Our BSW and MSW students do make a difference! This newsletter is focused on the various activities our students are involved in as part of their coursework, field experiences and student organizations... and the ways that they make a difference. Take a few minutes to read the newsletter and find out about students' experience at several national meetings, in an interprofessional course focused on motivational interviewing, and in their field experiences. Also read about the work students do in their student organizations, especially the very successful One Billion Rising, which is sponsored by the Associated Master’s of Social Work Students of Wyoming (AMSW2) and brings attention to gender-based violence. The Freeze Mob in the UW Student Union was great!

We are also pleased to introduce you to our new faculty this year: Kirsten Havig, Assistant Professor, comes to us most recently from Oklahoma; Shontay Roe, Assistant Lecturer, is hard at work learning the role of field director; and Jeremiah Volk, Assistant Lecturer, who has been a great resource to our students in Casper.

Mark your calendars for UW Homecoming, which will take place October 27-28. We will honor the Division of Social Work Distinguished Alum. We will also celebrate with the rest of the College of Health Sciences at our Interprofessional Panel with representatives from across the college on Friday afternoon and at the CHS Tailgate Party on Saturday before the game. Please consider nominating a graduate for the Division of Social Work Distinguished Alum.

If you’d like to make a difference in or find out more about the UW Division of Social Work, please visit our website at www.uwyo.edu/socialwork. If you are on-campus, please stop by and say hello!

Kimberly Harper, Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers – Wyoming Chapter, joined BSW students in two different sessions, one in Casper and one in Laramie this spring, to talk about the important of membership in the professional organization. NASW is the largest membership organization of professional social workers with over 132,000 members. As a professional organization, NASW seeks to enhance the professional development of social workers, develop professional standards, and advance the professional of social work. The Wyoming Chapter is one of 50 state chapters that are central to the national organization and has a mission of growing, developing and supporting a strong social work presence while upholding and promoting social work standards, values, and ethics. Ms. Harper also has been involved in the Division of Social Work providing guest lectures, teaching courses, and serving as a field instructor for BSW and MSW students.
Typically there is an average of 78 students going into field practicum placements each fall; placements are for 2 semesters with required program hours to complete. These students are from all cohorts: BSW Casper/Laramie (450hrs), MSW-Foundation (400 hrs.) and MSW-Advanced (500 hrs.). Students complete placements throughout Wyoming and at times surrounding states. Students utilize the person in environment perspective as they develop practice skills in micro, mezzo and macro levels.

To assist in the development of such professional skills, students have the opportunity while in placements to perform a wide range of duties from: assessments to clinical services, collation building to implementing strategic plans for change and most importantly empowering individuals, families and communities to advocate for self-determined goals.

Many Wyoming community locations offer and support a true rural, frontier generalist practice placement experience within hospitals, schools, mental health services, senior centers, income based services, protection services and advocacy services to name a few. Rural locations offer unique opportunities for student placements such as UW Campus placements with student organizations, diversity groups, minority groups, survivor groups, interprofessional strategic groups and many others.

As all of us know, change is hard. Yet change is pivotal relative to those habitual behaviors that significantly and negatively impact our health. Motivational Interviewing (MI), since the mid-1990’s, has demonstrated one of the strongest research records in navigating ambivalence around the decisions to change unhealthy life-style behaviors that contribute to physical and psychological conditions. MI is a conversational style grounded in unconditional regard and compassion for those of us who are struggling with change yet know that we need to/want to/have reasons to change those behaviors that negatively affect us.

Diane Kempson, associate professor in Social Work, has trained since the late 1990’s with Bill Miller, co-developer of Motivational Interviewing. She completed the Train-the-Trainer Training in 2010. Diane is teaching, again this spring, an interprofessional introductory course on Motivational Interviewing for the College of Health Sciences. As noted by Dr. Kempson, “I am very pleased that the MI course continues to attract students from across disciplines who are interested in helping their clients or patients find a way to move past the ‘stuckness’ of their old behaviors.” This year’s MI class includes students from the following programs: family and consumer science, pre-med, communication disorders, kinesiology and health, and social work. Diane’s hope is that interest in the course will continue to grow—perhaps even become part of mainstream coursework, given the efficacy of MI’s intervention style. At right, Social Work students exchange ideas.
Accolades and congratulations to our Social Work students (Associated Masters of Social Work students of Wyoming – AMSW2; student group; Officers and Members in particular) and ASSW for organizing yet another exceptionally successful One Billion Rising campaign to raise awareness about gender-based violence and sexual assault and RISE in solidarity on UW campus in Laramie on February 17th 2017. One Billion Rising is an international event to end violence against women and generate consciousness about the issue and take action.

