. in Sociology, followed by her Masters in Social Work from the University of Iowa. Also at the University, she received an Aging Studies Certificate and completed post-graduate work toward her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration. Nancylee spent the bulk of her professional career as an adoption specialist in Sioux City, Los Angeles, Des Moines and Cedar Rapids. Additionally, in Sioux City she served as Director of Internships at Briar Cliff College and in Cedar Rapids as Executive Director of the Professional Women’s Network, Director of Continuing Education at Coe College, and adjunct professor of Sociology at Kirkwood Community College.

Hermine E. McLeran, age 82, died unexpectedly in Iowa City. She was on her way to play golf and fell in her driveway. The fall led to her death. Hermine founded the Aging Studies Program in 1980 and served as its director for 17 years. She played an active role in leading students to the study of gerontology and until her untimely death, was still actively instructing students in the College of Dentistry, and providing advice to the Aging Studies Program. The Aging Studies Program will be working with the UI Foundation to set up a scholarship in her honor.

UI Social Work Connect

About 300 alumni have enrolled in the new version of Social Work Connect; an online map that allows alums to identify their location on a map of the world. You can include contact information which allows current students and former colleagues to connect for mentoring, job and practicum information. Its free! http://clas.uiowa.edu/socialwork/people/alumni
creative writing for social work

5th Annual National Poetry Contest For Social Workers

This year’s contest drew 158 poetry submissions from 38 states. The poems were rated anonymously by a panel of 5 judges. For the first time, a University of Iowa School of Social Work student won!

Leslie Olson is in her first year of the MSW program in Des Moines. Ms. Olson’s work has appeared in a book on refugee rights, various literary journals and in a number of small magazines and newspapers. Her series of essays, “Packing Light: Small Town Stories of Refuge, Rebuilding and Rejoicing” won an Iowa Arts Council Major Artist’s Grant.

The second place winner was Rebecca Thieman, who is currently pursuing her MSW from Virginia Commonwealth University with a focus in sexual assault and refugee issues.

The third place award went to Christopher Joseph from the University of Michigan where he earned an MPH and an MSW in 2008. He is now a health educator for homeless adults living with HIV/AIDS in New York City.

To read all of the submissions, go here.

Submit a poem for next year’s contest!

https://clas.uiowa.edu/socialwork/resources/creative-writing-social-workers

The 26th Creative Writing Seminar for Helping Professionals

July 21-24, 2017
Iowa City, IA

For more information, go to: http://clas.uiowa.edu/socialwork

For ceu or academic credit

Beginning English by Leslie Olson

Yes. After is sometimes always.
When you must hold your pen
Different than the other students
Your thumb, like your child, cut from your hand in Bujumbura;
When you understand nothing of others’
Lips gnawing air silent since the mortars;
When fifteen months of nightmares chisel
Out of Mai Edaga prison and escape into your summer windows
Taking you captive again, obscuring the teacher’s lesson.
After is always then. Still. Come. Learn.
We will have moments when tense slips,
When we lose ourselves in conjugation: I am. You are. She is. We are.
Here we learn to write in the past, yes
but this book of blank pages is yours to keep, yet to be filled.
Together we will learn the future perfect.

It’s a great time to get a PhD in social work!

• Competitive financial package
• Excellent job outlook
• Highly interdisciplinary curriculum with courses in psychology, sociology, education or public health
• Mentorship by nationally recognized scholars
• Opportunity for part-time study

Contact: man-guo@uiowa.edu for more information

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Submit a poem for next year’s contest!

https://clas.uiowa.edu/socialwork/resources/creative-writing-social-workers
April 13, 2017

Bill Sackter Day

5:00 Birthday cake & ice cream
5:30 Bill Sackter Awards
6:00 Film & discussion:

The Theory of Everything
The story of Stephen Hawking
321 North Hall

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EShHK3-S68k

School of Social Work Teach-Ins
Skill building for Effective Activism

Dec 7
LISTEN AND CONNECT
How to have difficult conversations
Jan 18
CALL IN, WRITE IN, GET ACTIVE
How to call and write your legislators
Feb 15
STAND UP, SPEAK OUT, DEMONSTRATE
Direct action, demonstrations, getting arrested
March 22
GET THERE, STAND UP
How to lobby your legislators
April 19
STEP IN & STOP IT
Bystander intervention skills practice
12noon-1:00 pm Room 332 North Hall

Students, staff, faculty, field supervisors, across all centers are welcome. Bring a friend!

Social Work Jobs
Have a job to advertise?
Looking for a job?
https://clas.uiowa.edu/socialwork/resources/social-work-job-listings

Professional Development

Four contact hours of continuing education for social workers and substance abuse counselors. Registration form available here.

