Message from Dean Nancy Smyth

As we face a sea of change in our global and national environments, higher education, and the social work profession, at UB we are charting our course based on our vision of a just, diverse, and humane society. Our strengths include a focus on community-engaged partnerships for research and practice, trauma-informed and human rights perspectives, and our willingness to employ new technologies to extend our impact and engage our stakeholders. Some highlights include:

- Our Buffalo Center for Social Research has three new institutes on Immigrant and Refugee Research, Sustainable Global Development, and Innovative Aging Policy and Practice that are poised to build on the extensive work already well underway by our Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care. Our award-winning podcast, inSocialWork, continues to extend its global reach to communicate new developments in research and practice.
- The launch of our Technology in Social Work Resource Center – a place with resources for social workers, students and faculty to find information on how technology is being used in our profession.
- Our faculty continues to grow – we’ve had seven new people join us in the past two years, bringing our faculty size to its largest in our 79-year history.

This brochure presents a gestalt of who we are – please visit our website to learn more.

“Our profession was born in the industrial revolution. Over the past century we’ve developed a toolbox and perspective that uniquely position us to solve the problems confronting the 21st century. But to do this, we need to integrate our social work skills with those of the digital age.”
Trauma-Informed Care in Action

Former MSW students Brad Linn, Meaghan Barone and McKenzie Mattison identified an opportunity to directly contribute to county service delivery by revising the admissions process at the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) at Erie County Medical Center (ECMC) through a course assignment in Evaluation in Social Work (SW 514), taught by Dr. Thomas Nohajski. Struck by the observation that clients who have experienced trauma are often faced with an uncomfortable series of interviews with various professionals, and that helping systems can thus potentially re-traumatize clients, the students developed an instrument to utilize a trauma-informed perspective while evaluating new patients who are seeking care. “We never thought it would be something necessarily adopted by them,” says Linn, “but ECMC changed their intake process so clients meet with a social worker first.”

Definitions: Trauma, Human Rights and Trauma-Informed Care

The UBSSW faculty acknowledges the interrelationship between trauma and human rights and has adopted these as guiding principles for the school and curriculum.

Human Rights
are inherent to the dignity of each person; they are universal, inalienable and indivisible.

Trauma
can follow events that involve actual or witnessed death, serious injury or threat to physical integrity.

Trauma-Informed Care
involves understanding “What happened to you?” instead of “What’s wrong with you?” and encompasses policies, services and practice that incorporate knowledge about the impact of traumatic experiences.

Online Resources: Technology in Social Work

Offering free online resources via videos, podcasts, blogs, articles, etc. on the best practices of leveraging technology to benefit social work education, policies, practice and research. Please visit our website:

socialwork.buffalo.edu/techresources
Our Faculty

Laina Bay-Cheng
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR and Ph.D. PROGRAM DIRECTOR

“...gender norms and sexism as risk factors since they often undercut young women’s access to social and material resources and their leverage in negotiating with male partners. These ideas drive my current study of how socioeconomic resources and future prospects affect young women’s investment and power in heterosexual romantic relationships.”

John Baker
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

“My activities involve how the brain works and how behavior can change when injury or disease affects the brain. My research involves psychosocial aspects of concussion or mild traumatic brain injury, including returning to school. I also study how to improve assessing these problems and measuring the outcomes of behavioral and medical treatments.”

Elizabeth Bowen
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

“Good health is the ultimate bottom line. My research looks at housing as a social determinant of health, with a focus on the intersection of homelessness, addiction and HIV/AIDS. I’m excited about the potential that social work has to advocate for both health and housing as human rights.”

Louanne Bakk
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

“...should have equal access to services and benefits as they enter later life. Because of disadvantages throughout the life course, inequities exist. My research focuses on racial, ethnic, and gender disparities under policy initiatives designed to assist older adults. I'm dedicated to helping students understand how programs differentially impact the aging population.”

