

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

# MOSAICS



## From the International to the Local: Addressing the Syrian Refugee Crisis

A variety of speakers and panelists spoke about what the United Nations has officially labeled the worst refugee crisis of this generation.



## Examining Women's Health

SSW faculty research battles barriers to accessible care



## Social Innovation

A creative interdisciplinary workshop

FALL 2016



# News of the SCHOOL

## STUDENT NEWS

MPH/MSW student **Rachel Wilson** received the University at Buffalo Career Services Graduate Student Employee of the Year Award, which recognizes exceptional work and are given to top student employees working on campus.



MSW student **Stephanie Sacco** received the WNY-NASW MSW Student of the Year 2016 award. This award is given to a student who has demonstrated academic excellence and personifies the values of social work as defined by the NASW Professional Code of Ethics.



MSW student **Nadejda Lisencu** completed her field education placement in her home country of Moldova, at the Keystone Human Services International Moldova Association. Read about her experience, and other student experiences abroad on her blog.

<http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/abroad>



## PROMOTIONS

**Kathryn Kendall, EdD, MSW '95**, assistant dean for admissions and recruitment, has been promoted to senior assistant dean for enrollment and online programs.

**Kelly Patterson, PhD** was recently promoted to Associate Professor. Patterson's research focuses on the limited opportunities available to people who are trapped in impoverished urban neighborhoods. She received the Marie Weil Outstanding Scholarship Award and the Homeless Alliance Collaborative Award. Known as a local housing expert, Patterson has spoken at numerous local agencies. Her commitment to community and social problem is central to the School's mission and invaluable to Buffalo and WNY.



## FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

**Associate Professor Laina Bay-Cheng** has been elected to The Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE) Steering Committee.

**Associate Dean for Research Catherine Dulmus** was invited to join the 2016 class of Fellows of the Society for Social Work and Research.

**Dean Emeritus Lawrence Shulman** was appointed by the New Hampshire Governor to the Division of Children, Youth and Families Advisory Board.

**Associate Professor Robert Keefe** has been invited to serve as Chair of the steering committee of a HRSA-funded project to develop public health social work competencies.

**Dean and Professor Nancy J. Smyth** was elected to the National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work (NADD) Board of Directors.

**Professor Deborah Waldrop** has been named a member of The National Quality Forum's Palliative and End-of-Life Care Standing Committee for the Palliative and End-of-Life Endorsement Maintenance Project.

**Assistant Professor Elizabeth Bowen** was accepted as a protégé in the American Psychological Associations' Cyber Mentors Program, which is an NIMH-funded mentoring program for HIV and health disparities researchers.

**Associate Professor Filomena Critelli** whose proposal, "Crossing Borders: Human Rights Issues from US & Mexico Perspectives," was selected for funding from the SUNY COIL Center and the US Embassy's "US-Mexico Multistate COIL Program" to develop a globally networked course with faculty from Universidad de Tijuana.



## ALUMNI EVENTS

A table full of social work alumni enjoying the Niagara-on-the-Lake UB Alumni Event in Ontario, Canada, on June 17, 2016.  
Photo credit: Dave Riffel



## COMINGS & GOINGS

Director of Online Programs **Anthony Guzman** has accepted a position as an Operations Manager at Academic Partnerships in Dallas, TX.

**Tami L. Tobas, MSW '11** is now the associate director of our Office of Continuing Education. She comes to us with nine years of experience in training coordination, case management, counseling and program coordination.

## PARTNERSHIP

The UB School of Social Work has been chosen as a full partner school in **The National Homelessness Social Work Initiative (NHSWI)**. The initiative is part of the National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services at SUNY Albany and is funded by a grant from the New York Community Trust. Assistant Professor Elizabeth Bowen serves as the School's representative in NHSWI.



## From Dean Nancy J. Smyth

I'm often asked how I stay current on new developments and trends that affect our profession. I use multiple strategies, but my most robust strategy is the professional/personal learning network (PLN) that I've developed online. Simply stated, PLNs employ, within an online environment, the same strategy that professionals have used for centuries: connect to people who share interests and with whom you can share useful information. Only now, these people could be in my city or on the other side of the world. The advantage of an online PLN is that it can be accessed almost any time, and it draws from a variety of sources: blogs, e-letters, interest communities (e.g., Facebook or LinkedIn groups, Google+ communities, Twitter chats), listservs, and various other social media platforms.

A true story from a UB colleague, Dr. Phillip Glick, illustrates the power of PLNs. One of his medical residents contacted him in the middle of the night, concerned about a child's non-response to emergency treatment. Seeking to advise the resident on what might help, Dr. Glick immediately searched Medline, an online database of biomedical articles, but he was unable to find anything useful. Next, Dr. Glick reached out to his Twitter network (using general statements, so as to not disclose protected health information). A few hours later, he had a suggestion from a doctor in Sweden who was writing up a series of similar cases – that suggestion saved the child's life. What's important to highlight is that Dr. Glick had already done the work, prior to the crisis, to build a trusted, professional learning network on that social media platform. How lucky for that child and family that they had a physician who was globally-connected.

Beyond staying abreast of new developments and providing opportunities for consultation, PLNs can open up opportunities for collaboration; for example, I'm writing a book with two social work academic colleagues who are part of my PLN – I met and came to know them well through social work conversations on Twitter and the Google+ Social Work and Technology Community.

If you're interested in learning more about how to create a PLN, check out Social Work Synergy, the UB School of Social Work blog at: <https://socialworksynergy.org/> where we will have links to great resources on this topic.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Nancy J. Smyth".

NANCY J. SMYTH, PHD, LCSW

## Mosaics Readership SURVEY

We want to hear from you, let us know what you think!



[socialwork.buffalo.edu/mosaics-survey](https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/mosaics-survey)

Please take 10 minutes to share your opinion on our magazine. Two \$100 Amazon Gift Cards will be randomly given out to those that complete the survey and **must include their email address.**

Gift Card Drawing Rules  
(Entries must be received by December 31, 2016, individuals must over 18 years of age and include a valid email address to be entered into gift card drawing. UB SSW Faculty/Staff not eligible. 1 entry per person allowed.)

