

Catch the Social Work Spirit!

Congratulations 2020 Graduates!

Volume 1 Issue 2

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Graduation marks a time for celebration and a sense of accomplishment. After years of dedicated work students and their families are rewarded with congratulations and promising careers in the social work. In 2020 the celebrations and the UMBC graduation commencement happened virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic and spread of COVID-19. However, the staff and faculty of the Baccalaureate Social Work Program recognized that on May 21, 2020 the profession of social work gained some very promising new additions. The social work students of the 2020 graduating class are listed below:

Agustin A. Aguirre Herrera, Patricia Ahonon, Bayan Al Sulaihat, Lillian Alford, Victoria Alvarado, Doris Anderson, Stephanie Arce, Toluwalope Arogbodo, Tutu Asfaw, Olubunmi Ayodele, Eni Bajrami, William Barbosa, Tori Barr, Erik Barrios, Geraldine Bernedo, Kimberly Blumgart, Orel Bonilla, Jackie Byrd, Julia Caramanico, Yolanda Castro, Natalie Charles, Rebekah Chittenden, Kayla Colby, Fatima Conteh, Candy Crossett, Kathleen Cully, Derek Davis, Dorothy Ellis, Jenny Escobar, Pilar Flores Ramirez, Kellen Franklin, Wendy Stephanie Garcia, Karla Gonzalez, Rachel Goodrich, Josephine Gyasi-Baaye, Brittani Hairston, Nicole Hanna, Ashley Harris, Melissa Harris, Erin Henry, Jonathan Hernandez, Daniela Hernandez-Santos, Sam Hertl, Vicky Hughes, Sarah Jahnes, Angel Jenkins, Natalie Louise Johnson, Krista Kinder, Nia Latimer, Analyn Leonardo, Chelsea Linton, Leslie Lopez, Karina Martinez, Brian McDonnell, Julissa Melendez, Daisy Menjivar, Emelia Mensah, Bria Miller, Erica Mollet, Miranda Rene Navarro, Kathleen O'Malley, Jennifer Orantes, Jessyca Orzech, Megan Palmer, Supriya Pandit, Autumn Pannkuk, Sarah Pena, Falista Phalwas, Lynn Phan, Cierra Pope-Crawford, Miranda Probeyahn, Tanya Ramsey, Julie Resendiz, Evelyn Reyes Medrano, Joanna Riley, Wendy Rivas, Linda Robinson, Stephanie Rodriguez, Samrah Siddiqui, Cherie Tebah, Peter Uwakwe, Noah Wallack, Makenna Wheeler, Belinda Gomes Williams, Gabriel Yang, Khadija Yassin, Sheila Yeelon, Charles Yonga, Jennifer Yoshikawa, Amanda Young.

Each year the faculty and staff recognize outstanding students for their academic and field education achievements. In 2020, these awards went to: **Outstanding Undergraduate Student Alumni Award**-Jennifer Yoshikawa; **Outstanding Student USG**-Angel Jenkins, **NASW BSW Student of the Year**-Jennifer Yoshikawa; **Title IV-E BSW Student of the Year**-Karla Gonzalez; and, **Outstanding Social Work Seniors**-Jenny Escobar Guevara, Kellen Franklin, Melissa Harris, Nia Latimer, Erica Mollet, and Miranda Navarro.

Congratulations Social Work Graduates! All the best on your exciting future ahead!

Dr. Kerri Evans, Assistant Professor

Kerri Evans, LCSW (MA), earned her PhD from Boston College School of Social Work and her MSW from the University of Maryland Baltimore. She has multiple years of teaching experience in the areas of macro practice, policy, and research, both in person and online. Her classroom is full of conversation and hands-on learning activities as she helps students to tie together the parallels in their own lives, field placements, work experience, and course concepts.

Dr. Evans brings a wealth of social work experience in both clinical and macro roles. She has provided in-home wraparound services to unaccompanied immigrant children, conducted adoption home studies, and led social skills groups for children and teens. She has worked as a community organizer with immigrant groups in Baltimore preparing clients to give legislative testimony, developed home study protocols for child welfare workers, and as a program manager for foster care specializing in unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children she was responsible for quality assurance, staff training, and policy making.

Her practice experience led to questions about service delivery and the operation of social service programs. Therefore, her research focuses on unaccompanied children using both qualitative and quantitative methods and nonprofit agencies serving crisis migrants. She was the Doctoral Student Award recipient for 2019 from the Association of Community Organization and Social Action (ACOSA) for her excellence in macro teaching and scholarship. Dr. Evans is thrilled to be joining the UMBC community and looks forward to meeting students in the fall.



Please welcome Dr. Evans by contacting her at kerrievans@umbc.edu

Dr. Nancy Kusmaul, Associate Professor



Dr. Nancy Kusmaul was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor in the Spring of 2020. Prior to coming to UMBC she worked in nursing homes and hospitals for more than a decade. Her research focuses on organizational culture, trauma informed care, and the impact of trauma experiences on the workforce. Over the past six years through UMBC and foundation support she has interviewed nursing home residents, direct care workers, managers, and families of nursing home residents. She has written about the different perspectives those groups bring to the quality of care in nursing homes.

Over the past year Dr. Kusmaul has been a Health and Aging Policy Fellow. Working with Senator Ron Wyden and with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services she has learned more about the ways policies are developed. She plans to infuse what she has learned into the courses she teaches at UMBC and to help improve conditions for residents and workers in long term care facilities. She co-chairs the Aging Committee for the Maryland Chapter of NASW and she is a fellow of the Gerontological Society of America.