EXPLORING WHITE IDENTITY for Effective Allyship

"It’s impossible to see the privilege and dominance associated with whiteness as a racial identity without acknowledging that whiteness is a racial identity."
-Emily Chiarelli

3 available sessions:
MAR 23
UI Students CDL Multipurpose Room, UCC 6pm - 7:30pm
MAR 27
Community Members Room A, IC Public Library 6pm - 7:30pm
MAR 29
UI Faculty & Staff 337 Pearson State Room, IMU 10:30am - 12pm
Keri Neblett, LMSW, is the school’s new Director of Field. Keri received her MSW from the University of Iowa in 2002. Previously she worked for The Crisis Center of Johnson County for 13 years. As Director of Crisis Intervention Services she developed the Crisis Chat and Mobile Crisis Outreach Programs.

Keri was a field instructor for the Crisis Center for 12 years, and enjoyed the interaction with students. Now she will direct the entire Field Program. One of her goals includes providing more orientation and training for Field Instructors. “There isn’t a great system for onboarding new field instructors, so I hope to develop one that will ease the transition and provide more guidance and supervision. We are always looking for great placement opportunities for our students.”

Keri is surveying current field instructors for their ideas and feedback about their experiences.

Keri is also a trainer for ASIST-Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training- which will be offered to students and community members this summer. “I’d like us to become a leader in suicide prevention training so that all of our students feel confident in situations where their clients are struggling,” she says. “Clients expect this from social workers, and they should be competent if the need arises,” Her greatest challenge? “Learning all the new technology!” Keri will also have teaching responsibilities. She will conduct two Field Seminars this summer and will teach OCP next spring.

“I’m here to help so I hope people will feel free to contact me.”

If you’re interested in becoming a volunteer at the Crisis Center of Johnson County, go to https://www.jccrisiscenter.org/

If you’re interested in volunteering and earning course credit, contact Professor Coohey at carol-coohey@uiowa.edu.

Kinsey Wohlers and Jaret Morlan are doing their Foundation Practicum with the Crisis Center as part of the Mobile Crisis Outreach team. The program began in February 2015, and now receives more than 40 calls a month. The purpose of the program is to divert people from calling police or going to the ER for temporary mental health crises that don’t require hospitalization. The Johnson County team responds to calls within a 60 mile radius and show up within an hour. The caller determines whether the situation is a crisis for them. As long as violence or drugs are not part of the scenario, the team is dispatched to the location of the person in crisis.

Students are paired with a supervisor when they respond to calls. Typical calls include sudden or overwhelming change in life circumstances; i.e. loss of job, housing, death of loved one; suicidal feelings; out of control child; medication needs, etc. The team has access to crisis stabilization beds that provide temporary and safe shelter with support for a few days until the situation stabilizes. Often the students act as a bridge to a better resource such as the Rape Victim Advocacy Program or the Domestic Violence Intervention Program. Services are free and available 24 hours a day. Every call includes follow-up until the crisis is resolved.

Kinsey and Jaret are effusive in their praise of the practicum placement. “We are constantly being trained while we are working. Having so much direct client contact has been the best learning and is the most relevant to what I wanted to do,” Kinsey says. Jaret adds, “I am using what I learned in Skills Lab! Its easy to romanticize doing clinical social work, but this is real. The scope of what people in crisis need is very big. Some days it means standing in line with a client and advocating for them to a DHS worker. It really is meeting the person where they are at. We know we are helping and that is very rewarding. People trust the Crisis Center and this is a program that works.”
Congratulations to Sara Knox, MSW student in Iowa City. Sara competed in the 3 minute Thesis Competition with the Graduate College. She was the Master’s Winner and the People’s Choice Winner. Over 40 students competed in this competition. You can watch Sara present her thesis research on at the following link: https://spark.adobe.com/page/DOVBCZKIPkdvZ/.

I asked Sara about how she became interested in suicide prevention research.

“I’ve been dreaming about his research since before I even knew I wanted to come to this school. I worked at a Crisis Center when Crisis Chat was introduced and I realized the incredible amount of data we were collecting due to the number of people using the service. Teenagers don’t call for help using the phone but they will use text messaging, and depending on how you interpret them, 50-80% of those on Chat are having thoughts of suicide. Because we have transcripts of every chat session, we have an opportunity to look at the way we are helping people. We have to determine how to code the volunteers’ responses and agree on what things mean and then we can determine inter-rater reliability. The pre and post chat surveys we use allow us to objectively measure how much their mood improves from beginning to end. The data will be able to tell us what works. What are the different elements of helping that make things better or worse? We may need a totally different type of training to help teenagers than others.”

