



Racial Justice Network Summary Map

September 2020 – May 2021

The UBSSW is taking a networked approach to racial justice.

We do not follow a single path, agenda, or leader. Instead, we are a system of nodes: small collectives of diverse UBSSW members working on various fronts and in various ways to move our school toward racial justice.

On the next pages, you can see some of the steps we have taken and where we still plan to go.



Members of the 2020-2021 Racial Justice Coordinating Committee (RJCC).
The RJCC's mission is to support the Racial Justice Network nodes by circulating resources and information (including through reports like this).

Read [a blog post](#) about the rationale for our approach

Find [details of the Network](#), including monthly maps

Link to blog post:
<https://socialworksynergy.org/2021/03/31/a-networked-approach-to-racial-justice/>

Link to Network details:
<http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/about/diversity-and-social-justice/racial-justice-network.html>

How did the UBSSW move toward racial justice in 2020–2021?

We took steps...

to Deepen Our Thinking

Research on Race Spotlight

Speaker Series & Community Communications

Faculty/Staff Book Club

to Enrich Our Curriculum

Expanded Courses

Added Faculty Training & Support

to Transform Our Practices

Integration of Restorative Practices

Transparency of Doctoral Programs Committee

Report & Reflection on Trends in Student Awards

to Fortify Our Communities

Founding of UB Chapter of Association of Black Social Workers

Designated Faculty Liaison for Racially Underrepresented Students

Mixers for Students, Alumni, Staff, & Faculty of Color

Research on Race Spotlight

Starting Spring 2021, we began spotlighting UBSSW research that advances racial justice.



Professor Noelle St. Vil, PhD, and colleagues are studying what residents in predominantly Black communities see as causes of intimate partner violence and as culturally responsive solutions.

[Click here to read the abstract.](#)