HEALS SCHOLARS 2020-21

There are two HEALS scholars for the upcoming academic year: Reese Beyers and Kaitlyn Kylus. They were selected for their commitment to social work practice in health care, and have committed to field placements in health care settings. The Council on Social Work Education and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Foundation partnered to develop and implement Social Work HEALS: Social Work Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholars.

Social Work HEALS aims to develop the next generation of health-care social work leaders who will stand ready to lead efforts to address system-level changes, heighten awareness of prevention and wellness, and address the issues of structural racism that are embedded in social institutions. Drs. Mel Bellin and Nancy Kusmaul are the School of Social Work faculty advisors for HEALS Program. They work with 10 social work programs across the nation to develop the next generation of health-care social work leaders.

Phi Alpha Honor Society

The concept of a national social work honor society came from a group of undergraduate social work students at Michigan State University in 1960. Investigation revealed that local chapters existed at three schools. Those three schools along with a few other schools formed a National Honor Society Committee in November of 1960. For more than a year, this committee worked on the constitution and other administrative matters.

The Students are eligible to join the society if they meet the following membership criteria: declare social work as major; achieve sophomore status; complete nine semester hours of required social work course; achieve an *overall* grade point average of 3.0 out of possible 4.0; and achieve a 3.50 grade point average in required or elective social work courses.

The Phi Alpha Honor Society Board for the UMBC and Shady Grove (USG) are: President-Sandra Crespín-Melger, Co-Vice Presidents-Julia Woodcock and Tracey Heckel, Secretary-Alexandra Loebach, and Co-Treasurers, Ashleigh Maples and Veronica Funes. Please contact the PhiAlpha advisors Dr. Laura Ting (LTing@umbc.edu) or Katie Lesier (lesier@umbc.edu) for additional information.



Dr. Shelly Wiechelt, Associate Dean and Chair



Before leaving UMBC in July 2020, Dr. Carolyn Tice expressed her sincere gratitude and appreciation to the social work faculty, staff, and students for a remarkable experience. Dr. Tice commented that her most cherished memories were in the classroom where she saw students recognize the relationship social policy has with practice, research, and advocacy. As she starts a new chapter in life, Dr. Tice will work for the American Friends Service Committee where she will continue her advocacy for economic and social justice.

Dr. Wiechelt, who joined the UMBC Social Work Program in 2006, is the newly appointed Associate Dean and Chair. She worked in the social work profession as a MSW level clinician, community leader, and program manager for 14 years prior to earning her Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Wiechelt combines her practice experience and research training in her community-based scholarship on the intersections of trauma and substance use in diverse groups. She brings these experiences to life in her classroom teaching. Dr. Wiechelt actively engages in service to the Social Work Program where she has provided leadership in the HBSE and Research Methods teaching sequences and program assessment for the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) reaccreditation of BSW program. As a leader in her

field, she currently serves on the editorial boards of the Journal Substance Use and Misuse, the Journal of Loss and Trauma, and as member of the Commission on Accreditation for the Council on Social Work Education. She is dedicated to the UMBC value of inclusive excellence and is the past president of the UMBC LGBTQ Faculty/Staff Association and currently serves as co-chair of the UMBC All-Gender Restroom Steering Committee.

Dr. Wiechelt is very enthusiastic about starting her new role as the Chair and Associate Dean of the UMBC Social Work Program. She recognizes that the challenging times that we are living in bring increased need for social workers to provide quality services to individuals, families, and communities and to advocate for social justice and anti-racism everywhere. Dr. Wiechelt is committed to the advancement of diversity and inclusion in the Social Work Program, UMBC, and the community. She will work closely with the faculty and staff to provide teaching and learning opportunities for our students to become skilled professional social workers with diverse groups in a variety of contexts. She will engage with students and faculty as well as campus and community leaders to foster a learning environment that supports inclusive excellence on our campus and promotes social justice in our world. Dr. Wiechelt is eager to begin the important work of leading the social work program in addressing the challenges we are facing.

Dean Judy Postmus, School of Social Work



Dr. Judy Postmus was appointed to the position of the Dean of the School of Social Work by University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMSSW) Interim President Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS. Dean Postmus assumed her new role July 1, 2020. She is the second female dean and the seventh dean overall since UMSSW's founding in 1961.

The selection of Postmus was made after a national search. Donald B. Tobin, JD, dean and professor at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law and chair of the search committee, described Postmus as an “excellent teacher and scholar and someone who has spent her career leveraging her research and teaching excellence with service to

the community. She brings to the school a passion for teaching and student success as well as a deep commitment to research and community engagement.

Born and raised in Miami to immigrant parents, Postmus began working with at-risk youth and their families in Liberty City, Fla., an environment where racism and poverty were rampant, and violence erupted in response in this disenfranchised community. After earning her MSW at Barry University in 1990, Postmus worked at Miami Bridge, a runaway and homeless youth shelter in Miami, and then as executive director of the Domestic Abuse Shelter in the Florida Keys.

Prior to coming to UMSSW Dean Postmus was director at the Center on Violence Against Women and Children at Rutgers University, New Jersey. Based on her previous work experience, Dean Postmus brings to the School a commitment teaching and student achievement as well as significant experience in research and community engagement.

**BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM
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