

THE CHANGE AGENT

Millersville University

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
BASW•MSW•DSW

Spring 2021 Newsletter

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



This semester marked one year since the world locked down due to the COVID-19 pandemic and brought a new challenge as we navigated system outages because of an external attack on our own network. Despite these challenges, we persevered and engaged in activities to expand our knowledge, assist others, and advocate for change. C. S. Lewis stated, “Integrity is doing what is right when no one is watching.” Throughout this newsletter, you will read of the research, advocacy, and professional development in which our faculty, staff, students, and alumni engaged. Their commitment to justice, advocacy, and excellence demonstrates why social workers are essential, and we appreciate their selfless commitment to their own professional growth and the enhanced social functioning of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

As the world begins to re-open with the increase in individuals getting vaccinated, we look forward to being able to celebrate the achievements of our current BASW, MSW, and DSW graduates as well as those who

graduated last year during the graduation ceremonies this month. Additionally, we want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to two of our Graduate Assistants (GAs), Shayna Landis Bell and Eden Willis who supported various programming during their tenure as GAs within the School of Social Work. We wish them the best as they earn their MSW and begin their social work careers.

We wish everyone a relaxing, healthy, and joyful summer break and look forward to seeing you in person this fall.

Take care, be well, and stay safe!



Dr. Rice

[School of Social Work Website](#)

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Millersville School of Social Work Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube Page:



The Learning Institute Facebook Page:



EXPLORATION

Interprofessional Education Certificate Program Continues to Grow



This spring marks the graduation of the second cohort in the School of Social Work's Interprofessional Education Certificate Program (IPE). This program is a partnership between the medical school of Penn State University and several local colleges including Millersville. Participants attend joint clerkships and seminars throughout the year. At these events, they learn about interdisciplinary teamwork in the healthcare field.

Then, students are assigned to teams where they create an inter-professional treatment plan for a case study. Participants include medical students, nursing students, occupational and physical therapy students, pharmacy students, and social work students. Students from the Millersville cohort had many remarks on the value of the experience:

The IPE certification has provided me with a better understanding of true teamwork and

collaboration. No matter what you do in social work you will work in a group and in most settings, it will be inter-professional. This certificate has provided me the knowledge to take with me, no matter where this MSW degree takes me. Plus, it's so fun!

-Emily DiCola

This program has built my confidence for the value of social workers in the interprofessional setting. Every event has allowed me to learn more about teamwork and communication, and increase mutual respect with members of other disciplines

-Eden Willis

[Interprofessional Education Certificate
Program](#)

PROFESSIONALISM

MSW Student Publishes Research



Channel Lowery says she would describe herself as “a multi-passionate action-oriented researcher, and I've found that through my MSW education, I have been able to express this in numerous ways.” In the fall **Lowery** had a paper published in the MU Graduate Journal, where it was also featured in the Made in Millersville Conference. The paper was on housing policies in the United States and looked at this issue from a historical policy perspective. **Lowery** also presented this spring at the Global Well-Being and Social Change Conference. Her presentation was inspired by her research and experience applying to Ph.D. programs last semester. **Lowery** became

interested in how microaggressions affected people in academic culture and wanted to explore people's experiences and the macro implications. She says, “I wanted to share what I learned through this presentation to give a voice to something I felt could easily be overlooked but should not be. I am so glad that people joined, and we were able to have a fantastic dialogue that produced new questions for me to explore.” While working on these projects, **Lowery** was also applying to Ph.D. programs. She was accepted into a fully funded Social Work Ph.D. program at the University of Minnesota, starting this fall. **Lowery** says, “I am grateful for this fantastic opportunity and keenly aware of the weight this holds for myself and my family, as I am a first-generation student. I also feel a strong responsibility to be a change agent as I venture to the city where George Floyd was killed less than one year ago. I think about this a lot.”

Lowery says one of her main takeaways from the MSW program is the flexibility to make your education what you want it to be. She says the papers and assignments have allowed her to explore topics she is passionate about. Another major takeaway is the importance of mentorship and relationship building. **Lowery** says her cohort members have been one of the support systems that she has relied on to get through this program.

She also emphasizes the importance of relationships with faculty: “My mentor Dr. Wanja Ogongi has had a lasting impact on my professional and personal life. She has encouraged me in so many ways and demystified the idea of conducting research as a student.”