For copies of the articles,
email:
sw-racialjustice@buffalo.edu

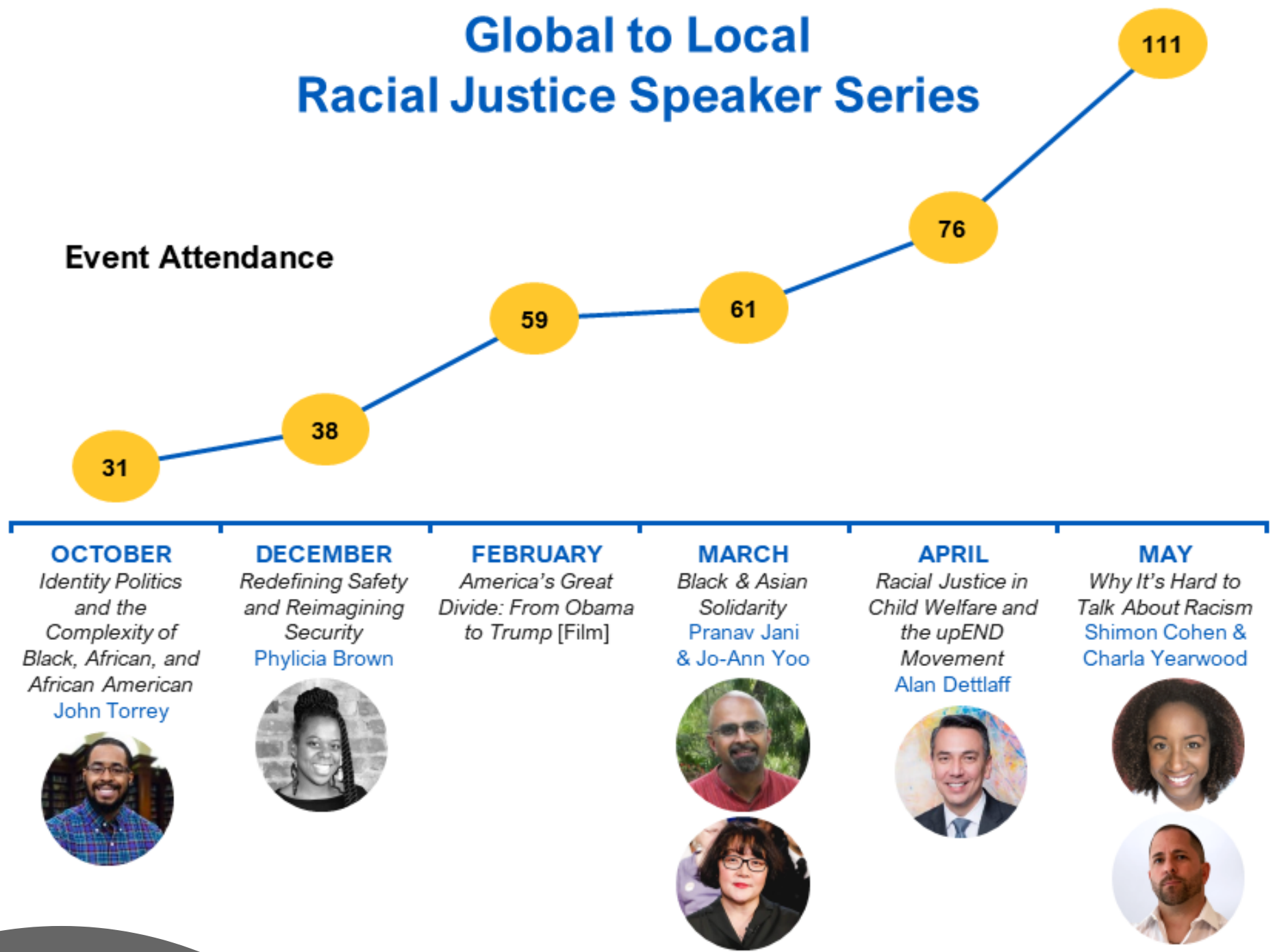


PhD Candidate Josie Diebold used participatory research methods to explore how a white antiracist organization, Showing Up for Racial Justice, works to undermine white supremacy in their own communities. Buffalo SURJ's local accountability partner is Black Love Resists in the Rust.

[Click here to read the abstract.](#)

Global to Local Racial Justice Speaker Series

Event Attendance



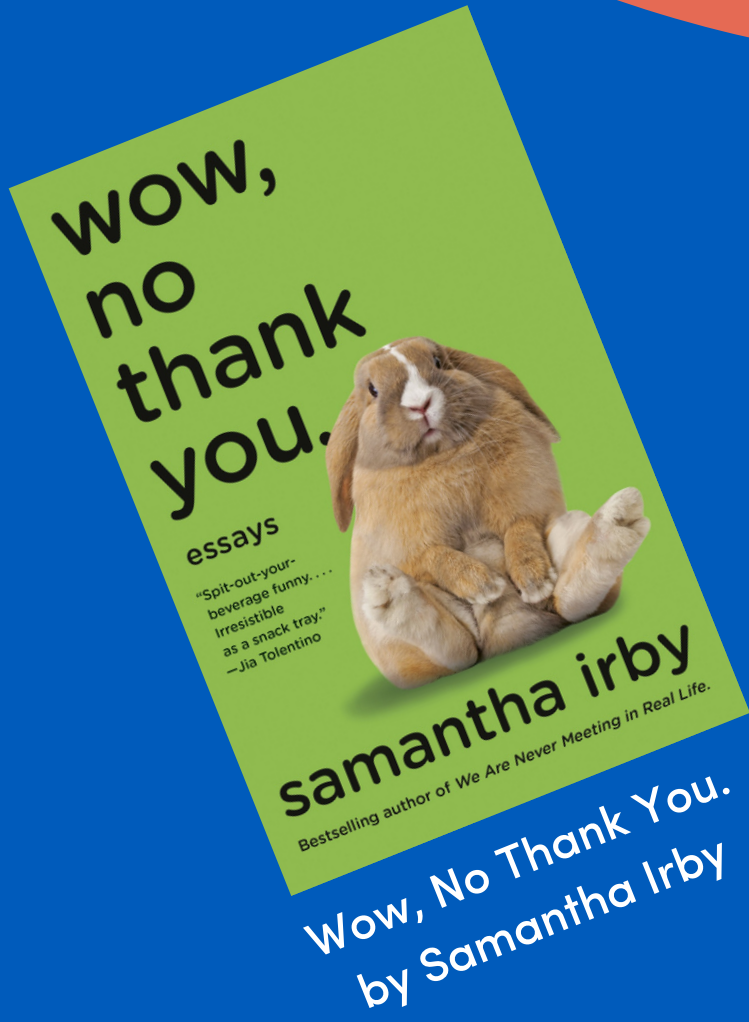
The annual Global to Local Speaker Series was dedicated to issues related to race and racism, featuring a range of guest experts.