# MOSAICS

**CORRECTION:** Nancy Mautone-Smith's name was incorrectly stated in the Fall 2015 Mosaics. We regret any confusion this created.

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The University at Buffalo is a premier research-intensive public university, the largest and most comprehensive campus in the State University of New York. UB's more than 29,000 students pursue their academic interests through more than 390 undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs. Founded in 1846, the University at Buffalo is a member of the Association of American Universities.

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Electronic versions of this publication may be found <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/mosaics>.

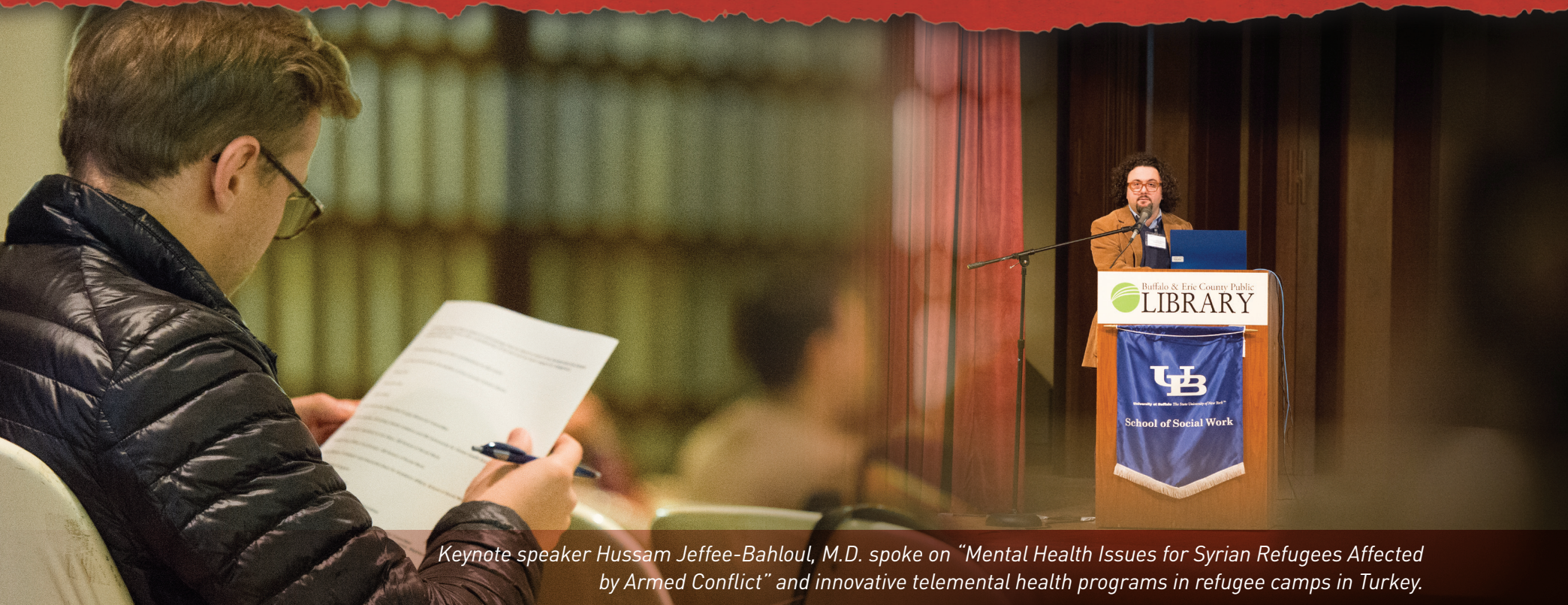
Correspondence, including requests to be added to or removed from the mailing list, may be sent to: Editor, Mosaics, University at Buffalo, School of Social Work, 685 Baldy Hall, Buffalo, NY 14260; or email [sw-mosaics@buffalo.edu](mailto:sw-mosaics@buffalo.edu).





# From the **INTERNATIONAL** to the **LOCAL:** addressing the Syrian refugee crisis

By Jana Eisenberg



*Keynote speaker Hussam Jeeffee-Bahloul, M.D. spoke on “Mental Health Issues for Syrian Refugees Affected by Armed Conflict” and innovative telemental health programs in refugee camps in Turkey.*

On March 31, 2016, the School of Social Work hosted “Syrian Refugees: Buffalo Responds.” The day-long symposium, co-sponsored by the UB Asian Studies program, took place at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library’s main branch. A variety of speakers and panelists spoke about what the United Nations has officially labeled the worst refugee crisis of this generation.

Nationally, and through the federal system, Buffalo/Erie County is a preferred community because of the area’s affordable housing, employment opportunities, and local and ethnic community support. Officials of the city and region acknowledge that resettling refugees here greatly contributes to revitalizing the city; further, the four resettlement agencies and a number of related non-profits provide many services and organized assistance.

Throughout the day experts and professionals shared a variety of perspectives.

In her welcoming comments, Dean Nancy Smyth said “Refugees’ needs must be addressed from both trauma-informed and human rights perspectives.

Looking only through the trauma lens can overly ‘medicalize’ the issues and symptoms. Adding a human rights perspective, which is more political, helps them take back the power in their lives. We all need to provide refuge or we will lose our way.”

Asli Yalim, MSW, is a UB graduate assistant and PhD candidate. A

native of Turkey, Yalim was the first speaker; she summed up the facts of the crisis.

While reports vary; most agree that the number of both internally and externally displaced Syrian people totals over 10 million. Most of them are young; girls making up a large percentage. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians live in refugee camps. Millions more live on the streets or in tents in rural and urban areas in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. “The situation is complicated and getting worse every day,” said Yalim. “Even when Syria’s war ends, how long will it take to get people back home?”

Her overview of Europe’s response to refugees pinpoints the complexity of the problems and dangers that refugees encounter. “The cost is more than economic and emotional,” she said. “They often face bias, violence, negativity and hostility. When refugees are given help, they contribute to society — look at the West Side of Buffalo.”

