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# 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](mailto:noellest@buffalo.edu)

### 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](#)

## In Planning:

- Newcomer Support Group
- Students & Alum of Color Mixer



Open to all Black undergraduate  
& graduate students

# Restorative Practices

## 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.

- 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](mailto:fortunad@buffalo.edu)

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



# 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](mailto: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

## 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

### 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

# 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.



## 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](#)

#SWeduActs  
Sept. 2021 session:  
Recommitting to a  
monthly antiracist dialogue  
with all social work faculty.

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

#SwEduActs

## Antiracist Pedagogy Peer Support

Save the Date(s)  
October 27  
November 24

2021  
2022

Save the Date(s)  
January 26  
February 23  
March 30  
April 27  
May 25

Open Group structure – all  
social work faculty welcome.

Info and register for unique link:  
<https://sweduacts.wordpress.com>

# Field Education

## Recent Tasks

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

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

## Current Tasks

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



# Committee on Students

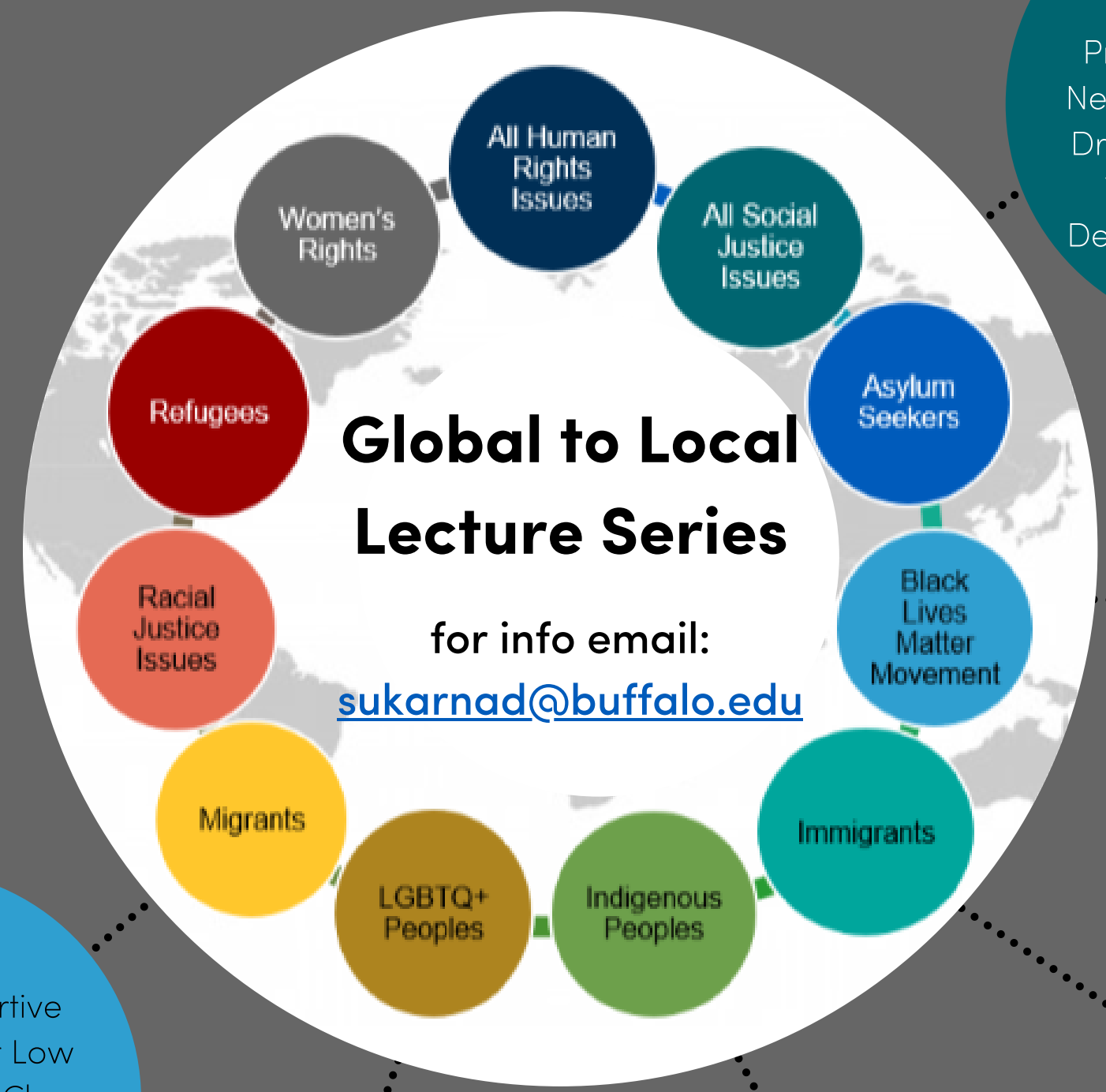
Continuing to evaluate student award nominations and how we promote them.

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.



**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

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

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

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

# Consciousness-raising

# Courses & Curricula

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

## Racial Justice Projects Course

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

## 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

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## Doctoral Programs Committee (DPC) Process:

DPC has added on on-going agenda item to each meeting related to racial justice.

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.

## DSW & PhD Curricula:

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 has begun an audit of PhD courses for racial equity and anti-racist content

## Admissions and Recruitment:

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

## 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](#).



# Recruitment Committee

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.

## Policies & Procedures

The Committee is examining models for promoting equity in promotion standards, policies, & procedures.

# Personnel Committee

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.

# Data for Equity

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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.