Lowery says the advice she would give to potential MSW students is to have a goal in mind when they start and take advantage of being a student in all the ways they can. She says the professors are more than happy to help and love working with students, so students should glean all they can. Finally, Lowery says, “I cannot stress enough the importance of self-care. Taking care of yourself needs to be the standard and norm as you are on this journey. Whatever that looks like for you, make it a priority.”

[MUsings Journal Article](#)

MSW Student Presents Her Research to the Council of Trustees



The Bridging the Gap Together (BTGT) research project began as a rural resources tour and a dinner & discussion at a Lancaster County agency that attends to those experiencing rural poverty. BTGT is an experiential learning project facilitated in a freshman-level social work class at MU taught by Dr. Jennifer Frank. Dr. Frank encourages her students to understand the impacts of rural poverty by meeting and interacting with the very people right here in our county that experience it. -Paper Trails, the penpal project that MSW student, **Brittany Leffler** spent the majority of her time working on, was actually a response to the issue of low attendance at that dinner event. - Once the rural participants began pen-palling with students, they were more incentivized to attend the dinner to meet

their penpal. Subsequently, Paper Trails provided rich, qualitative data and insights regarding the nature of and usefulness in facilitating human connections.

Dr. Frank asked **Leffler** to join her and Drs. Heather Girvin and Laura Granruth at the end of Leffler’s first MSW year of study. -Since Leffler began working with them, Dr. Mary Glazier and another student, **Rachel Preibisch** have joined the team. Brittany says she was just wrapping her head around writing in APA style; and juggling being a working mom going back to school after many years since undergrad. She shares that she had a lot of imposter syndrome to work through as a theatre professional-turned-social worker, so she was surprised and delighted to be asked to join the team. Since **Leffler** is a part-time student, she has had the opportunity to work with the research team

for more years than an advanced-standing or a full-time MSW student could. She says that is one of the benefits of being in the MSW "slow-track," as she likes to call it. **Leffler** will be a student for 4 years at MU, so for 3 of those years, she says she has been exploring and growing her strengths as a researcher with a team of academics and fabulous women who excel at what they do, dream big, care deeply about this community, and provide mentorship in the process.

Public Mission

Microsoft Webinar on Sustainability Features Dr. Karen Rice as Panelist



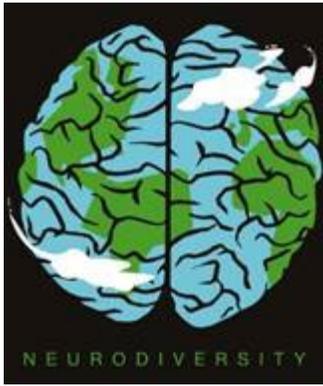
On May 6, 2021, **Dr. Rice** served as a panelist on Microsoft's Global Government Forum's Webinar, *[Information is Power: How Tech is Transforming Public Sector Sustainability](#)*. **Dr. Rice** spoke on a number of topics related to sustainability. She also shared examples of how Millersville

University faculty, staff and students collaborate with community partners to identify and implement solutions to current challenges in efforts to realize the Sustainable Development Goals. These solutions are supported by mini grants awarded to members of the MU community through [the Positive Energy Fund](#), which was made possible through utility rebates MU receives from the success of the [zero energy Lombardo Welcome Center](#). **Dr. Rice's** research and practice are related to a number of sustainable development goal areas, including ending poverty, reducing inequalities, and providing quality education.

[How Tech is Transforming Public Sector Sustainability](#)

INCLUSION

DSW Students and Alumni Engage in Professional Development to Foster Inclusivity



DSW alumni and current students participated in the first DSW Program's continuing education professional development workshop during summer residency. Dr. Jessica Hughes, Assistant Professor of Communication and Theatre at Millersville University provided a 3-hour workshop entitled, *Using the Neurodiversity Paradigm as a Tool for Inclusion*. Through participating in this professional development workshop, our students and alumni were able to recognize neurodiversity as a dimension of difference that can be harnessed as a strength in groups as well as understand how using the neurodiversity paradigm as a tool can encourage social model thinking, drive design, and make groups more accessible for everyone. Dr. Hughes not only provided our students and alumni with the knowledge and skills to apply this framework within their own practice, but she did an excellent job modeling it for us as well. As one attendee summarized, "This was an excellent training! The presenter was extremely knowledgeable about the topic but also virtual engagement. I was very pleased with the content, delivery, and overall experience." We look forward to offering professional development workshops at future residencies.