The next speaker, Dr. Deborah Reed-Danahay, professor and Jean Monnet Chair, UB Department of Anthropology, added more context. “Pre-crisis, immigration was already an issue for some of the 28 individual European Nation member-states — those autonomous nations don’t have to cooperate with EU policies,” said Reed-Danahay. “Amidst differing opinions and the refugee influx, Europe is trying to balance fears with humanitarian impulses.”

Sarita Fritzler, associate director, Save the Children US, spoke via Skype. “Inside Syria there is desperate need for aid and support,” she said. “Children are experiencing things beyond our comprehension — in their home countries, on their journeys to escape, and while they’re living in camps. And they can’t go home. This is a global issue: how do we, as developed countries, integrate refugees?”

The mid-day luncheon, featuring falafel, baklava and other Middle Eastern items, offered participants and attendees a chance to digest some of the information gleaned from the morning’s speakers.

After lunch, Hussam Jeeffee-Bahloul, MD, assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, delivered the keynote speech. Jeeffee-Bahloul, who himself is Syrian, completed



*Opening remarks by Associate Professor Filomena Critelli, Chair of the symposium.*





decades of research on Syrian refugee mental health, after which he created the Syrian Telemental Health Network [stmh.net]. The online network provides support for mental health providers working with refugees in Syria and Turkey.

Jefee-Bahloul’s research shows that it takes up to 10 years for newly settled people to overcome cultural barriers and achieve economic stability. And, while some issues on the spectrum of post-displacement mental health are non-clinical — like appropriate feelings of loss and grief after fleeing one’s home, fear for family members’ safety — there can also be disorders, ranging from mild to severe. Jafee-Bahloul found that, rather than medication or clinical treatment, successful integration into society is critical for growth.

“We must move beyond acute response, to long-term improvement of recovery, function and coping,” he said. “These providers help refugees to retain their cultural identity while incorporating elements of their new culture.”

Othman Shibly, DDS, of UB School of Dental Medicine, has helped establish schools in Syria and dental clinics in Turkish refugee camps. He spoke briefly about the need for the world to respond more strongly to the war. “This war is a historical continuation of greed; dictators preying on tribal differences,” he said. “Corrupt leaders use innocent people for political and religious purposes.”

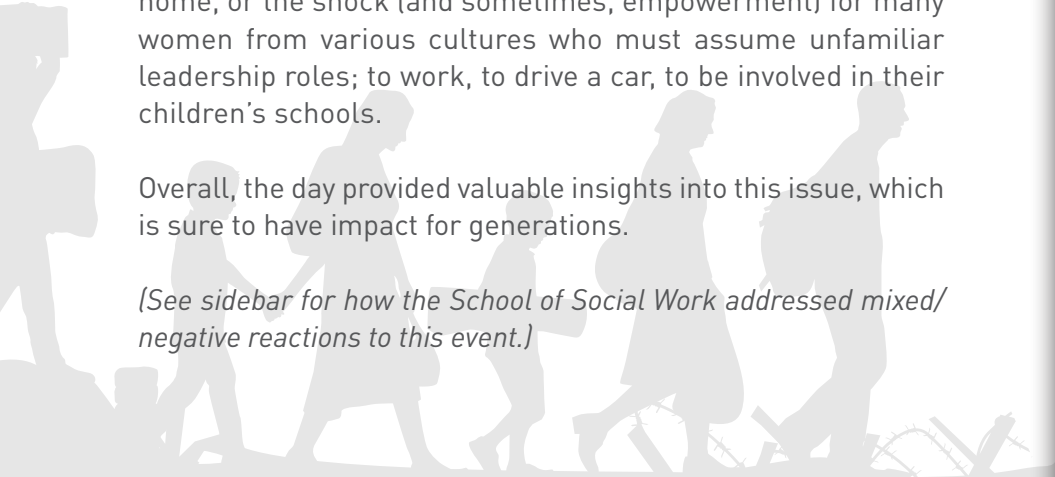
A closing panel featured local experts and professionals who each iterated that the best way to help refugees in Buffalo is to strengthen and extend the resettlement processes and functions. Buffalo/Erie County resettles about 1,400 people a year.

Panelists on the topic of “Buffalo Supports Refugees” included Denise Beehag of the International Institute of Buffalo; Kim Griswold MD, associate professor of family medicine, psychiatry and public health in UB’s Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences; Ali Kadhum, MSW ‘14, of the Iraqi American Society; Pam Kefi, founder of Jewish Family Services’ WNY Center for Survivors of Torture; Donna Pepero, Journey’s End Refugee Services; and Meghann Rumpf Perry, Esq., Coalition of Refugee/Asylee Legal Services. They each discussed continued challenges, such as healthcare, education access, language and cultural barriers and public transportation.

From each viewpoint, a lightbulb moment occurred, whether it was the fact that refugees must almost immediately begin to repay the money they were loaned to travel to their new home, or the shock (and sometimes, empowerment) for many women from various cultures who must assume unfamiliar leadership roles; to work, to drive a car, to be involved in their children’s schools.

Overall, the day provided valuable insights into this issue, which is sure to have impact for generations.

*[See sidebar for how the School of Social Work addressed mixed/negative reactions to this event.]*



## Responses refocus negative comments

By Jana Eisenberg

When the School of Social Work announced a symposium on Buffalo’s and the world’s response to Syrian refugees, Dean Nancy J. Smyth expected some backlash. Her surprise came during the event publicity phase when negative and divisive comments were being posted on the School’s own Facebook page.

Some of the remarks suggested that only Christians should be allowed into the U.S., that Muslim people are inherently terrorists, and assertions that that refugees must be “assimilated.”

Smyth and Associate Dean for Advancement Barbara Rittner responded by suggesting that, if they like, the faculty, staff and school community should add their own comments on the Facebook page to communicate their individual perspectives on the topic, as they might do in any group discussion.



Dean Nancy J. Smyth

Smyth’s own response there read: “...our values and ethics support freedom of speech...however, we will remove any comments that we believe represent hate speech.” This rare stance by Smyth was because several of the negative points made were “at complete odds with the National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics.”