We also held a **Community Conversation** to identify and refine our shared values. Approximately 25 UBSSW members attended the March 24 gathering. A prevalent theme was participants' desire for action, not just talk. Creating a new node in the Racial Justice Network or joining an existing one is a way to take action.

Information and event recordings can be found here:
<http://bit.ly/2qXkQoh>

Faculty/Staff Book Club

Starting this year, the UBSSW's faculty/staff book club prioritized books about race and by racialized authors.



Open to all UBSSW employees, the book club offers an opportunity for diverse colleagues to reflect together on race, racism, and racial equity. This is also an example of how to integrate racial justice in our customs, social circles, and informal culture.

New Courses

SW 978: Racial Justice Projects at the UBSSW MSW Elective

Action and advocacy are integral to social work as an academic discipline and professional field. Therefore, students' efforts to move our school toward racial justice should not be treated as "extracurricular" or an added burden. We developed the Racial Justice Projects elective so MSW students can receive course credit as they work on self-designed individual or group projects promoting racial justice at the UBSSW.

SW 130: Dismantling Anti-Blackness Undergraduate Course

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.

https://catalog.buffalo.edu/courses/social_work.html

Strengthening Teaching

Faculty members expressed need to strengthen their skills in facilitating class discussions regarding racism and white supremacy. This resulted in two nodes:

1

Faculty Peer Advisory Meetings

These monthly meetings are open to anyone teaching a UBSSW course and offered an opportunity for informal exchange. Questions can be directed to Isok Kim, MSW Program Director.

"People were open in sharing thoughts, experiences, and ideas. As a part-time faculty member, they were important sessions for me. They enabled me to touch base with other faculty members and have some a sense of sharing and communion."

- Part-time faculty member

"They were safe spaces to share experiences and concerns. They were very low-key and un-self-conscious."

- Full-time faculty member

2

Faculty Workshop

Facilitating Race Talk and Difficult Conversations in the Social Work Classroom

- Offered by Amani Johnson and Jayna Punturiero from UB Counseling Services, with help from Professor Noelle St. Vil

Event logistics to be announced in September 2021

Questions can be directed to Professor Mickey Sperlich

UB Chapter of Association of Black Social Workers

**Click here for a video description of the
UB Association of Black Social Workers
by Gloria James, MSW Student
Founder, UB ABSW Chapter**

A transcript of this video is available at the
end of the PDF.

For more information, email:
ubuffaloabsw@nabsw.org

Faculty Liaison for Racially Underrepresented Students



To support racialized UBSSW students, Professor Noelle St. Vil, PhD, began serving as the Faculty Liaison to Racially Underrepresented Students (RUS).

"I met with students individually who felt burnt out by being one of the few, if not the only, RUS in their classes. The increased focus on racial dialogue exacerbated this feeling for many RUS. I facilitated several racial restorative conversations between students as well as conversations between faculty and students."

– Professor Noelle St. Vil, PhD

In that role, she:

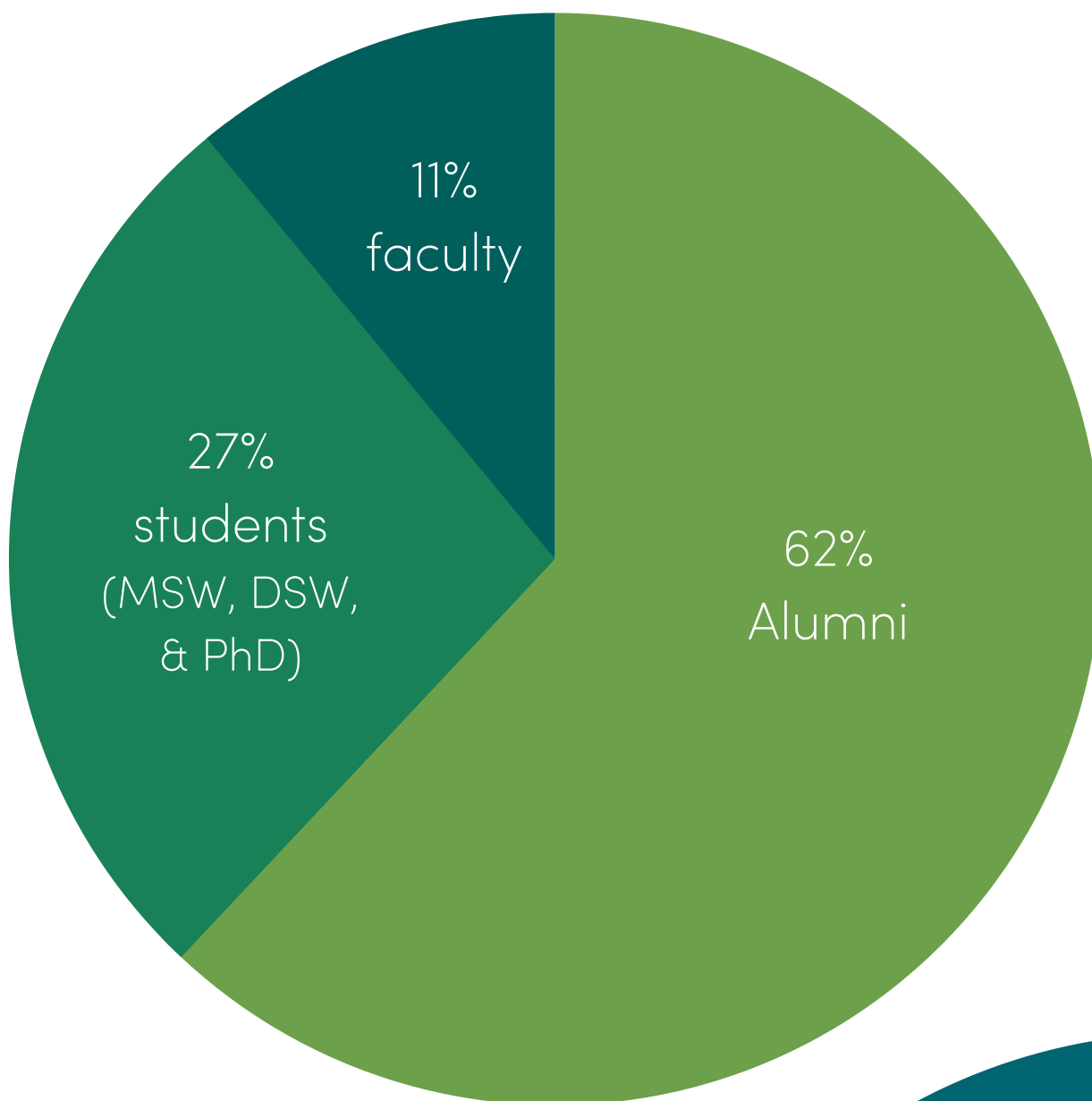
- Provides a safe space to talk about experiences of race and racism on campus and in field
- Shares concerns with and offers suggestions to Student Services and Field when relevant
 - Holds group and individual meetings with students

Topics of the Spring 2021 group meetings included:

- surviving and thriving at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI)
- feelings about the UBSSW's focus on racial justice
- Successful summer plans

Mixers for Students, Alumni, Staff, & Faculty of Color

To strengthen social and professional networks, Student Services Advisor Jenell Spitale hosted a series of online mixers for UBSSW alumni and students of color.



These mixers will continue in the upcoming year and the Student Services Unit is developing additional mechanisms for students of color to connect with each other, alumni, faculty, and staff.

Restorative Process

Students may experience or witness racism, heterosexism, cissexism, and other forms of oppression in their classroom and/or field placement. These incidents could involve faculty, staff, field liaisons, field educators, or other students.



[Click here for a video about the restorative process at UB School of Social Work by DSW Student Michelle Fortunado-Kewin](#)

A transcript of the video can be found at the end of this PDF

In Spring 2021, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Diane Elze drafted guidelines for addressing these incidents using a trauma-informed and restorative process.

In Fall 2021, Diane Elze and DSW student Michelle Fortunado-Kewin will offer presentations and conduct listening sessions to help the UBSSW community implement this process.