Sara plans to pursue a PhD and hopes to teach at the college level.

Sara Knox and Carol Coohey are applying for a grant to fund their research into suicide prevention. Some excerpts from the grant are below.

**Problem.** Suicide is the second leading cause of death among children ages 10–14 (CDC, 2013) and among older adolescents and young adults (Drapeau, McIntosh, 2016). About 17.7% of high school students seriously consider attempting suicide and 8.6% attempt suicide each year (YRBS, 2015). About 5,491 people between the ages of 15 and 24 die by suicide annually (Drapeau, McIntosh, 2016). Clearly many young people are in pain—enough pain to think about ending their lives.

**Solution.** Crisis centers are an important resource for people who are depressed, despairing or thinking about suicide. In the US, there are 165 crisis centers that answer over one million calls per year (SAMHSA, 2016). Beginning in 2010, crisis centers started to offer online chat services. In 2015, 50 centers accepted over 79,000 chats, a 30% increase in the number of chats from the previous year (Sinwelski, 2016). To meet the behavioral health and crisis care needs of people contemplating suicide, chat services provide free and confidential support to people 24 hours a day, seven days a week. People who contact chat services are called visitors. About 72% of visitors to Lifeline, the largest network of chat services in the US, are under the age of 30. About 80% of visitors reported they had thought of suicide in the last 24 hours (55%) or within the last few days (25%; Sinwelski, 2016).

**Reaching adolescents and young adults.** Chat services are an important part of the safety net for adolescents and young adults who are in crisis and need someone to help them cope with their thoughts of suicide. It appears that young people who are distressed, and adolescents in particular, find communicating through chats more appealing than talking on the telephone (Gould et al., 2002; King et al., 2003). According to John Draper, director of the SAMHSA-funded Lifeline Crisis Chat network, chat services promise to be an effective method to reach “people in crisis in the ways in which they want to be helped” (Draper, 2015).
Students for Inter-professional Education (SIPE) is a board of graduate students from a variety of disciplines ranging from public health to social work to pharmacy. While it primarily focuses on healthcare related professions, any student interested in interdisciplinary work is welcome to participate.

Last semester I had the chance to serve as the representative for the school of social work alongside one other MSW student, Mike Markham. I enjoy learning about the perspectives of students and future professionals from other disciplines and I also love sharing my perspectives. A multidiscipline approach is very social work in the sense that it works to integrate different approaches and promotes constant education and challenges where individuals come from. As a current practicum student at the Holden Cancer Center, my appreciation for the opportunities SIPE provides have deepened. I am now serving as a member of the executive board, as my passion for collaboration across disciplines has grown. Most recently, I had the chance to help host a forum on homelessness and mental health that over 25 students from different fields of study attended.

-Tori Johnson

PhD Candidate Nadia Sabbagh participated in the SIPE panel on homelessness and mental health.

Free Mental Health Clinic

For the past several years, Nadia Sabbagh has volunteered two Saturdays per month at the Free Mental Health Clinic, first as a social worker, then as a social work student mentor, and now as a supervisor and consultant. Prior to her involvement, social workers were not part of the team of medical students, pharmacy students and psychiatry staff that ran the clinic for homeless or indigent people with mental health problems. With her leadership and consistent oversight, social work is now an essential part of the intake and assessment process of all new patients. Nadia currently leads a seminar for the four BA social work students who receive credit for their involvement, (Madie Hall, Sam Conoway, Harry Skaletsky and Shirley Bell). During clinics, they do psycho-social assessments, advocacy, provide resources, do medical record keeping and collaborate with the medical personnel to create a plan for each client. “It’s a great service for the community and a great learning experience for students. I would love to find a way to institutionalize our involvement so that it doesn’t end when I graduate,” Nadia says.
Social work students, faculty and alumni mobilized against Governor Branstad’s proposal to eliminate licensure requirements for social workers and many other professions. The bill did not make it out of committee due to the lobbying efforts of thousands of social workers and mental health counselors.

Denise Rathman, Executive Director of the Iowa Chapter of the NASW, cautions that social workers should maintain their vigilance. As recently as March 6th the Governor was quoted as being still interested in ways to shrink the number of licensed professions, in order to save money. There are almost 4,000 actively licensed social workers in Iowa. Rathman encourages social workers to write letters to the editor of their local newspaper and to advocate for protecting licensure. “We had a wonderful response from advocates on this bill, which helped our allies and us keep it from passing out of subcommittee. But in Iowa, a bill is not dead until the Legislature adjourns. There is always a chance that some form of the bill could be attached to another bill as an amendment or put into what is known as the “standings” bill, which is one of the last bills to be passed. NASW-IA will remain vigilant and we hope that our members and allies will stand ready to utilize their advocacy skills to maintain licensure for social workers in the state of Iowa,”

Stay up to date-join the Facebook Group Iowa Social Workers.