 Love  Comment  Share

  You and 1,702 others like this

“Community members — and especially our faculty — gave great responses on how we, as a community, feel,” Smyth adds. “After our faculty began commenting, a Facebook community member who said he was a veteran, posted that he had defended this country for everyone’s rights — including refugees — to come here. In all, the responses gave a sense of diversity, and showed that we stand together for refugee’s rights.” Within two days, overwhelmingly positive posts that were supportive of Buffalo’s willingness to welcome refugees shut down bigoted comments.

Hilary Weaver, School of Social Work professor and associate dean for academic affairs, was one of the event organizers. “Through the School’s Global Interest Group, we decided that this crisis was a timely topic,” she says. “It’s visible, and there are mixed feelings. Clearly we need to help these refugees fleeing atrocities. From the European perspective, they’re overwhelmed by the astounding number of people crossing their borders. In part, I wanted to educate myself more about what was happening.

“It was disheartening and shocking that divisive and bigoted comments came out on our own Facebook,” adds Weaver. “I understand that some people go on Facebook to find pro-refugee comments and events to take on this battle — that they were not necessarily from our community.

“The comments about ‘assimilation’ particularly disturbed me,” she says. “I am Native American; I practice my culture and spirituality. I don’t believe that everyone must see the world in the same way.”

Ultimately, the Facebook exchange died down, and the event proceeded successfully. Smyth and Weaver both said that they were happy with the speakers and the diverse attendees who were thoughtful about the information that was shared.

“I was especially pleased with the number of students who were there” sums up Dean Smyth. “The event provided an important message about Buffalo’s overall incredibly welcoming response to the refugee community.”

“The shared perspectives from the school community by and large balanced out the divisive Facebook comments,” reflects Weaver. “To the inflammatory and emotionally based comments, they responded with thoughtful, factual responses, grounded in values of compassion and ethics.

“This was our first large event,” adds Weaver. “I think we will continue to do these — looking at timely and thoughtful issues, to learn more about what’s going on in our world.”





# EXAMINING WOMEN'S HEALTH

## ♀ SSW faculty research battles barriers to accessible care

by Jim Bisco

Access to health care for women, particularly those of low income, can be rife with barriers leading to negative health care outcomes. School of Social Work (SSW) associate professors Robert Keefe and Gretchen Ely have been individually working toward narrowing the disparities from prenatal and postpartum to sexual and reproductive health to help reverse such outcomes.

Keefe has done considerable research on factors that affect new mothers, particularly those of color, and their access to health care in the context of adverse environmental and domestic situations.

Keefe's recent study revealed the extent of postpartum depression experienced by low-income mothers of color. The results were startling in the disparity. "We typically find 13 percent of the population of white women develop postpartum depression, but we didn't know that upwards of 38 percent of mothers of color tend to develop postpartum depression," he points out. "One concern is the under reporting. I think if the reporting were more accurate, we'd see the full scope of the problem and would be able to justify the needs for funding for more services that are culturally responsive to the needs of mothers of color. I'm trying to justify through my research exactly how big the scope of the problem is."

Although services for new mothers are available, according to Keefe, many of those services are based on research that is focused largely on white mothers. "Much of the research has not taken into account the experiences of mothers of color, particularly low-income mothers of color," he explains. "When I started asking more about what got these mothers through their depression, for many of the mothers it was the church."

He found that while the church offers a spiritual component, it also meets concrete needs such as transportation -- someone from the church providing a ride to a medical appointment, for example. "The church forms a community around these mothers to buoy them up and help them along," Keefe notes. "In some cases, the church and its members helped the depression from getting worse and continue to be a support system to these new mothers throughout their pregnancies."

Because so many people of color turn to the church for help, Keefe wants to find funding to start working with churches. He envisions training some church members, who are mothers themselves, as birth coaches or to become effective home visitors to help these new mothers manage their newborns and become more assured. "Because so many people of color have had such bad experiences with health care providers in the past, I would like to formalize the home-visiting service with the mothers in the churches," he says.

Keefe observes that while social work has a long history of working in maternal and child health, the more recent focus has been working solely with the mother. "The missing gaps are what we would call more of a community focus. While the social work literature has grown in the respect of working with the individual mother on a micro level, there has been very little research that has looked at the bigger community, or macro level. That's the gap that I'm hoping my research will help to fill."

Ely's career includes working as a medical social worker providing counseling for patients who were getting abortions. Ever since, she has continued her quest to facilitate abortion access.

"What it means to be a social work researcher in reproductive health is that you bring a social justice and human rights perspective to accessing health that you may not see in other professions because they're more epidemiologically focused," she says. "It's not always easy because there can be criticism directed at people who help facilitate this kind of access, but it's an important place for social work to be."

Abortion rights and accessibility continue to be touchy subjects even more today. Recently, for instance, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg challenged the merits of a proposed Texas law that could have closed all but a handful of abortion clinics in the state, decrying the scope of inaccessibility.

Ely soldiers on, supporting the National Association of Social Workers' stance on family planning and reproductive choice, which specifically upholds access to abortion. "People should be





able to time and space their children and choose when and if to have them, and parent or not parent in peace. Abortion is a vital part of this process, so social work has to be at the table.”

Ely has created an infographic on destigmatizing abortion in social work (see accompanying graphic). “I had done a small study on social work students that suggests many of them had very little knowledge of how to respond when clients sought abortion information or referrals.” Impressed with the infographics done at the SSW on various topics, she set about seeking funding to develop one in this area in conjunction with Social Workers for Reproductive Justice, the National Network of Abortion Funds, and INROADS: The International Network for the Reduction of Abortion Discrimination and Stigma, the organization that provided the grant funding for the project. The infographic was distributed to schools of social work across the country over the summer and is available on the SSW website for download.

Ely was the recipient of the 2016 Excellence in Research award and a 2016 Civic Engagement Public Policy Fellowship Grant for her research on cases representing patients who sought funding assistance to access unaffordable abortions in the United States and Ireland, in partnership with the Abortion Support Network in the United Kingdom and the National Network of Abortion Funds in the United States.

“My research suggests that abortion is becoming less accessible in the United States, especially for lower-income women and women of color,” Ely explains. “While technically legal in the United States, the stories from women in America reflect inaccessibility that is on par with problems experienced by women in Ireland. Abortion is legal here and illegal there, but problems obtaining abortion care -- which include gathering funds to pay for the procedure -- seem to be similar.”

# Lead the Way

## to Destigmatizing Abortion in Social Work

2

Access to safe abortion is a human right. Most social work clients are women, and one-third of U.S. women have an abortion over their lifetimes.

3

First-term abortions are not associated with mental or physical health problems, and most abortion patients anticipate a feeling of relief afterwards.

Bust the Myths

4

47,000 women annually worldwide unsafe abortion. Self-induction increasing in t

1 Pressure clients that is legal and safe.

2

Learn about abortion laws in your state.

3 Defs & use responses mination.

3

4

Use the word “abortion” confidently in practice.

5

6

Offer clients to medically accurate referrals.

Move to Action

DOWNLOAD



To download the infographic, Destigmatizing Abortion in Social Work, visit:

[socialwork.buffalo.edu/destigmatizing-abortion](http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/destigmatizing-abortion)



# CLASS OF 2015-2016 GRADUATES



## 2015-2016 STUDENT AWARDS RECIPIENTS



- ANDREW J. LAUGHLIN AWARD **Stephanie Sacco**
- ARCHIE W. SWANSON HONORARY AWARD **Dior Lindsey**
- BERTHA S. LAURY THORN & ROSE AWARD **Victor Diaz**
- DENA P. GOLD MEMORIAL AWARD **Felicia Badio-Merriam**
- DOROTHY LYNN HONORARY AWARD **Elena Spence**
- DREAM AWARD **Ashley Barnes | Rachel Daws | Marna Metcalf | Kyle Reiser**
- HASELTINE T. CLEMENTS MEMORIAL AWARD **Skylar Amari**
- JULIAN SODJA MEMORIAL FUND **Ashley Bates**
- KRISTOPHER L. BRASELTON MEMORIAL AWARD **Theresa Tripi**
- LOUISA CIELEN AWARD **Katie Nokovich**
- LOUIS H. SWARTZ AWARD **Kerry Battenfeld**
- MARY O'DONNELL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD **Lauren Ashburn**
- NASW AWARD **Stephanie Sacco**
- NILES CARPENTER AWARD **Robyn Taylor**
- OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD **Kyle Reiser**
- SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARD **Natasha Mehta**
- TERESE EUSANIO MEMORIAL AWARD **Shelley Hitzel**
- ROSE WEINSTEIN AWARD **Marna Metcalf**





# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RHO KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY 2016 INDUCTEES

Sara Alpert  
Kelsey Bennett  
Alanna Blasting  
Bryan Blumlein  
Kristen Dyell

Michael Guerin  
Paige Heagerty  
Kimberly Kaufmann  
Breanne Kramer  
Alexandra Liloia-Bishop

Kailey Lopian  
Katie Nokovich  
Thomas Power  
Corrin Pudlewski  
Kyle Reiser

Stephanie Sacco  
Anna Saltarelli  
Jesse Sarubbi  
Emily Sebian  
Elena Spence

Karen Szczesniak  
Dominique Tucker  
Emily VanOcker  
Grace Wach  
Dianna Walkowski



# ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS



## Research Department Bereavement Services, Hospice Buffalo — Excellence in Research Award

Hospice Buffalo is the recipient of a Buffalo Center for Social Research Excellence in Research Award for its contributions to end-of-life social work research. Collaborating with the organization's Research Department and Bereavement Services Program, Deborah Waldrop conducted a recent study examining how communication between a dying individual and their caregivers affects the grieving process of the caregiver. According to the study discussing an individual's advance directives and having their wishes in place before death improves the emotional wellbeing of the caregiver and eases the grieving process. This study also highlighted the unique role that social workers play in end-of-life care, as they are well-suited to facilitate these conversations and to empower those involved.



## Karen Lisiecki — Outstanding Achievement in Field Education

As a field educator, Karen Lisiecki, MSW '02, was recognized for her ability to integrate all levels of social work practice into the daily work of her students — client engagement, case management skills and effective policy analysis. She has worked in the field for almost 30 years bringing her extensive knowledge of communities and practice to her supervisees and instilling in them a standard of excellence by which they are expected to measure themselves. Those who nominated Lisiecki for the Outstanding Field Educator award share that she inspires them, that she is a constant source from which to learn and that she genuinely cares about students' success as effective and ethical social workers.

## Marcy Brimo, MSW '92—MSW Alumni Award

Marcy Brimo, MSW '92, specializes in the areas of spirituality and trauma therapy and has had an enormous impact on many clients since she became a mental health social worker. Brimo's nominator credits her with introducing trauma-informed care into treatment settings long before UB SSW officially adopted this perspective. As an adjunct faculty she has taught several clinical courses at UB SSW, including Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). Throughout her 23-year career Brimo has proven to be a dedicated evidence based therapist, a compassionate mentor and a skillful clinical supervisor. She is the 2016 recipient of the Distinguished MSW Alumni Award.

## Shraddha Prabhu — Excellence in Research Award

Shraddha Prabhu, PhD '15, receives this Buffalo Center for Social Research Excellence in Research Award for her dissertation study that brings attention to the needs of children living in red-light districts of India. Prabhu's work looks at the frequency and context by which children of women in prostitution are exposed to violence, emphasizing the presence of trauma symptoms among them. The impact on children of women in prostitution in India is largely underrepresented, making Prabhu's contribution critical to understanding the intersection of violence, trauma and resilience in this vulnerable population. It is the hope that this study can be used to inform community-based intervention and prevention strategies, allowing for the development of protective measures for these children.

## Gretchen Ely — Excellence in Research Award

Gretchen Ely, PhD, UB SSW associate professor, is a recipient of the Buffalo Center for Social Research Excellence in Research Award for a recent study that examines the potential funding barriers faced by women seeking abortions. The study identified the characteristics of women who utilize financial aid to fund an abortion. She found that women of color, single women and women seeking second-term abortions tended to rely on financial assistance in order to terminate the pregnancy. This study was the first to highlight the economic disadvantages many women face when considering abortion — a barrier that is exacerbated by the fact that public funding for abortion is prohibited in the United States.







Above:  
Lisa Rapp-McCall, PhD

Left: Rapp-McCall's  
parents accepting her  
award on her behalf.

