

Catch the Social Work Spirit!

Fall 2019

Graduation Celebration May 23, 2019

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***Congratulations
to the Class of
2019***



Graduation is a time for celebration! The faculty and staff of the Social Work Program hosted a reception for the following graduates and their families and friends immediately after the UMBC commencement at the Events center. During the reception scholarship awardees were honored as were outstanding graduates: Becca Mann, Laura Popp, America Lucero, Mike Lewandowski, Theresa Lyon, Theresa Lyon, Stefany Ferig, and Annette Hubbard . The 2019 graduating class included:

Ariel Aaron, Omobolaji Adeyeri, Nicholas Albaugh, Monica Altamirano, Victoria Amaguana, Janice Arana, Sara Ashna, Eni Bajrami, Kimberly Blumgart, Edward Blyther, Chanelle Born, Grace Brown, Mario Bruno, Daniel Burke, Briana Capuano, Marjorie Carrillo Pena, Jessica Chapple, Angela Choi, Jason Chrystal, Stephanie Cruz, Jennifer Cruz, Kevin Cua, Mandy Day, Haben Debessai, Anthony Denardo, Silvia Diaz, Jenny Diaz, Deborah Donkor, Cecilia Dye, Eliana Edery, Lionel Edouard, Bethany Engle, Jamie Engrum, Stefany Feria, Carmen Flores, Silvana Fogelbach, Amy Fox, Marijka Frazier, Jaryn Gessesse, Paris Goodwin-Williams, Amber Gosser, Briana Graves, Nicole Griffith, Blair Grooms, Darlyn Arely -Hernandez Vasquez, Annette Hubbard, William Hudson, Ikran Ibrahim, Skyelar Ingram, Tekshia Innocent, Ashlyn Jacob, Sarah Jahnes, Maria Jimenez, Ciara Jones, Cassidy Kehn, Hailey Kerr, Tiffany Keyser, Jessica Kirbow, Tianna Knox, Garmai Korvah, Samantha Kramer, Mehr Lamba, Lucas Lengrand, Jamie Lerp, Michael Lewandowski, Rebecca Lopez, America Lucero, Theresa Lyon, Rebecca Mann, Rachel Mansir, Flloyd Martin, Daisy Martinez, Derick Mebune, Niteara Mickey, Anna Milyaeva, Zaira Miranda, Danielle Misterka, Doris Morales, Katie Muellerklein, Ghislaine Nguemeni, Maria Nissley, Rachel Oddoye, Michelle Orozco Fuentes, Karen Ortey, Kirsten Peacock, Jessica Pelaez, Katherine Perez, Lynn Phan, Sonia Podloch, Laura Popp, Adwoa Prempeh, Kayla Pruium, Samantha Queen, Constance Roberts, Brie Rosa, Tanya Sanchez De Lainez, Mark Schulze, Neneh Sey, Shatia Sharp, Farah Shirazi, Kaitlin Simmons-Leigh, Tenier Sims, Amy Skariah, Elizabeth Smith, Tamara Spence, Madison Straw, Stacey Stroh, Sheila Suarez, Kaila Swann, Lauren Tart, Ellen Tippet, Afi Toulassi, Glenda Ventura, Toni Walker, Amber Webster, Andrea Williams, Charles Yonga.

Hrabowski Innovation Grant

Social work faculty, Dr. Nicki Belfiore and Instructor Jeanette Hoover, received a **Hrabowski Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Award** to evaluate the influence of a semester-long course, based on a podcast, on undergraduate students' racial attitudes, knowledge, and skills. *Seeing White is a Peabody*-nominated podcast produced by the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University that addresses the history of institutional and structural racism in American society.

Belfiore and Hoover are interested in the effectiveness of the delivery of content using podcast technology as a teaching tool, as well as the influence of the course as a whole on student growth and commitment to social justice around race issues. This study uses a mixed method design relying on both quantitative and qualitative measures.



The course was piloted as an independent study in the Spring of 2019. It was structured as a seminar for 10 students who were required to listen to all 14 episodes of the podcast, keep a reflective journal, attend four, two-hour integrative seminars, and complete a self-evaluation analysis paper. The piloted course provides accessible content and an opportunity to engage with that content in order to understand how the history of systemic racism affects American society today. That understanding may guide attention to social justice and equality and provide a framework to address and alter entrenched discriminatory institutions. Thus, we hope to identify, through our research, the required, essential elements of the course and understand how the course influences students' responses to race issues. The ultimate goal of the project is to develop a rigorous course elective that will increase the success of our social work undergraduate students as they enter the workforce in a diverse, yet divided society; we hope to inspire in students a commitment to addressing social justice issues around race.

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Social Work Student Association Officers



The Social Work Student Association (SWSA) across both the UMBC and USG campuses has been preparing for the fall semester. Campus and community activities are on the calendar and have been posted to encourage student involvement.

The officers for USG are: President Julie Resendiz, Co-Vice Presidents Emilia Mensah and Christian Figueroa, Secretary Pilar Flores Ramirez, Treasurer Marvelicia Brown, Public Relations Mariandree Paiz, and Service Chair Cherie Tebah.

