Research & Scholarship

UBSSW Racial Justice Research Spotlight:

Dr. Melanie Sage and colleagues are in year 5 of a federal grant to improve child welfare reunification of Indigenous children, and to support policies that lead to this outcome. Their work in improving Active Efforts was recently highlighted at the Children’s Bureau Express website.

LINK

Buffalo Center for Social Research (BCSR) Climate:

- The BCSR Grants Team is examining how to incorporate racial equity in the grant consultation process.
- The BCSR is committed to supporting racialized faculty and student scholars through training and mentoring programs.
- The BCSR Research Advisory Council is examining the current Research Awards process to ensure a racial equity lens is used to identify excellence in research.
Resources for UBSSW Members of Color

Group for Racially Underrepresented Students

- Fall 2021 Meetings:
  - Weds 10/20, 8:15-9:15
  - Weds 11/17, 8:15-9:15
  - Weds 12/15, 8:15-9:15

email Dr. Noelle St. Vil to join: noellest@buffalo.edu

Open to all Black undergraduate & graduate students

In Planning:
- Newcomer Support Group
- Students & Alum of Color Mixer

Students:
If you identify as a person of color and would like to be on a contact list about community-building events and resources, please complete this form

e-mail Dr. Noelle St. Vil to join: noellest@buffalo.edu
More presentations planned.

Michelle Fortunado-Kewin is soliciting and will analyze feedback about the restorative practices process from faculty, staff and students.

**Summer 2021**
- Diane Elze conducted training with field liaisons on the restorative process and holding restorative conversations.
- Diane Elze and Michelle Fortunado-Kewin presented restorative practices process to adjunct faculty.

**Fall 2021**
- Created a video on the restorative practices process and shared with 9 MSW classes.
- Michelle Fortunado-Kewin presented the restorative practices process to 9 MSW, PhD, and DSW classes.
- More presentations planned.
- Michelle Fortunado-Kewin is soliciting and will analyze feedback about the restorative practices process from faculty, staff and students.

- Holding virtual listening sessions about students' experiences of racism and other forms of oppression:
  - Tuesday, Nov 2, 12:30- 2pm
  - Tuesday, Nov 9, 5:30- 7pm

   for info email: fortunad@buffalo.edu
Strengthening Teaching

UBSSW Faculty Training
Difficult Conversations: Creating Brave Space to Address Racial Microaggressions
Trainers: Jayna Punturiero, MSW & Amani Johnson, PhD from UB Counseling Services

Held on October 7, 21 faculty attended this training organized by Drs. Isok Kim & Mickey Sperlich, with consultation from Dr. Noelle St. Vil.

Organizers are reviewing session feedback to guide next steps.

UBSSW Faculty
Peer Advisory Groups*

All UBSSW instructors are invited to join informal monthly drop-in sessions to dialogue about how to address racism and other heavy topics when in the classroom.

Monthly meetings on Zoom every 3rd Friday, 11am-12pm
Email MSW Director Dr. Isok Kim isokkim@buffalo.edu for information.

*Peer advisory groups = settings where individuals can find and give support, solve problems, and achieve goals with people facing similar challenges
Recruitment & Marketing

- Inclusive recruiting efforts with organizations and geographic areas that are more likely to elicit diverse applicants (e.g., TRIO, McNair scholars, National Idealist Fair)
- Fostering educational partnerships through direct communication with specific undergraduate institutions (e.g., HBCU)
- Establishing UBSSW admissions awards supporting diversity among the student body
- Advising applicants on eligibility for application fee waivers
- Advocating across UB departments for greater flexibility in recruitment

Application Policies & Procedures

- Maintaining a consistent, replicable, and equitable application process
- Provide coaching and offer opportunities for guidance with applications
- Assisting applicants with steps to application completion and deadlines
- Live and virtual information sessions

Student Recruitment

Admissions Review Process

- Maintaining a consistent, fair, and equitable review process
- Supporting and assisting faculty reviewers to review applications in accordance with our policies and procedures
- Requiring multiple application reviews for each applicant
- Promoting a holistic application review approach, while maintaining fair and equitable discussion of applicants' materials
- Continued quality improvement regarding application eligibility, requirements (e.g., GRE score waiver), and review process
Action Beyond the UBSSW

The new Buffalo chapter of the Social Welfare Action Alliance (SWAA) has UBSSW alum Stephanie Sacco as its representative on the National Steering Committee.

Challenge2Change, led by Dr. Annahita Hall, is a UBSSW partnership with 15 WNY high schools. Intergroup dialogues in day-long summits have been held with 600+ students, who develop antiracist knowledge and strategies.

• UBSSW is one of four organizers of this national group.