#### Lisa Rapp-McCall — Distinguished PhD in Social Welfare Alumni Award

Since earning both a PhD in Social Welfare and an MSW from UB SSW ('99 and '91, respectively), Lisa Rapp-McCall has left her mark on several schools of social work as both a faculty member, teaching clinical courses reflecting her extensive experience as a psychiatric social worker and as a BSW Program Coordinator at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), and the MSW Program Chair, Associate Director, and Acting Chair at the University of South Florida (USF). She is now a full professor at Saint Leo University. Rapp-McCall has published 24 articles, 9 books and 16 book chapters and will continue to enrich any social work program with which she is involved.



# Tom Nochajski

## SARKIN AWARD RECIPIENT

by Lauren Kroening

UB School of Social Work Research Professor Tom Nochajski, PhD was recently honored at the UB Alumni Association Achievement Awards among other distinguished alumni who have made remarkable contributions to their fields of work. Nochajski received the Richard T. Sarkin Award for Excellence in Teaching, which is presented to individuals who demonstrate expertise as educators and mentors to their students.

Whitney Mendel (PhD '16) and Brad Linn (MSW '12), candidate for PhD in Social Welfare, are among those who nominated Nochajski for this award. As longtime students of Nochajski's, they are able to speak to both Nochajski's skills as a teacher and his character as a mentor and friend. Mendel shares: "Over the course of my dissertation journey, Tom taught me, encouraged

me, challenged me, coached me, and grounded me. He made me laugh. He helped to ensure that I had opportunities to choose from. He had my back while letting me lead." Linn adds: "Tom has worked to demystify the research process for social work students. The effects of Tom's efforts cannot be understated. [His] accomplishments are not simply in communicating information to students, but instilling a sense of self-efficacy."

Nochajski raises the standards to a very high level for what it means to be an effective, committed and understanding educator, and the UB SSW community is fortunate to benefit from his expertise as a member of the faculty in the School of Social Work.

Photo Left to Right: Mary Garlick Roll, MS'88, BS '84, Tom Nochajski, PhD '90, BA '82, President Satish Tripathi.



# NEW GRANT

## to benefit teens struggling with substance abuse

By Lauren Kroening and Charlotte Hsu



A new grant from New York State's Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) will benefit adolescents struggling with substance abuse, enabling the School of Social Work to partner with service providers to improve care.

The new funding will be used to train local organizations to take the potential role of traumatic life events into account when helping young people in need.

The project furthers the School of Social Work's focus on trauma-informed care — an area of emphasis that sets the school apart from its peers. In 2000 the school began offering a trauma counseling certificate, and in 2009 faculty began incorporating a trauma-informed perspective into the curriculum.

The new \$15,000 grant from OASAS advances this mission.

The funding supports a nine-month project: a learning collaborative on trauma-informed care for programs working with adolescents with substance abuse disorders. The main objective is to help workers in these programs be knowledgeable about trauma-informed practices and to implement trauma-informed care at policy and procedural levels.

With OASAS staff, the Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care in the School of Social Work, led by Primary Investigator and Clinical Associate Professor Susan Green, will help select participants for the learning collaborative, conduct trainings and provide consultations and monthly coaching calls for organizational champions.

"My best hope is that the champions will help their agencies infuse trauma-informed care in their policies, practices and organizational culture, and thus will help promote a safer, more empowering environment for staff in addition to more effective, trauma-informed services for the adolescents they work with," says Samantha Koury, project manager at the institute.

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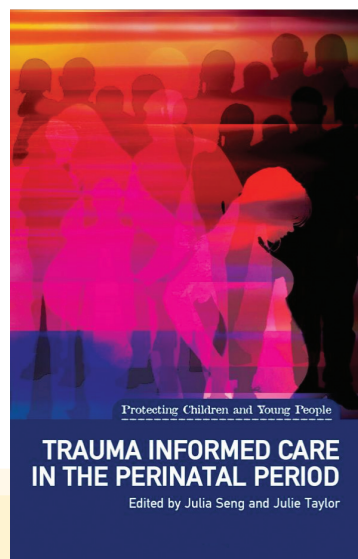
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## Trauma Informed Care In The Perinatal Period

Written by Mickey Sperlich, assistant professor;  
Edited by Julia Seng and Julie Taylor  
[Dunedin Press, 2015]



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### CHAPTER 4

How does focusing on post-traumatic stress disorder shift perinatal mental health paradigms?

### CHAPTER 7

What does trauma informed perinatal care look like?

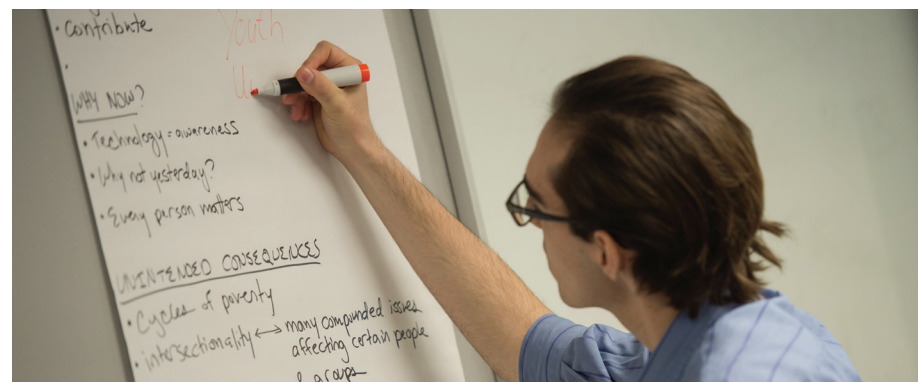


# social innovation

*A creative interdisciplinary workshop*



Social Work students Stephanie Sacco and Promise Bruce, along with Management student Rachel Stern and others worked on creative solutions at the April event.



If you build it--or build on it--they will come. And they did.

Students from UB schools of Social Work, Management, Engineering and Applied Sciences, Architecture and Planning, Arts and Sciences and Law all came to a field of dreams, of sorts, at Jacobs Management Center on a Saturday morning last April to brainstorm and build on possible solutions to a range of social issues.