On the UMBC campus the newly elected officers are: President Micaiah Baker, Vice President Brian McDonnell, Treasurer Vicky Hughes, Secretary Bria Miller, Public Relations Representative Makenna Wheeler, Service Chair Karla Gonzalez, and member at Large Tanya Ramsey.

Inclusive Excellence : All Gender Multi-User Restrooms

Dr. Shelly Wiechelt and Dean Keith Bowman serve as Co-chairs of the UMBC All Gender Restroom Steering Committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students. The committee is collaborating with the campus community to implement multi-user all gender restrooms throughout the campus.

The first of these restrooms, located on the second floor of Sherman Hall, A Wing, was launched with a grand opening celebration on May 28, 2019. A reception honoring the event was attended by university faculty, staff, and students.

Special thanks to the members of the All Gender Restroom Steering Committee for their work on behalf of the UMBC community.



Phi Alpha Induction

Phi Alpha, is the national social work honor society for undergraduate students. Delta Omicron Chapter, the UMBC branch of Phi Alpha, held their annual induction into this prestigious association on April 8, 2019. Attended by approximately 100 friends and family members, new members engaged in the Phi Alpha pledge and candle lighting ceremony.



The members inducted Dr. Jodi Kelbeer-Kaye as an honorary member, recognizing her work as the Associate Director of the Honors College.

The 2019 inductees were Victoria Amaguana, Edward Blyther, Grace Brown, Maria Bruno, Kellen Franklin, Karla Gonzalez, Brittani Hairston, Melissa Harris, Ashlyn Jacob, Hailey Kerr, Tianna Knox, Nia Latimer, Belinda Louro, Erica Mollet, Jennifer Orantes, Jessyca Orzech, Sarah Pena, Tanya Ramsey, Julie Resendiz, Lauren Tart, Joana Wall, Christian Wallace, Makenna Wheeler, and Nichole Younkins.

Please contact Dr. Laura Ting (lting@umbc.edu) or Instructor Katie Leiser (leiser@umbc.edu) or information on Phi Alpha.

Karen Kraft Retires



Karen Kraft, Program Management Specialist for the Baccalaureate Social Work Program, decided to retire effective September 1, 2019. When asked why, Karen quickly responded that she wanted to spend time reading with a cat on her lap and her sailing buddy and husband, John close at hand. After thinking a moment longer, Karen added that she hoped to spend time gardening and enjoying the company of family and friends. Although Karen will certainly be missed by faculty, staff and students her reasons for retirement made sense.

Prior to her employment at UMBC Karen and John sailed the high seas for eight years and lived on a 37' sailboat cruising in the Caribbean, traveling as far as Venezuela. Upon returning to dry land Karen, with a degree in secondary education, gained administrative positions in Baltimore companies. She joined the Social Work Program in 2005 as an Administrative Assistant II and was promoted to Program Management Specialist in 2008.

With a clear student-focus Karen's presence in the social work office provided stability, a watchful eye, and a high standard of quality. Diligent with a good sense of humor, Karen helped to organize the office and services to students with precision and commitment as seen in events like the graduation reception. She facilitated a sense of team spirit with her generous sharing of information, strong work ethic and smart communication.

Karen's reputable snack drawer proved to be just as reliable, especially in the summer when the office was quiet and the days were long. Room 365 will seem quiet without the crackle of a pretzel bag and the "meow mix" theme song echoing through the hall when a loved one calls her cell phone. Birthdays without homemade cake will never be the same, and Conor is not willing to risk her professional reputation by attempting to bake.

The social work community at UMBC, the Universities at Shady Grove and the School of Social, University of Maryland, Baltimore is greatly appreciative of the contribution Karen made to a positive work and learning environment. Her flowers, cakes and news articles added kindness and generosity to the ambiance of the office for which many of grateful. Thank you, Karen. You will be missed, but always remembered with a smile.

Featured Alumni



Perpetua (Pepsi) Abongnelah earned her Bachelor's degree in Social Work from UMBC in May of 2016. In May of 2017, she completed her Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Maryland, Baltimore with a specialization in Behavioral Health.

While in the MSW Program, Pepsi completed her field placement at Advanced Behavioral Health and upon graduation was hired as a social work therapist. Pepsi notes that many of her clients have been diagnosed with Depression, Anxiety, ADHD, Adjustment Disorder, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. She provides individual and family therapy integrating cognitive behavioral therapy and psychodynamic techniques, and she works collaboratively with clients, the child welfare and court systems, and psychiatrists and medical physicians.

Pepsi finds her work gratifying and identifies the opportunity to see her clients grow and develop healthy coping skills a rewarding aspect of her work. As a social worker, she serves the indigent and underprivileged and values her clients and her role as an advocate, recognizing the strengths of her clients and working to help clients feel empowered.

Pepsi is grateful for her educational journey at UMBC and continues to reflect on what she learned specifically, the importance of professionalism and punctuality. She believes her professionalism and timeliness illustrates to her clients that she values them and their work. Pepsi carries these skills and knowledge to her role as a social worker

and also her work as a pastoral counselor.

Pepsi and several other students and alumni participated in a new marketing video to share their perspectives about the social work profession and what skills and knowledge they gained at UMBC. You can see the video here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjOZb7xShmM> or say this: Visit [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search UMBC Social Work.

**BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM
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