The event had a great turn out – the largest so far. Officers and volunteers were busy all day handing out informational pamphlets/brochures with important information about various local and campus resources and services for survivors of violence and sexual assault to students on campus, besides offering free coffee.

The signature event of the club- ‘freeze mob’ as a statement/symbol to stop violence was a huge success with an attendance of about 40 or more student and faculty volunteers- the biggest attendance so far!

In the evening, the screening of “The Hunting Ground” documentary was also attended by numerous social work students and students on campus. The screening was later followed by an amazing discussion led by an esteemed panel of faculty members from social work and psychology and representatives from Safe Project in Laramie. We also had the privilege of having President Nichols grace the occasion to talk about her New Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Initiative. An earnest thank you to all Social Work students, faculty and staff for your help in planning, organizing, executing and participating in this event – great teamwork!

Article courtesy of Dr. Neely Mahapatra (AMSW2 RSO Advisor).

Signs displayed in the Union provided a clear message for raising awareness regarding the prevalence of gender-based violence and sexual assault, especially in Wyoming.
HELPING A BUSY MOM SUCCEED

I am so blessed to have received an academic award scholarship to help me during the advanced MSW school year. By receiving this award, I have been given the opportunity to find a balance in both of my major roles; student and single mother. This award allowed me the much-appreciated opportunity to hire an in-home caretaker to look after my children so I could focus all my energies into growing academically and professionally over the last year. I am honored to have been the recipient for this award and very much appreciate the support of those supporting students at UW.

FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN FAMILY AND EDUCATION

I entered the UW Masters of Social Work program in the summer of 2016 and will graduate May of 2017. I currently work for the GEAR UP Program at Casper College. I have a great passion for working with the youth and enjoys making a difference in the lives of others. I hope to someday work in the school district as a social worker. I have a wife and three beautiful children. My oldest son Michael is attending Stanford University to obtain a degree in Engineering. My daughter Zuri is 8 and is in the dual immersion Spanish program and Ziah his 3 year old is currently driving my wife crazy! My wife has a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from UW and also is a fitness instructor. This scholarship has allowed me to support my family while achieving all my educational and professional goals by ensuring we are not burdened with student loan debt.

REVIEWED PUB FOR 2016:


NATIONAL PRESENTATIONS, 2016:


YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT THE DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK

✓ ONLINE: Make a payment using our secure server: www.uwyo.edu/giveonline
✓ PHONE: Call the UW Foundation during business hours at (307) 766-6300 or (888) 831-7795
✓ MAIL: Make checks payable to the UW Foundation, indicate your allocation preference and mail to the address to the right. Your gift is tax-deductible by law.

PLEASE ACCEPT MY/OUR GIFT TO THE DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK IN THE AMOUNT OF: $25 $50 $100 $500 $1,000 $2,000 Other $

KIRSTEN HAVIG, MSW, PH.D., is a native of Columbia, MO who comes to UW by way of Tulsa, where she was an assistant professor with the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work at the University of Oklahoma. She was highly engaged there with statewide collaborative efforts to shape policy and build service systems to respond to human trafficking, in particular the commercial sexual exploitation of children, through her research and service work. In December 2016, she partnered with Dr. Neely Mahapatra to present a training, Human Trafficking in Wyoming and the U.S., for staff from the Department of Family Services. In addition to her continuing research efforts in this area, Dr. Havig also focuses on trauma, resilience, and posttraumatic growth, and has been accepted to present related research at the upcoming UW Shepard Symposium as well as at the Wyoming Joint Symposium on Children and Youth.