The unique workshop was entitled “Creative Innovation: Using Innovation to Tackle Social Issues,” the first initiative for students resulting from collaborative efforts between the schools of Social Work (SSW) and Management (SOM) on social innovation and social entrepreneurship. The idea was to open the session to the entire university to collaboratively stir creative juices on solving social issues.

The 17 attendees were a mix of both undergraduate and graduate students. They worked in groups ranging in size from two to four participants, selected by how they ranked in order of importance a list of social issues that were determined previously by a student interest group from the SSW and SOM, the organizing schools of the workshop.

The chosen issues were legal assistance for the disadvantaged, reliable public transportation, food security, youth unemployment, school suspensions, and housing for low-income residents.

The workshop was presented by two co-facilitators, Anne Moretti, president of a management consultant firm, and Bob

Neubert, SOM clinical associate professor and director of the Entrepreneurship Academy, who guided the students in design thinking and possible solutions employing a business model that had been adapted for the purpose of mission achievement.

“We were tearing apart all the boxes,” says SSW Associate Professor Kathleen Kost. “It set the stage for a different way of approaching how do we resolve these issues and identify solutions. This was only a four-hour workshop. Our goal was just to present a model, give the students content on that model--how to use it, apply it, focusing on an individual target person.”

Kost and SSW Vice Dean and Chief of Staff Maureen Hammett organized the workshop. “There is something to be said for bringing together people from different disciplines who inherently have different experiences and approaches and mindsets,” Hammett reasons. “The language was important so that we weren’t speaking to one particular group of students from any one discipline. We used the language of consumers, rather than clients or customers.”

Ultimately, Kost describes the ideas that were generated as very creative and very possible. “Nothing was so far out of the realm of possibility that you think ‘no way,’” she observes.

Student evaluations were in agreement that it was a thoroughly thought-provoking experience and that an even more expanded version of the workshop would be welcome.

“One of the things that stood out in our assessment of the day was the value and, in some cases, joy, of working in diverse groups,” notes Hammett. “It was such a pleasure to have this opportunity that in academe doesn’t happen all the time.”

Discussions are in progress for future interdisciplinary student think-tank sessions.

by Jim Bisco





# Classnotes



## 70

**Thomas M. Grace (MSW '75)** is now an adjunct professor of history at Erie Community College in Buffalo, NY. He has also published a book, *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties*.

## 80

**Linda J. Dinger (MSW '80)** has officially retired from teaching as an adjunct instructor at the UB School of Social Work, where she began instructing in 2004. Most recently she taught Interventions I & II, as well as Theories of Organizational Behavioral and Development.

**Ellen P. Fink-Samnick (MSW '83)** is the 2016 recipient of the National Award of Service Excellence for the Case Management Society of America, the first social worker to receive the award.

## 90

**Mary Jo Gervase (MSW '93)** an LCSW-R, school social worker at the Frederick Law Olmsted Buffalo Public School #64, is also a part-time psychotherapist with Western New York Psychotherapy Services.

**Ricardo Herrera (MSW '93)** is the executive director of the Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers, Inc.

**Lidia J. Snyder (MSW '95)** who recently completed the 300-hour certification program through the Trauma Center at the Justice Resource Institute, is among 67 individuals across the globe to hold this certification in the Center's empirically validated model for treating complex trauma and PTSD.

**Mary Kay Diakite (MSW '96)** is a mental health therapist at Family Services of Chemung County and lives in Horseheads, NY.

**Jennifer Berger (JD/MSW '98)** is the AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly's supervising attorney, and is also the recipient of the 2016 Jerrold Scoutt Prize, which is one of the highest honors available to public interest lawyers in the District of Columbia.

## 00

**Jennifer Ditta (MSW '00)** is an LMSW I for the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities and resides in East Aurora, NY.

**Dennis J. Koston (MSW '02)** is an LMSW II and works for the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities as a forensic liaison and behavioral services coordinator with Inter-District Transfers and Crisis Services.

**Renée M. Schumacher (MSW '03)** is the Developmental Disabilities Services Director at Hillside Children's Center in Rochester, NY.

**Carol Mae Whitlow (MSW '06)** retired from The New York State Office of Children and Family Services and works as a Disaster Mental Health Lead for the Red Cross, responding nationally to floods, tornadoes, wildfires and other major events, and resides in Ithaca, NY.10

IN MEMORIAM

## 1955

**Edmund A. Sherman (CERT '55)** a great friend to the SSW and a retired professor emeritus from SUNY Albany, passed away on January 8, 2016.

## 1957

**Pauline R. Riemer (MSW '57)** a longtime and generous donor to the SSW and a retired director of social services from Sunnyside Nursing Home, died on March 7, 2016.

## Rita M. Andolina

Greetings! The 2017 U.S. News & World Report rankings placed the University at Buffalo School of Social Work in the top 10% of social work schools nationwide – our graduates are among some of the best in the country. We are professionals who universally embrace and support human rights, safeguard social safety nets, recognize trauma in our clients, develop vital resources and offer support to those who need it most. As practitioners and educators of a helping profession, we seek and capture every opportunity available to assist our clients and our communities.

At Commencement I had the privilege of welcoming the UB School of Social Work Class of 2016 to our professional ranks. I felt such pride as an alumna of the school in introducing this outstanding group of professionals prepared to have a profound impact on our communities.

Membership brings a broad base of connections founded on common bonds. You are a graduate of the University at Buffalo, a premier public center for learning, research and discovery, and our school plays an integral role in the University's mission of outreach locally, nationally and internationally. You are part of the UB family; indeed, you belong to this club. Our experiences



Photo credit: David Riffel

and memories do not end when we leave the University and our School; they live on through the UB Alumni Association. The UBAA is here for you no matter what you need.

In short, we have the services, programs, events, volunteer opportunities and more that benefit you, your fellow alumni and the University community, no matter where you are.

To maximize our relationship with you, please note the request in this issue to complete the magazine readership survey – we want to hear from you.