Watch coverage on legislative forum here:

http://www.kcrg.com/content/news/People-pushed-lawmakers-to-reject-Governor-Branstads-bill-414796023.html
Alumni Updates

Liz Mendez-Shannon (PhD 2010) is the new Diversity and Inclusion Project Director in Hispanic/Latinx Affairs at Iowa State University. Previously Dr. Mendez-Shannon was an Associate Professor of Social Work at Metropolitan State University in Denver.

Scott Easton, (PhD 2011) has been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure at Boston College.

Kelli Soyer, (MSW 2003) was honored as the 2016 Children’s Champion for the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children. The award recognizes significant public impact on behalf of young children in our state. Soyer joined Every Child Matters in Iowa in 2015, a nonprofit, non-partisan organization seeking to make children’s issues a national priority with candidates and elected officials. In her current role, she manages operations in Iowa, specific to the 2016 elections.

Marj Evans, (MSW 1981) I do core strength and yoga classes alternating every other day at our local park and Rec center with people from all over the world recognizing and respecting everyone's cultural background. Exercise and strength classes are also a huge stress reliever. I teach Sunday school every Sunday with 5 university students in my class from China who speak limited English. A great challenge and gift. One of my greatest joys is practicing and singing in our awesome First Methodist church choirs weekly and giving back in voice. Even though I am not working for pay very many hours now, I do keep up my licensure and respond in writing to the value of social work licensure to our state legislators. I use my social work skills daily in our large blended family and community.

Jennifer Luria, (MSW 2002)

This is a picture of my daughters at the Iowa City protest. They are Anna (16) and Davina (6). We went to the Women’s March in DM and the Iowa City protest. I made calls regarding HS 138. I am working with the environmental education group at my church (UU). I am also trying to check in with the families I serve to make sure they are feeling safe.

Erin Robinson, (PhD 2016)

I started an online BLM book club last fall. We are reading books from the Black Lives Matter Summer Course Syllabus from NYU. Our book club has about 70 members and we read a book each month and then come together

http://clas.uiowa.edu/socialwork
I am a School Social Worker. I have practiced Social Work in my little town of Kewanee, IL since 1985, starting with medical SW and transferring to the schools in 1997. “Being the best you”, is something I strive for every day. My philosophy is "When you live your passion you serve your purpose". Advocating for those who have lost hope or find it difficult to find their way, is one of the most important aspects of my position as a School Social Worker. Keeping a smile on my face, and addressing each situation/challenge with "hope" and a "positive attitude", brings optimism to situations that otherwise seem bleak and unfix-able. I am so lucky to work with staff, parents, and community members that assist me daily in meeting the needs of so many in our community. I cannot express the gratitude I have for my family who understand the importance of my work. Having a supportive family who helps in your journey is the "key".

Shirley Bell, BSW student, Professor Merce Bern-Klug, Maggie Tinsman, (MSW 1974), and Meika Jensen, BSW student, at the 2017 Dialogue on Aging Conference which is part of the Iowa Department on Aging’s ‘Leadership Series on Aging’. Former Senator Tinsman was recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award. After meeting the students, Maggie encouraged them to consider running for public office someday. Maggie is active in the “50/50 by 2020” initiative to get more women elected to public office by the year 2020—100 year anniversary of the right to vote for women. Maggie also spoke about the need to stop sex trafficking in Iowa, “The average age of a girl being trafficked in Iowa is 13.”

Robin O’Connor, (MSW 1997) online to discuss. Our members come from all walks of life and are spread out throughout the country. It is refreshing to hear diverse perspectives on such important social issues, and also challenge myself to step outside my comfort zone. This book club has assisted me in seeing the world through a more intersectional lens as well, thus helping me become a better social worker. If anyone would like to join, feel free to email me! erinrobinson25@hotmail.com

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http://clas.uiowa.edu/socialwork

John Spanczak, (BSW 2013) The presidential budget is proposing to eliminate AmeriCorps, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Volunteer Generation Fund, Social Innovation Fund, AmeriCorps VISTA, Foster Grandparents, FEMA Corps, and many more. The loss of these programs would have a terrible impact on our community and state. Would you please take a minute to write to congress in support of these programs? https://voicesforservice.org/take-action/contact-congress/