Lisa Butler
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

“Being grounded in trauma research has led me to realize the importance of conceptualizing what trauma really means. We must clearly define traumatic events as distinct from other major stressors, even if the latter have profound effects; we must also be able to identify the events are uniquely human rights violations.”

Anahita Ball
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

“...schools serve as community hubs uniquely positioned to address the complex needs of children and their families. My research focuses on the ways in which schools, families and communities partner to provide innovative, long-lasting and meaningful services that foster positive youth development and promote equity in education.”

Filomena Critelli
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

“I view my research as a form of activism, and I love the cross-cultural aspects of research. My goal is to prepare students with a global perspective so they can advance social justice and human rights and to connect my research and teaching to the promotion of social change.”
Catherine Dulmus

“Many adults suffer terribly with serious mental illness, often starting when they were children. I’ve expanded my research in children’s mental health through a university-community research partnership whereby our findings are quickly applied in practice. My hope is to develop interventions for children that lead to a more satisfying adult life.”

Gretchen Ely

“Women in particular face unique challenges in terms of access to healthcare, making them vulnerable to negative health outcomes. My research is focused on examining and addressing barriers to healthcare for women and other vulnerable groups, with the goal of making healthcare accessible to everyone.”

Diane Elze

“My focus is on the wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth. Sexual orientation and gender identity are integral to our identity. Issues impacting adolescents also impact LGBT adolescents, who in addition may face the trauma of rejection because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. LGBT rights are human rights.”

Sue Green

“My work is concentrated on trauma and trauma-informed care across the lifespan within communities and organizations. We now have tools to help people heal from trauma and to avoid retraumatizing those seeking help. What an honor to be in a position of helping people recognize the possibilities in our work.”

Annette Semanchin Jones

“My focus is on a new approach to child welfare called Family Assessment Response and its impact on families, specifically issues of racial equity and disparities. It directly impacts my teaching, encouraging future social workers to help build knowledge and advocate for equitable implementation of policies and programs that impact children and families.”

Robert Keefe

“My research focuses on the service needs of new mothers of color and their children who are unable to access prenatal healthcare agencies. By assisting healthcare professionals in rendering culturally-sensitive services, we can improve health outcomes for mothers of color and their children.”

Isok Kim

“I believe that social work research and practice based on a trauma-informed, human rights perspective is reflected through community-based participatory research. Thus, addressing the mental health needs of the Asian American community requires that its community members are systematically involved in establishing culturally appropriate services and providing feedback for continuous improvement of services.”

Wooksoo Kim

“I am passionate about increasing knowledge concerning alcohol and gambling issues among Asian immigrant elders, a frequently marginalized group. Through research, we can improve the lives of this vulnerable population. The school has many faculty members interested in immigrant and refugee issues. Together, we can advance science and make changes in these communities.”
Kathleen Kost
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

“I work with students to help them gain an understanding of the dynamic nature of poverty and opportunity at both the local and global levels of practice. In particular, I focus on the influence social workers can have on the collaborative activities of organizations and resources in poor communities.”

Denise Krause
CLINICAL PROFESSOR AND ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACADEMIC RELATIONS

“I’m interested in training students and professionals in solution-focused approaches to work at all levels of practice. My hope is that by emphasizing engagement and listening before acting, our graduates will create empowering practice communities.”

Patricia Logan-Greene
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

“Social workers typically work with victims, but if we’re going to prevent violence, we really need to focus on the perpetrators. The goal of my current work with court-involved youth is to underscore the fact that the victims and offenders are the same people; a punitive approach is not helpful for these youth.”

Nadine Murshid
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

“I believe violence is not only an individual-level issue affecting those who commit or experience violence, but a systemic problem that allows its normalization. My work on violence ranges from genocide to domestic violence, the outcomes associated with it and the context in which it may happen, including poverty and status inconsistency.”

Barbara Rittner
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR ADVancement

“It’s about the welfare of children, not just about the system that delivers child welfare services, and understanding how childhood trauma is different than adult trauma. My passion is to get people to question authority, question assumptions and create literature that informs the role of advocate. That’s critical to being a good social worker.”