Other research interests include gendered and sexual violence, child welfare, and social justice pedagogy in social work education. The social justice mission of social work has always been at the forefront of Dr. Havig’s work as a practitioner and as an educator and researcher. Her proposal, “The experiences of sexual and gender minority youth in Wyoming: A photo-voice project”, was selected for 2017 funding through the UW Social Justice Research Council. This project emerged through discussions with students and other faculty on campus about this unique social work practice styles while maintaining the social work code of ethics. It is with pleasure I encourage you to explore with no limits to possibilities the opportunities provided to you and all those you encounter within the field of Social Work.

SHONTAY ROE, FIELD COORDINATOR, in her own words. As a 2010 Graduate from the MSW Social Work program with a back ground in Child Welfare, I’ve been fortunate to have worked with 1000’s of families; within this unique helping profession I’ve spent the last 7 years working closely with families in the courts system, a concept I term “When Systems Collide”. My passion is for important knowledge–building to inform social work systems, interventions, and advocacy work.

This year, Dr. Havig is teaching courses focused on social welfare policy analysis and advocacy and child welfare policy and practice. While she has quite a bit of experience with distance education platforms, she is preparing her first fully online course on trauma-informed practice for this summer. She is also serving on a national committee for the Council on Social Work Education working to develop competency standards for social work education focused on trauma-informed practice.

As a lifelong Midwesterner, Dr. Havig has dreamed of living in the Rocky Mountain region for years and is thrilled to be here in Wyoming. She plans to explore the state over the summer to learn more about life on the Wind River Reservation and to experience all the natural beauty the West has to offer.

JEREMIAH VOLK MSW, LCSW, LAT has been living in Casper, WY for the vast majority of his life. He and his wife have four children together. He is a musician and finds that performing, practicing and enjoying live music is his way of self-care. Jeremiah also enjoys traveling as often as he can to learn about different cultures and appreciating artwork.

Jeremiah Volk obtained his Associates of Science degree in Addictionology in 2005 from Casper College and his Bachelor’s degree in Social Work from the University of Wyoming at Casper in 2007. He then received his Masters degree in Social Work from Walla Walla University in 2008. Jeremiah has worked in several different settings within the Social Work field, but he has found that his true passions lay with Substance Abuse and Mental Health treatment. Jeremiah has also been fully trained in Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) and has found the intrinsic reward in helping people work through their trauma in their past. With that said, he has found that he truly loves teaching. He has supervised interns and practicum students since he obtained his Masters degree in 2008. Jeremiah has also taught as an adjunct instructor for the University of Wyoming’s Social Work department since 2010. He will be the first one to say how honored he was to be able to come on-board as a full time staff member to the UW’s Social Work department.

Jeremiah’s approach to teaching has been to always focus on the NASW Code of Ethics and present real life situations to the students. The field of Social Work holds no reservations and you never know what will walk in your door on any given day; thus, he finds it important to explore as many circumstances that could arise in various aspects of the field with his students. Jeremiah believes that not only is the classroom a place for lecture, presentations, etc. it is also a practice lab where students will be asked to put themselves in various situations as a Social Worker and process how they would proceed with these circumstances.
TODD LENNON IS THE 2016 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS FOR THE DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK.

Captain Lennon earned his BS in Social Work from the University of Wyoming followed by an MS in Social Work from the University of Louisville and a Doctor of Health Science from Nova Southeastern University.

As a Licensed Certified Social Worker, he has thus far had a distinguished 11-year career in the U.S. Public Health Service, currently serving as Emergency Coordinator & Team Lead. He has received multiple service awards and was recently promoted to the rank of captain.

Past deployments include assisting with logistics after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and serving aboard the USNS COMFORT on the 2009 Continuing Promise Mission. Prior to his public health service, he served as Director of Information Services for the Council on Social Work Education in Virginia. His commitment to serve and lead extends into his community in the form of volunteer work as a career mentor, field instructor, coach, camp director and ministry team member.

The Division of Social Work in the UW College of Health Sciences welcomes your nominations for our 2017 Distinguished Alumni. This individual will be honored during the upcoming Fall Homecoming season at the University of Wyoming. Go Pokes!

To nominate a graduate, please send a 1-2 paragraph allowing the accomplishments of the nominee and the nominee's resume/CV to the Director, Division of Social Work, 1000 E. University Avenue, Laramie, WY 82071 by September 1st, 2017.