[Doctor of Social Work \(DSW\)](#)

BASW Student Receives Leadership in DEI Award



Alli Lawrence took on leadership this year through her internship with the President's Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). Despite the responsibility, **Lawrence** says that she was motivated to work hard because she truly believes in what the commission set out to achieve. **Lawrence** says that diversity, equity, and inclusion all align with the values of both the commission and university, so many of the tasks that she was involved in were to achieve those exact values. **Lawrence** was largely in charge of planning the International Women's Day at Millersville. The goals were to celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness against bias, and take action for equality. **Lawrence** says that as a woman herself, these goals were significant, so it was very important to her that the event went well. The day of the event the PCSW had more than 600 views on Facebook live and 115 guests on zoom. She says it was very rewarding that so many people were able to attend and celebrate women and also learn about gender and racial inequalities that are occurring today.

According to **Lawrence**, her leadership experience allowed her to truly build upon the social work core competencies. She says the tasks that she completed with the PCSW was largely macro social work. She was able to look at data of Millersville University

faculty to determine if women are being adequately represented on campus. Additionally, she wrote a literature review on why the campus needs a childcare facility. This document will be sent to the president of the university as reasoning to open a childcare. **Lawrence** says, "This experience, while different from many social work internships, gave me the opportunity to see what goes on at an agency behind the scenes. I really felt like I had an impact on the university through the leadership work that I had accomplished."

[Women's Commission](#)

INTEGRITY

Social Workers Are Essential: A Month Long Celebration

Each year, throughout the month of March, social workers across the nation celebrate the important role we play in ensuring the overall wellbeing of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. It is only fitting that this year's theme is: ***Social Workers are Essential!*** Our students enjoyed friendly competition during a social work and women's history trivia event. Next, the department engaged with the global community at a South African cultural heritage event. Advocacy was encouraged through a presentation from the department chair Dr. Karen Rice on the global role of women in development and social change. Students had an opportunity to engage in policy advocacy at the annual Legislative Education and Advocacy Day. Finally, alumni presented a panel discussion on the essential role of social workers during the 2020 pandemic. The alumni presentation ended with the celebration of the first annual field instructors of the year award.



(BASW) Jan Bechtel - *Jan exemplifies all of the main social work values and ethics. Most importantly to me, they recognize the importance of utilizing a strength based perspective and celebrating diversity. Jan has encouraged me and continuously reminds me of my own worth and value as a social worker and the importance of recognizing and advocating for disability services. Jan has also instilled and exemplified the importance and value of human relationships within the realm of professional social work, with particular attention to the value of collaboration and developing a strong support network with your colleagues and other professionals. Jan embodies the social work core values of service, social justice, advocacy, and beyond. I will be forever grateful for their wisdom and support!!! – Jan's Student*

(MSW) Steven Pagden - *Steven exemplifies social work values and ethics in each and every one of his interactions. Steven knows how to gracefully hold his colleagues and those he supervises to the highest*



standard of care. The student Steven is working with quoted “We like to say that when I hear someone is hungry, I start drawing up plans to build a free grocery store in their neighborhood; while Steven is already on his way to deliver food. His awareness of our different tendencies helps me build my practice into a more holistic approach.”

[The School of Social Work](#)

COMPASSION

MSW Students Examine Homelessness in Lancaster County



This spring, **Dr. Jennifer Frank** created and taught a special topics MSW elective on homelessness in the United States. The course, *From Hobohemia to Housing First: A Critical Reflection of Homelessness in the US*, provided students with an historical overview of homelessness as a social problem in the United States. Students examined the disparate conceptualizations of homelessness over time and the individual, community, and policy approaches intended

to address it. Students were captivated to fully engage with the issue locally and in real time. After hearing from a guest speaker who shared his experience doing outreach with the unsheltered of Lancaster, students embarked on a project to study the best ways to attend to unsheltered homelessness in our community. The class invited the mayor’s office and LancoMyHome, the homelessness coalition, to participate in the project. Students formed three teams to research: the local issue, recommendations of national organizations, and effective best practices. Further, students assisted in the development of an IRB protocol, which was approved to survey individuals who had prior experience sleeping outdoors to include their feedback related to what is needed. Findings were disseminated at Made in Millersville. Further, on Monday, April 26th the students were invited to the Mayor’s Office and LancoMyHome and shared their findings. Collaborative discussion ensued. Several students plan to continue the work on the project with Dr. Frank after the semester’s end. As a result of this course, national

connections have been made with other homelessness scholars as well as the National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services.