Yunju Nam
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

“My research focus is economic security and asset building among elderly immigrants, as this population is in a particularly vulnerable position in respect to economy. Low-income populations have a right to economic security and development, so it’s important not only to provide them with something to get by, but also something to build upon.”

Thomas Nochajski
RESEARCH PROFESSOR AND CO-DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE ON TRAUMA AND TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

“My primary work has been concentrated in the addictions area. The focus in my research has always been to help make things better through application. From my research with DWI offenders, I developed a screening instrument for DWI offenders that is currently being used in several states and Canadian provinces.”

Kelly Patterson
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

“Residential segregation relegates the poor and minorities to the most disadvantaged neighborhoods. This means they have unequal access to valuable resources such as housing and education. I believe everyone has the right to access decent affordable housing in neighborhoods that offer them opportunities for social and economic mobility.”
Peter Sobota  
**CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR**

"I want our students to think beyond the typical. I remind them that a real social worker not only provides social services, but also works for social change. That's what gets me excited as a social work educator—teaching students about theory and then showing them how it works in the real world."

Deborah Waldrop  
**PROFESSOR AND ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR FACULTY DEVELOPMENT**

"I believe that a 'good' late life and death are universal human rights. I'm committed to advancing awareness about the interrelationship between aging and progressive limitations. My research focuses on understanding how decision-making about options for care happens and on increasing knowledge about people and families' expressed wishes near life's end."

Charles Symns  
**CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR**

"Trauma is, unfortunately, an integral part of the experience of marginalized and vulnerable populations. The trauma-informed perspective provides a path for social workers to understand and address, at multiple levels, the experience of these populations. Challenging trauma at the structural level is a human rights imperative."  

Hilary Weaver  
**PROFESSOR AND ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

"Whether it's a substance abuse, nursing home or child welfare issue, I'm always interested in how the cultural piece fits with helping people. With its many ethnic populations, Buffalo is a great place to work. The social work profession has a mission to serve disenfranchised populations and that includes being culturally responsive."

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**Buffalo Center for Social Research**

With a commitment to community-based research, the Buffalo Center for Social Research (BCSR) robust infrastructure assists both faculty and students in developing and sustaining their research programs. Faculty research interests and expertise include addictions, aging, child welfare, trauma, violence, gender issues, mental health treatments, health disparities, as well as research related to refugees and global social work. The newly established BCSR Incubator further promotes innovative research and project development. The BCSR’s community-based research among Buffalo’s diverse populations provides training opportunities for doctoral students to assist in transforming their studies into real-world practice, developing the skills they need to support their particular area of research interest while broadening their world view.  

There are five institutes operating under the BCSR:

- The Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care
- Immigrant and Refugee Research Institute
- Institute for Sustainable Global Engagement
- Institute on Innovating Aging Policy and Practice
- UB/Amrita Social Behavioral Sciences Research Institute

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Sarah Nesbitt (MSW ‘13) teaching a public health class to refugee camp in Thailand.

Marie Clancy (MSW ‘11) visiting Costa Rica and pictured at a site visit of Nicaraguan immigrants.

Associate Professor Kathleen Eho and UB colleagues in Tanzania for the Buffalo Tanzanian Education Project.
A binational region steeped in history and diversity

From the nearby Southern Ontario region of Canada to the reservation communities of the Seneca and Tuscarora Nations, Western New York and the Buffalo-Niagara region have much to offer:
• Rich architectural heritage, including buildings by Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan
• Extensive Frederick Law Olmsted system of parks and parkways
• Affordable housing and low cost of living
• Award-winning schools
• Proximity to three Great Lakes

• Thriving arts and cultural scene, including the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the Burchfield-Penney Art Center, Just Buffalo Literary Center, Shea's Performing Arts Center, Irish Classical Theatre, and Shakespeare in the Park
• Minutes from Canada (Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls, Toronto, The Shaw Festival, Stratford Festival)
• Urban, suburban and rural communities
• Major league professional sports (football, hockey, lacrosse)