Media Stories

These news outlets reported on our school’s work related to racism & racial equity (June-September):

- The Conversation
- MedicalXpress
- SBCAmericas
- Spectrum News
- The Buffalo News
- WBFO 88.7
- KOA News Radio
Recent Tasks

- Summer 2021 restorative practices training for Field Liaisons (Dr. Diane Elze facilitated)
- Edited Field Manual to include: restorative practices; more explicit language acknowledging potential for racism and desire to address it within field

Intentional site development: Black Love Resists in the Rust (2 students in '21-22)

Current Tasks

Develop goals for the academic year, including a Spring 2022 training for Field Educators on interrupting racism in field.
Committee on Students

Continuing to evaluate student award nominations and how we promote them.

Evaluating handbook policies and practices, such as policies for grievances and ethical violations, and assessing how the Restorative Practices Process can support or supplement these processes.

Student Services developing formal tracking system for inquiries from students about possible grievances.
Intergroup Dialogue: whiteness & racism

Using the model of intergroup dialogue (IGD), a white affinity group/caucus is being established for UBSSW students with the goal of confronting racism and whiteness. The group will include facilitated conversations and exercises to explore white identity, biases, privilege, the roots of colonialism and white supremacy in social work education and practice, and actionable ways to practice anti-racist social work at UBSSW and in the field.

Global to Local Lecture Series
for info email: sukarnad@buffalo.edu

- November 1, 2021
  HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, and the New AIDS Panic Icon - Dr. Octavio González, Wellesley College Department of English

- December 6, 2021
  Effects of the Criminal Justice System on Communities’ Food Justice: Storytelling as a Means for Social Change - Nicole Capozziello, PhD student, UB SSW

- February 7, 2022
  White Mothers and Their Negotiation of Race, Ethnicity and Class in the Parenting of Biracial Children and Adolescents - Dr. Margaret O’Donoghue, Rutgers SSW

- April 4, 2022
  Suicide Prevention among Ghanaian Youth, Black Boys and Young Men - Enoch Kordjo Azasu, PhD Candidate, Brown SSW; Founder, STAY Ghana

- March 7, 2022
  Storytelling Through Photography to Amplify Narratives of Indigenous People - Dr. Amanda Cheromiah, Native SOAR, University of Arizona

- May 2, 2022
  Creating Supportive Environments for Low Income/Working Class Students - Chazz Robinson, PhD student, UB Dept. of Ed.

Consciousness-raising
Courses & Curricula

Racial Justice Projects Course
8 MSW & MSW/PhD students working on individual and group projects to advance racial justice at the UBSSW.

MSW Curriculum: Piloting a process to add anti-racism in course objectives and discussing how to identify racial justice priority content throughout the curriculum.

Undergraduate Course: Dismantling Anti-Blackness: On Becoming Anti-racist

This foundational course examines historic and contemporary anti-Black racism and white supremacy in the United States. Students will analyze policies and strategies to identify, challenge, and transform the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism, white supremacy and anti-blackness. Students will also engage in self-reflection, develop self-awareness, and participate in critical analysis of systems of privilege and oppression, as well develop personal strategies for becoming antiracist and facilitating change in communities and society.
**Doctoral Programs**

**Admissions and Recruitment:**
DPC is partnering with the UBSSW Admissions team to strengthen recruitment and admissions processes.

**Doctoral Programs Committee (DPC) Process:**
DPC has added an ongoing agenda item to each meeting related to racial justice.

**DSW & PhD Curricula:**
DPC has begun an audit of PhD courses for racial equity and anti-racist content.

**Doctoral Students:**
UBSSW Doctoral Students have been actively engaged in anti-racist efforts.

PhD Students wrote an Open Letter to the school to initiate important conversations in becoming an anti-racist school community. For more information, contact Candra Skrzypek or Sarah Richards-Desai.

DPC is hosting a sharing session for Doctoral Faculty on 11/15/21 at noon (via Zoom) to examine and discuss the implicit curriculum in the doctoral programs.

DPC meetings will be public and transparent:
- agenda will be shared with faculty, staff, and students via doctoral program announcements;
- all are welcome to attend and/or share ideas on agenda items.

DPC has added an on-going agenda item to each meeting related to racial justice.
Committee members attended three workshops focusing on Diversifying UB’s Faculty presented by the Office of Inclusive Excellence. Lessons learned from these workshops will be incorporated into recruitment strategies and procedures.

Dean Alford attended a Recruitment Committee meeting to share strategies he employed to attract diverse candidates to Syracuse University in his role as Chief Officer of Diversity Equity and Inclusion.

The Committee is examining models for promoting equity in promotion standards, policies, & procedures.
A new initiative to support the work of Racial Justice Network nodes in need of student data. When Racial Justice Network nodes need data to support their work, this group will compile, de-identify, and provide summaries of applicable data. This node emerged, in part, from the work of the Committee on Students on exploring historical student award nomination data. Led by Joshua Hine, Director of Student Services; Leah Walsh, Director of Academic Processes & Data Operations; and Elyse Fuerst, MSW student.