[The National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services](#)

OWEP Coordinator Serves on Community Panel



The School of Social Work's Opioid Workforce Expansion Program (OWEP) Coordinator, **Gwen Burkholder** (left) served on a community panel to share insight on aspects of opioid addiction and prevention. The panel discussion was a collaboration between Arts at MU and the Into the Light Project, which is a travelling exhibit of portraits of lives lost to opioid addiction. The artist Theresa Clower started the project after her son Devin died in 2018. The exhibit was displayed at

Millersville University's The Ware Center. By pairing the exhibit and the panel discussion, participants were able to recognize the toll of opioid addiction while learning ways to make positive change.

Social Work students enrolled in the OWEP program attended the event as part of year-long professional development activities to enhance their knowledge and skills related to prevention, treatment, and recovery of opioid and substance use disorders.

[Opioid Workforce Expansion Program](#)

[Into the Light Project](#)

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

Carson Herbert, BASW '10



Carson Herbert, BSW '10, began in geriatric social work. One year after graduating, **Herbert** moved to behavioral health social work as a direct support professional in a community mental health program transitioning adults with serious mental illness out of the state hospital. In this position, **Herbert** developed opportunities for patients to be stakeholders in their own care. **Herbert** also became CPI certified and conducted company wide trainings educating staff on de-escalation techniques. **Herbert** graduated from the MSW program at Temple University in 2014. **Herbert** went on to work as an intensive case manager at Community Services Group. In 2016, **Herbert** moved to Baltimore, MD and concentrated on providing mental health treatment within a substance use setting. Through the role of therapist, clinical director, and hospital social worker at varied agencies, **Herbert** faced unexpected hardships including an active shooter at one Opioid Treatment Program where 2 people were killed and 2 were injured. In addition to clinical practice, **Herbert** was a co-presenter of "Sex & Relationships in Recovery" at the Pennsylvania Certification Board Conference.

Herbert is currently employed as the first Social Worker at the Center for Addiction Medicine under the University of Maryland Medical Center and is a LCSW-C and LCADC supervisor. Since obtaining a BSW, perseverance and courage have kept **Herbert**'s passion of helping others alive and achievable. While **Herbert** values micro level social work, the past 11 years of experience have driven **Herbert** to focus on social justice and advocacy at a systematic level. **Herbert** specifically has a desire for incorporating best practices into a clinical model that promotes staff advancement and is financially conducive to the individual, agency, and community. **Herbert**'s most memorable class of the undergraduate program was statistics with Dr. Karen Rice, which continues to assist **Herbert** with program evaluation today. **Herbert** has largely worked with an urban population who utilize public and medical assistance. **Herbert**'s clinical practice centers on harm reduction and strengths-based perspectives, adding pieces of motivational interviewing, grief counseling, CBT, and acceptance and commitment therapy. **Herbert**'s goal for the future is to obtain a PhD in social work and become a professor. **Herbert** comments, "The BSW program at Millersville didn't just teach me skills and knowledge of how to be a social worker, it provided me a firsthand experience of what it meant to be a social worker and the power that can be created by simply believing in someone."

[Bachelor of Social Work Program](#)

Katie Drudy, MSW '20

Katie Drudy is the first graduate of Millersville's Social Work and Sports Management dual degree program. **Drudy** became



involved in the program because of her experience as an athlete. She played D1 college field hockey and ended up suffering from an injury, yet she continued to play despite her pain. This ultimately led her to have a double level spinal fusion at the age of 19. She was having panic attacks in the middle of the night after her surgery and found out that she had developed PTSD symptoms. **Drudy** says she had no mental health support, and did not even know where to find any. Thankfully, she received support from some of her professors. **Drudy** transferred to MU in 2014, graduated with her BSW in 2015 and then found the Alliance of Social Work with Sports organization. This allowed her to network with other professionals, including Dr. Felizzi who is a presenter and member. When **Drudy** decided to go back for her MSW in 2019, she found out about the dual degree program. **Drudy** says, “I knew that everything that had happened led me to be here.”