Goals of a Restorative Process:

- To build community
- To strengthen relationships
- To repair harm through participatory decision-making

Doctoral Programs Committee Transparency

Following the lead of doctoral students, the Doctoral Programs Committee made the development, implementation, and promotion of anti-racist social work DSW and PhD education its top priority.

They pursued this by...

Adding an item regarding racial justice to the agenda of every meeting

Auditing all courses for racial equity and anti-racist content

Revisiting the GRE application requirement, given its racial bias as a measure and barrier

Surveying DSW and PhD programs across the US about how they promote racial equity in admissions

Opening all meetings to attendance by any UBSSW member

Other committees may follow this model for increasing administrative transparency, accountability, and trustworthiness.

Student Award Reporting

To identify possible racial bias in our student award process, the Committee on Students studied data from last year's award nominations.

The data showed white students comprise 72% of the MSW student body, but received 84% of the 2020 award nominations.

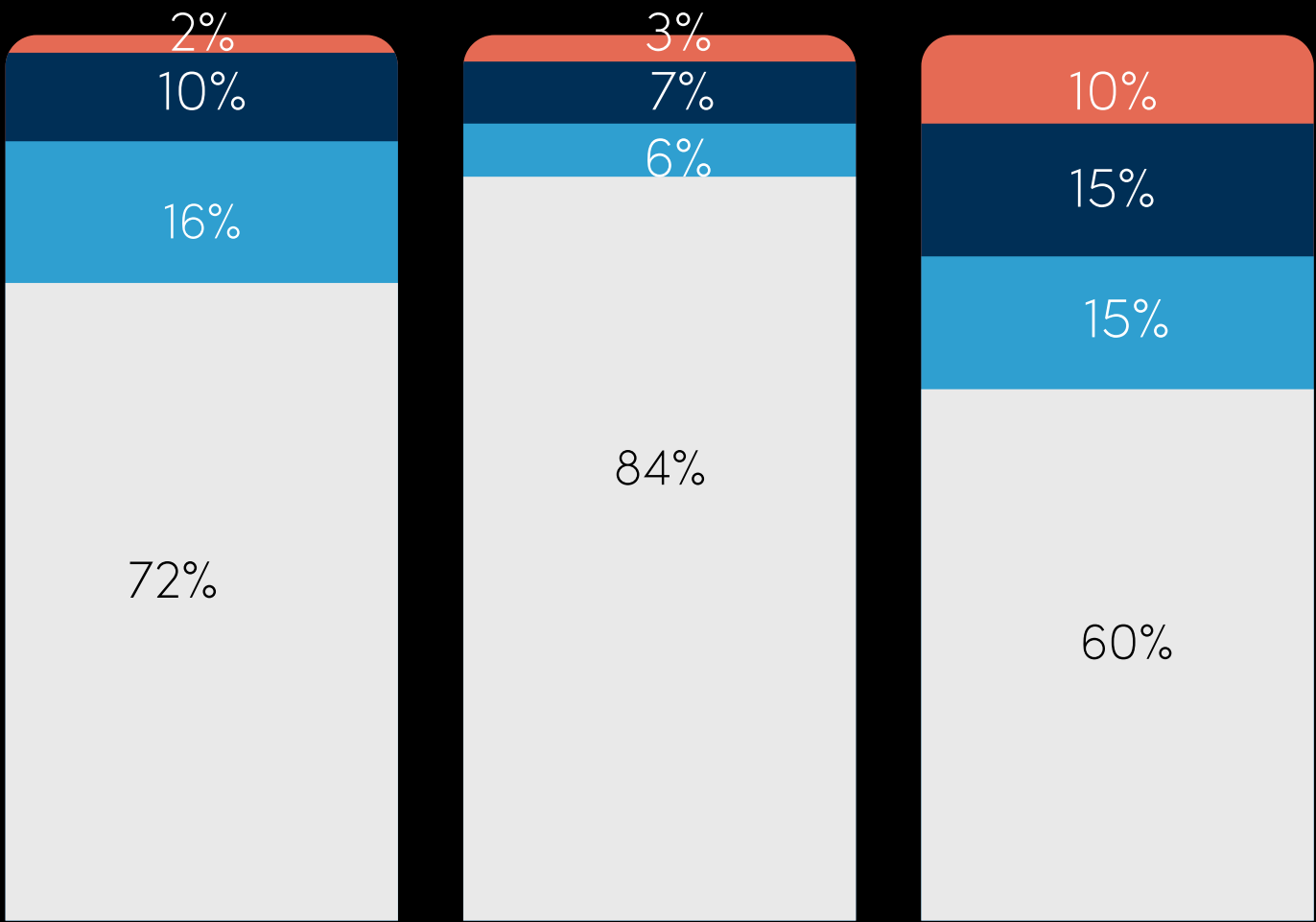
The committee asked faculty to keep this disproportionality in mind when making nominations.