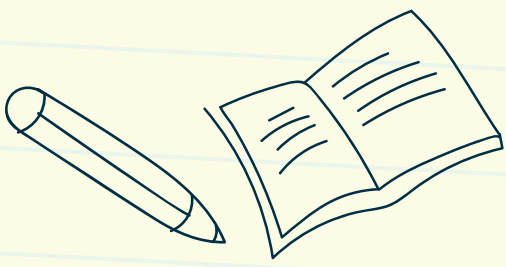
As always, feel free to contact me at GovGirl55@aol.com.

*Rita M. Andolina*

Rita M. Andolina, MSW '88  
Advisor, UB SSW Alumni



10



**Alicia M. Laible-Kenyon (MSW '10)** is the executive director of the Elderwood Health Plan, covering the six Western New York counties, operating out of Williamsville, NY.

**Margaret Coombes (PhD '11)** an assistant professor of social work and human services at University of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, Canada, has been named director of the School of Social Work and Human Services.

**Molly Corsi Katta (MSW '11)** is a school social worker, working with grades 7-12 at the Salamanca City School District in Salamanca, NY.

**Lisa Maynard (MSW '11)** is the implementation specialist with the Center for Adoption Support and Education, and maintains a private practice of therapy and yoga, called SatiVirya, LLC in Rochester, NY.

**McKenzie L. Mattison (MSW '12)** has been promoted to manager of the Volunteer and Family Services at the Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo, in Buffalo, NY.

**Katie McClain-Meeder (MSW '12)** works at Say Yes Buffalo as a Family Support Specialist at Lafayette High School.

**Colleen McCormack (MSW '12)** is a clinical case manager for Beacon Health Options in Boston, MA.

**Angel G. Graham (MSW '13)** a Child & Family Therapist for Pathstone Mental Health in Welland, Ontario, Canada, is also a part-time faculty member in Applied Health & Community Studies at Sheridan College. Additionally, she completed the Trauma-Informed Care & Counseling Certificate from our own Office of Continuing Education and the Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care.

**Karrie HusVar (MSW '13)** is a counselor with an inpatient rehabilitation facility in Williamson County, TX.

**LuAnn Stevens (MSW '13)** is a Medical Social Worker II in the department of psychosocial oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, NY. Additionally, she is a trainer for our own Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care.

**Emma Fabian (MSW '14)** is the director of the Center of Behavioral Health at Evergreen Health Services in Buffalo, NY.

**Beata C. Skonecki (BA/MSW '14)** is a Crisis Counseling Specialist II at Crisis Services in Buffalo, NY, and has been published in the Flip the Script: Adult Adoptee Anthology.

**John Gusky (MSW '15)** is the clinical care coordinator at Spectrum Human Services in Western New York.

**Chanell McCain (MSW '15)** is the director of community engagement at the Alzheimer's Association, Western New York Chapter, in Williamsville, NY.

**Timothy J. Shaughnessy (MSW '15)** is a care manager for Health Home within the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center in Niagara Falls, NY.

**Whitney E. Mendel (PhD '16, MSW '02)** is an assistant professor of public health, specializing in community public health, at Daemen College in Buffalo, NY.

**Sarah Reynolds (MSW '16)** is a primary therapist with the Genesee Mental Health Center for Children and Youth Services in Rochester, NY.

**Stephanie Sacco (MSW '16)** is a chemical dependency counselor, working with adolescents, at Lake Shore Behavioral Health, Inc. in Buffalo, NY.



## Take it from Us: MSW students learn from alumni about jobs, self-care and self-advocacy

by Lauren Kroening

The middle of the spring semester: a time when students and professors are equal parts bogged down by busyness and revitalized by the small light at the end of the tunnel that grows bigger each day. For MSW students in their final year, this period of time involves an even sharper sense of approaching closure and new beginnings; graduation awaits and beyond it

lies the sometimes daunting but exciting task of finding a job. Where and when should this process begin? How exactly does one 'market' oneself? What will life look like after the tassel moves from right to left?

Fortunately for MSW students, these questions did not have to remain unanswered. UB Career Services and UB Young Alumni Program teamed up with the School of Social Work to organize a Young Alumni Insights Panel. About 50 people attended the event with the hopes of gathering helpful information from the four UB SSW alumni panelists. These panelists were Amanda Bigos (MSW '12), Paula Madrigal (MSW '12), Danielle Maurice (MSW '13) and Andrew Wilton (MSW '12), each with firsthand experience on how to jump into the job market.

Panelists were asked one opening question by moderator Katie Crosby (MSW '12), UB SSW philanthropy associate. After which, all attendees were invited to ask any questions that they had on their minds. Topics included how and when to network effectively, tips on how to self-advocate for a fair salary and other rights and the importance of focusing on the work environment of a potential job to be sure that it is a good fit.

Much of the discussion focused on self-care as panelists were adamant in echoing the importance of this discipline. Bigos shared that, while she thought she took self-care seriously during the MSW program, it took on a much deeper meaning for her as a working professional. She stressed the necessity to be proactive in setting boundaries for oneself — right now as MSW students — cautioning that employers are not often going to be the ones who set these boundaries for their staff.

Throughout the discussion, there was a noticeable blend of emotions in the room — tiredness from the persistent semester, anticipation for what is in store after May and a bit of apprehension from the largely unknown nature of it all. But the testimony from the panelists cast a sense of ease over the attendees. When one nervous student asked what it will take to set themselves apart during the interview process, Wilton nudged the student toward introspection. "Think about what makes you stand out as an individual," he advised. "Go with that. It will be the same substance that makes you unique as a professional."

14 &amp; 15





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# UB Out-N-About



August 25, 2016 UB Night 2016 at the Great Arrow Museum, the School of Social Work was in full-force with lots of alumni, faculty and staff.

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I'M  
*thankful.*

**Victor Diaz**  
CLASS OF 2017  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Victor Diaz was born in the Dominican Republic, raised in the Bronx and moved to Buffalo to attend the UB School of Social Work, following in the footsteps of his wife and close friends who were students there. Victor plans to be a military social worker or to work with the Veterans Administration and is willing to go where such jobs take him. “I hope that wherever I go, I am able to be a force for change,” he said. Victor also is grateful to the donor who established the scholarship he received, and pledged “I will work to be a role model and live up to the expectations of the award.”

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