Now at the completion of her degree, **Drudy** says, “Sport management and social work are so similar in the ability to provide a wide range of career opportunities, and then to put these together, it offers the degree holder a tremendous amount of potential. Athletes, though provided with numerous privileges, are often a severely underserved community and this is why we need more people to become interested in this pocket of the social work world.” **Drudy** hopes to apply her degree through work in student success and/or college sports and mental health.

For information about the Social Work and Sports Management Dual Degree Program, click here:

MSW Website
Dual MSW/MEd in Sport Management

Karen Polite DSW ‘16

Karen Polite has many different highlights across her 20 years of social work direct practice in addiction and mental health. She has worked at inpatient, outpatient, and intensive outpatient programs, as well as consulting work with children of incarcerated parents. Recently **Polite** "retired" from full-time teaching after 20 years of service at Harrisburg Area Community College(HACC) . She was Professor of Human Services, and after retirement was granted the title of Professor Emerita. While at HACC **Polite** served as the program director for one year and served as an



advocate and provided leadership on issues of diversity and inclusion at the college. In addition, she worked closely with the Office of Student Services providing presentations related to mental health and student success. Polite continues to teach as an adjunct instructor at HACC, in addition to Millersville University and Temple University where she has served as Field Liaison for the BSW, MSW and MSW programs, respectively. She also serves as an adjunct instructor for Simmons University's DSW program.

Polite has also served on several boards, including Elm Street Steering Committee, Council for Standards in Human Service Education (CSHSE)-which is the sister organization to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and she continues as a board member for the Teenage Girls Empowerment Summit (TGES). In 2019 **Polite** opened her own business- KEP Consulting, LLC, where she now uses her 20 years of social work practice and teaching experience, as well as her social work knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide consulting, life coaching, training, and public speaking services.

Polite says the DSW program at MU sharpened her critical thinking and scholarship skills, allowing her to boldly identify herself as a teacher and scholar. Finally, **Polite** shares advice for other DSW students: "I would say doctoral work will be one of the, if not THE most challenging process one will undertake in one's lifetime. But with commitment to the process, and "trusting the process," it is absolutely a worthy and attainable goal." **Polite** was born and raised in Lancaster; she is a "proud product" of the School District of Lancaster, and she currently lives in Lancaster city with her husband of 22 years, with whom she has 5 children, grandchildren, and great children.

[DSW Website](#)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOLARSHIP ACTIVITIES

Scholarship

Presentations

Granruth, L., Girvin, H., Frank, J., Leffler, B. (MSW Student). Bridging the Gap Together. Presented virtually at the Millersville Council of Trustees Meeting. March 17th, 2021.

Dr. Karen Rice. Panelist on: Information is Power: How Tech is Transforming Public Sector Sustainability. Presented virtually at Microsoft Global Government Forums Webinar. May 6th 2021.

Publications

Redcay, A., Pfannenstiel, A.N., Albert, D. (2020) "Student Perceptions of Textbooks: Prior Behaviors and Beliefs Can Impact Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Adoption Impact," *Open Practice*.

Redcay, A., Luquet, W. (2020) "Institutional Change and Transgender Employment," *Advances in Social Work*.

Redcay, A., Pandya, A.K. (2020) "Access to Health Services: Barriers Faced by the Transgender Population in India," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*.

Rice, K., Girvin, H. (2021) "Applying Intervention Research Framework in Program Design and Refinement: A Pilot Study of Youth Leadership, Compassion, and Advocacy Program," *Social Work with Groups*.

Appointments and Recognitions

Dr. Karen Rice served as an external reviewer for Florida Atlantic University School of Social as they completed their 5 year program (BSW, MSW, DSW) review. The 2-day site visit occurred virtually February 22-23, 2021.

Alumni, stay connected and let us know what you are doing. We love to hear from our alumni and feature the great work you are doing.

Complete the form here:

<https://www.millersville.edu/socialwork/news-and-highlights2/index.php>

