An innovative study abroad class, International Social Welfare: A British Perspective, was offered May 2014. This course afforded students the opportunity to travel to London and learn about the growth and development of social work and social welfare systems in England. The experience allowed students to understand how these systems impact today's world of multiculturalism, diversity, technological progress, migration and globalization.

Students were able to learn the impact of current global developments and local governments on the social work profession, as well as meet Londoners who not only raised their level of consciousness but helped them to be reflective individuals/practitioners. Highlights of the trip included visits to Southall Black Sisters, an important advocacy non-profit in London that provides services to Asian and African-Caribbean minority ethnic women; Salvation Army, the second largest provider of social services in Great Britain; Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Temple, Parliament, Southwell Workhouse, and Central London Mosque. The students heard lectures from members of the British Association of Social Workers and attended walking tours highlighting the East End, the events of Jack the Ripper, and Fair maids, Feminists & Philanthropists. The students also had the opportunity to see British humor at...
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Students were able to understand social work within a context that is tied to the national culture, tradition, geography, laws, economy, and socio-political milieu of the place. Being physically present at site offers a unique opportunity. Almost none of the students had been overseas prior to this study abroad and most were from rural areas, but they all quickly adapted to a city with a population of 13 million. Students stayed in homestays and got to experience day-to-day life in London and the unique experience of commuting from 45 minutes to an hour via bus and underground rail.

Many reflective conversations took place during these commutes. Experiences like visiting Southall Black Sisters shifted how students viewed their own experiences and what they understood about the world. The various tours and trips raised questions and many students reflected how they could make a difference in the world. It is through funding like The World is Their Classroom that we can offer students these eye-opening experiences.
Lacey Slominski was a guest speaker in “Diversity and Difference in Social Work Practice” class at the University of Wyoming-Casper Campus on December 16th, 2014. Lacey shared with the class what it was like to be one of the few females in the profession in the region and shared her experiences from last summer while she was in Montana fighting forest fires.

“I believe it is important from the diversity perspective for social work students to meet someone like Lacey for several reasons. She inspired many students in multiple ways. However, my main goal for students was to get a better understanding of what it is like for Lacey as one of the only females to be working in a predominantly all male profession so they could apply her experiences to future social work practice with other client systems.”

- Instructor Kari Velzke

Lacey is one of the few female firefighters in Natrona County and she is currently in the Fire Science program at Casper College, as well as training to become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSOR WINS TWO RESEARCH AWARDS

This winter our newest faculty member Amy Castro Baker, PhD, MSW, was granted the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) award for the best Doctoral Dissertation in Social Welfare and the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education Award for the top journal article published by a graduating PhD student. Both awards were presented at the annual meeting of SSWR in New Orleans.

Both awards were in recognition of her research on the roles of gender and race in the recent housing crisis and recession. According to Dr. Baker, one of the highlights of the event was presence of two MSW and two BSW students from our program.

“Thanks to the generosity of your donations to the Social Work Excellence Endowment we were able to provide scholarships for them to attend and be immersed in the world of social work research.”

The Division of Social Work is extremely proud of the accomplishments of Dr. Baker and how they are already having a positive impact on our students. We are also very thankful for the opportunity and funds to connect our student’s assignments and placements with the wider world of social work research.

CUTTING EDGE RESEARCH

Assistant Professor Neely Mahapatra, Ph.D., M. Faulkner, and Professor Mona Schatz, Ph.D. Forefront of Human Rights Issues: Integrating Human Trafficking into the Social Work Curriculum accepted for publication in Critical Social Work.

Assistant Lecturer Kari Velzke. Evidence of What Works to Support and Sustain Care at Home for People with Dementia: A Literature Review accepted for publication in Biomed Central Geriatrics.

Assistant Professor Neely Mahapatra, Ph.D., M. Faulkner, and Professor Mona Schatz, Ph.D. Forefront of Human Rights Issues: Integrating Human Trafficking into the Social Work Curriculum accepted for publication in Critical Social Work.
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MICHELE FOIST AT muryfois@uwyo.edu

COMING NEXT ISSUE:
STUDENTS’ RESEARCH TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS