

A MESSAGE FROM DEAN EDDIE UEHARA

Dear School of Social Work Community:

Our school is renowned not only for its commitment to social justice and social change but also for our track record in creating innovative, cross-sector initiatives that put our commitment into practice. In this issue of our newsletter, we highlight three recent large-scale initiatives designed to make good on our core value commitments: the [Washington State Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative](#), the [Washington State Child Welfare Informational Technology Education Project](#), and the recently renewed [Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence](#).

All three initiatives invest heavily in the potential of the future human services workforce—our students—as a powerful force for systems change. Together, these initiatives bring millions of dollars annually for generous scholarships to students in Washington state. These scholarships are designed to attract and support highly committed, capable and diverse cohorts of students who will enter key professional roles in the state's behavioral health and human services sector—debt-free or substantially debt-relieved. Here, by “students” we do not mean just social work students or just University of Washington students, but a range of public service-oriented students in academic programs in colleges and universities in Washington.

It is too early to determine whether these recently funded, ambitious initiatives will have their intended long-term impact on equity and anti-racism, empowerment and efficacy in service systems. To support success, those of us in higher education must provide the kind of education that best enables our students—the future workforce and leaders of systems change—to imagine a future that does not reproduce the inequities of the past, to make good on their deeply held commitment to anti-racism, service equity and social justice, and to harness the enormous potential of public funding to support new strategies that bring resources, empowerment, care and healing to the communities we all exist to serve. Our school is deeply committed to meeting these 21st-century educational and leadership needs.

Our initiatives also offer our own social work students some powerful, real-world opportunities for adult learning because they comprise precisely what the andragogy literature views as ideal “enriched adult learning environments”: goal-directed work in complex environments where the roads to success require deep cooperation among diverse actors and constant innovation and problem solving, and where the need for information, analysis and task completion is constant and failure can have real-world consequences for people and communities. When our students are given well-guided opportunities to engage in these environments, we have found that they thrive, learn and apply what they learn very quickly—and come away deeply affected and changed by their experiences.

At the end of the day, our school's commitment to equity and justice will be measured, at least in part, by the intensity of our commitment to students and to relieving the debt-to-salary ratio that burdens too many of them for decades after graduation. In essence, our three initiatives represent the School's abiding commitment to this goal.

Warmest regards,

Eddie Uehara
Professor and Ballmer Endowed Dean in Social Work
University of Washington



CREATING MULTI-LEVEL SOCIAL CHANGE MODELS

At the School of Social Work, we're co-creating innovative change models—working with our students, stakeholders and communities to improve lives, advance equity and support a debt-free education for diverse students seeking sustainable careers.



Renewing a historic child welfare partnership

The UW and the state's Department of Children, Youth & Families have renewed a historic agreement for eight more years and \$80 million to support the School-led Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence. [MORE](#)



Launching a statewide behavioral health initiative

With \$24.8 million in funding from Ballmer Group, the School is collaborating with graduate programs at 12 other institutions across the state to bolster a skilled, diverse behavioral health workforce to improve access and care. [MORE](#)



Creating an equity-driven career path in technology for social workers

The School is launching a new training program with the UW Information School that will commit \$2 million annually to develop critical IT skills that serve the child welfare system and promote greater social equity. [MORE](#)



MSW students help shape new social change model

While completing their MSW degrees, two students—Reed Klein (MSW '21) and Emily Roskey (MSW '21)—provided critical research and data analysis that led to the funding and launch of the Washington State Behavioral Health Workforce Development Initiative. [MORE](#)

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Meghan Romanelli leads study to explore teens and suicidal behavior. Assistant Professor Meghan Romanelli and colleagues at New York University identified patterns of suicidal thoughts, plans and attempts in a national study of 7,500 high school students. Among their findings: Black students are almost twice as likely as whites to attempt suicide without reporting any suicidal thoughts or plans; and students who are bullied online, have a history of sexual violence, smoke cigarettes or misuse drugs are more likely to plan and attempt suicide. This information will help frame targeted prevention and intervention efforts. [MORE](#)

School researchers receive \$2.5 million to explore how alcohol use and social environments affect midlife adults. Rick Kosterman and Marina Epstein, researchers at the School's Social Development Research Group, received \$2.5 million from the National Institute on Aging to study the role that alcohol use and social environments play in adults ages 40 to 60 and to identify intervention strategies to reduce health risks and disparities. The team will make use of data from a diverse cohort that has been followed longitudinally as part of the Seattle Social Development Project as well as collect new data from the SSDP sample. [MORE](#)

New director appointed to nationally recognized prevention science center. Margaret Kuklinski is the new director of the School's Social Development Research Group, replacing Kevin P. Haggerty. She is the first woman to hold that position in the center's 42-year history. Kuklinski, whose expertise lies at the intersection of prevention science and health, will lead efforts to disseminate interventions and research that promote healthy behaviors and positive development among youth. [MORE](#)

School partners with national consortium as part of a new center to empower foster youth. Associate Professor Angelique Day, along with colleagues Associate Teaching Professor William Vesneski and Associate Professor Margaret Kuklinski, will head up the evaluation component of the national Quality Improvement Center on Engaging Youth in Finding Permanency. The newly formed center's goal is to give foster youth ages 12 to 20 a more active role in making decisions about their care, whether that includes reuniting them with their birth families or placing them in other legally recognized, permanent arrangements. The five-year federal grant to the consortium totals \$20 million. [MORE](#)

Field education study uncovers challenges exacerbated during the pandemic. When the pandemic struck last year, students, community agencies and field education programs had to transition quickly to a virtual setting. Curriculum and infrastructure were redesigned, and learning activities were recrafted for virtual presentation. Much of this was uncharted territory. A collaborative study published by three School field education faculty details the lessons learned and provides recommendations for future societal crises. [MORE](#)

FACULTY NEWS

Three new assistant professors join School of Social Work community

Abril N. Harris, Kristian Jones and Maya Williams joined the School faculty this fall as assistant professors. All three have a deep commitment to marginalized communities, focusing their research on racial inequalities, social equity and inclusion. [MORE](#)



COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Nov. 19 Dean's Forum on Race & Public Policy

The UW School of Social Work is partnering with the UW Evans School to focus on the historical legacy of racism within the child welfare system and to consider initiatives that both de-center children's removal from their homes and support family-strengthening activities in explicitly anti-racist ways. Join the conversation with a panel of national leaders on Nov. 19 from 12 to 1:30 p.m. [RSVP](#)



New initiative connects alumni with current and prospective students plus recent grads

SWAAP—Social Work Alumni Advocate Partners—is a group of justice-driven School graduates who have volunteered to advise prospective students or mentor current students and fellow alumni, as well as help plan alumni events. More than 300 graduates took part in a recent survey to help SWAAP identify the types of events that interest School alums. [MORE](#)



IN THE NEWS

[How stigma prevents people from accessing mental health care and what we can do about it](#), *The Seattle Times*, Oct. 22, 2021 (Associate Professor Jennifer Stuber and Assistant Professor Meghan Romanelli)

[Study: 60% of aging LGBTQ+ in Oregon experience discrimination](#), KOIN Channel 6 (Portland), September 16, 2021 (Professor Karen Fredriksen Goldsen)

[Suicide is Washington state's biggest gun violence problem](#), *Crosscut*, August 11, 2021 (Forefront Suicide Prevention)

[From 'distress' to 'unscathed'—mental health of UW students during spring 2020](#), *UW News*, July 13, 2021 (Professor Paula Nurius)

[Research on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Is Being Stifled](#), *Scientific American*, July 8, 2021 (Associate Dean for Faculty Excellence David Takeuchi)

[Should Families' Surveillance Cameras Be Allowed in Nursing Homes?](#) *The Markup*, June 30, 2021 (Assistant Professor Clara Berridge)

[The future of elder care is here—and it's artificial intelligence](#), *The Guardian*, June 3, 2021 (Assistant Professor Clara Berridge)

[Washington voters led much of the nation in saying guns must sometimes be seized to prevent violence. How's the law working?](#) *The Seattle Times*, June 1, 2021 (Associate Professor Megan Moore, PhD candidate Kelsey Conrick)

[COVID-19: An Existential Crisis for Social Work Field Education](#), *Field Educator*, May 2021 (Associate Teaching Professor Jennifer Brower, Associate Teaching Professor Stacey De Fries and Assistant Dean for Field Education Rachel Wrenn)

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