Our Spring 2021 nominations showed improvement, with Black and other racialized students receiving 30% of award nominations (compared to 13% in 2020).

The Committee plans to study award nomination data more closely and find more ways to promote racial equity in our recognition of student excellence.

This project led to the creation of a new Data Support node.

Starting Fall 2021, Josh Hine (Director of Academic Success Initiatives) and Leah Walsh (Director of Academic Processes & Data Operations) will help individual nodes by analyzing available data to detect patterns of racial bias and priorities for change.



- Race Not Reported
- Other Racialized Identities
- Black/African American
- White

MSW Student Population

2020 Award Nominations

2021 Award Nominations

Steps Ahead in 2021–2022

We have made progress, but will continue moving the UBSSW toward racial justice by growing our Network nodes and initiatives, including...

Analyzing school data to identify inequities & remedies

Amplifying student-driven action & leadership

Increasing awareness of & engagement in the Racial Justice Network

Restarting newcomer student group

Expanding & diversifying student recruitment

Integrating restorative practices throughout the UBSSW

Revising the SW 500/SW 503 course sequence to foreground the critical study of racism in US history, policy, and culture

To Join, Support, or Learn More:
ub-racialjustice@buffalo.edu

Transcript of Video on Restorative Process

"Greetings, incoming MSW students. We are so happy that you will be joining the UB School of Social Work committee. My name is Michelle Fortunado-Kewin, and I am a DSW candidate at UB. Over the last academic year, we initiated a very important and exciting Racial Justice Initiative that has many components to it.



" One very important component that you should be alerted to is the process of engaging in restorative conversations when you have experienced racism, or other forms of oppression in your classroom or at your field placement.

"Unfortunately, racism and oppression still happen. Much racism exists we at UB are committed to addressing it when it occurs. We developed an explicit process so that you will know how we will help you address the situation, should you need our help. This process is described in your MSW Student Handbook, in our Field Manual, and you will also find it in Module 6 in your pre-orientation course. We know some of you will intervene into situations on your own, however, some of you may want our help. We want you to know that we will take these situations seriously and we will help you. We have laid out a process that describes how we will help you address these situations.

"If you have any questions about the process, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Diane Elze, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. She's the one who has also developed this process with input from faculty, staff and students last year. You may also contact Dr. Noelle St. Vil, the Faculty Liaison for Racially Underrepresented students. Lastly, be on the lookout for more information about the Racial Justice Network. As a current doctoral student at UB, I will be leading a student node through the Racial Justice Network. You will be receiving an email from me in the fall about ways to get involved in the student node and ways to provide feedback for UB School of Social Work's restorative practices process. Thank you, and welcome to UB."

Transcript of Video on UB Chapter of Association of Black Social Workers

"Hi, everyone! My name is Gloria James and I am the chapter president of the UB ABSW, that is the University at Buffalo Association of Black Social Workers. We are a school chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers.



"We're a newer chapter that was established this year, but guess what? We're doing some great things. Right now we've got four initiatives going on. We have our educational initiative to address disparities that our Black and brown boys and girls face. We want to minimize the educational gap. Second, we have an intimate partner violence initiative to address the violence that's happening in the home, that's not being talked about. We need to bring awareness of that so everyone knows that it's not okay.

"We have our health and wellness initiative. This initiative is important because we need to bring awareness around so our community knows that they need to go to the hospital, they need to get checked up, they need to have a voice. And finally, we have our financial literacy initiative. We need to make sure we know that our community know how to spend their money, and where to spend their money.

"If you want to know more about what we are doing, email us at ubuffaloabsw@nabsw.org."