Welcome to the fall semester 2016! We want to appreciate all of the agencies and field instructors who are hosting students for us. As most of you already know, we have a very large undergraduate cohort this year. We have 95 BSW students in field practicum placements and just over 100 MSW students in placement. To complement all of the students, we also have over 100 new task supervisors and agency field instructors. Working hard to support our students and agencies are seven BSW field liaisons and nine MSW field liaisons; including one BSW and three MSW liaisons working with our distributed learning program. It takes a village!

This past week we had visitors here representing the Council on Social Work Education. The purpose of their visit was to meet with faculty, students, community representatives, and field instructors to learn about our program and insure that we are providing students with curriculum and field experiences that prepare them for the profession. Please look for an update on our accreditation process in the next issue!

We look forward to working with all of you again this year. Our students are provided with amazing learning experiences and it is not lost on me that these experiences are often facilitated in the face of staff shortages, fewer agency resources, and the expectation that workers will do more with less. Thank you for your willingness to give back to the profession by working with our students and the passion that you bring to this effort.

Patty Hunter

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VISIT US
www.csuchico.edu/swrk
A Semester in Ghana

with Lisa Thao

I am from the small town of Oroville, 30 minutes south of Chico. I have lived there for as long as I can remember from childhood until my days as a college student. Growing up, I faced several challenges within my family that ultimately allowed me to become the person I am today. I chose the School of Social Work at CSU, Chico because it includes many values and beliefs of diversity and social justice. The School of Social Work has allowed me to embrace all sorts of experiences along my pathway to achieving my undergraduate degree.

I had the opportunity to study abroad in Accra, Ghana, in Africa for the spring semester of 2016. I spent six months living in a foreign country for the first time ever, taking courses in my undergraduate major pathway. I chose to study abroad because I wanted to serve a different community and allow myself to learn how to embrace a new culture along with seeing how individuals lived their lives each day with the limited amount of resources available to them.

Being abroad has prepared me mentally and physically for my field placement. I learned one of the core values of being a social worker—to have patience. When I first arrived in the country it was hard to communicate to individuals who spoke very little English, and it was frustrating to always have to repeat myself more than three times. However, I eventually gained the patience that every Ghanaian had and it has definitely shaped me into a better person. I am able to actively listen without interrupting an individual, and my patience level went up more than I had expected.

My favorite part about being abroad was being able to volunteer my free time at Echoing Hills Village with Shanquela Williams a social work student from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Echoing Hills village is home to 60-plus individuals ranging from those who are blind, deaf, disabled, and able. I had the opportunity to engage in various activities with children and adults. Education was highly valued, but without much funding, several individuals were not given the opportunity to attend school. However, that did not stop any one of them from dreaming about their academic future. Echoing Hills allowed me to understand what I was truly passionate about in my career pathway, and that is to serve the underserved population. The individuals I connected with are the most fun, talented, and thoughtful individuals that I had had the opportunity to share my experience abroad with.

Upon my completion of the undergraduate social work program, I hope that I will be able to serve in another country and spend my time with those who make me wake up every morning with a smile on my face knowing that I did what I could to help them. I encourage you to find what makes you smile and what makes you feel like you have made a difference in this world. It is never too late to help someone if you are truly passionate about what you stand for. 

During her trip to Ghana, Lisa visited a famous historical site that holds the remains of the first President of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.
Get to know the School of Social Work
Stipend Program Recipients

Rhonda Engle, Mental Health

Rhonda Engle graduated from the BSW program in spring of 2016 and is now in the MSW Advanced Standing program. She is completing her field placement in Alcohol and Drug Services through Butte County Department of Behavioral Health. Alcohol and Drug Services includes family treatment program, drug court and Prop 36 as well as treating both men and women with substance abuse and mental health disorders. The agency provides assessment, diagnosis, and treatment to individuals who require substance abuse services.

Rhonda was interested in applying for the Mental Health Stipend after hearing about all of the learning opportunities that were involved. She is intrigued by how the changing mental health system in the U.S. has impacted national policy and individual attitudes towards mental health. Rhonda’s interest in community mental health stems from her past experience and her interest in co-occurring disorders. What she has witnessed so far in her placement is a gap in services when treating those with mild or moderate mental health disorders. Many do not meet the medical necessity to receive some of the services this agency has to offer. She has also noticed a lack of services for dual-diagnosis with regards to inpatient treatment in our area. What Rhonda hopes to learn this year is more about the treatment of those with co-occurring disorders so she can specialize in this area in the future.

Becky Morris, Title IV-E

Becky Morris is a second-year MSW student completing her field placement at Butte County Children’s Services Division (CSD). Butte County CSD serves many populations including those dealing with mental health, substance abuse, and poverty as complicating factors to the presenting problem of child abuse or neglect. Becky is currently working with non minor dependents.

Becky’s interest in public child welfare is the complexity of the work as well as the impact the work can have on children, families and ultimately communities. What appeals to Becky about working with this population is the ability to work with and be present with individuals who are usually marginalized and devalued. She loves to connect with people on a human level, no matter what the situation. She believes there are always commonalities and strengths that can be found if we look for them.

The Title IV-E program supports Becky in her placement by conducting process groups multiple times a year at her internship site. In addition, the program supports her education by holding seminars, practice labs, and job fairs. Also, the coordinators of the program are always available to talk about any educational or field placement issue.

This year, Becky hopes to learn how to do all of the necessary things to walk into a CSD job and carry a caseload in any unit. She will be shadowing and doing hands-on work in every unit in order to gain the experience needed to feel comfortable stepping into the field after graduation.
Gaganjeet Sidhu is a second-year MSW student completing her field placement at an agency new to our program, Ampla Health. This nonprofit organization in Sutter County provides community-directed comprehensive medical, dental, mental health and specialty services. Ampla Health provides services to ethnically diverse populations that are and can be low income, migrant workers, and seasonal farm workers. A social worker in this setting will provide a number of services that include assessments, ADD/ADHD assessments, counseling, connecting individuals to community resources, education, and working collaboratively with health providers.

Working in an integrated health care setting peaked Gaganjeet’s interest due to the word “integrated.” As she has learned, and continues to learn, the importance of working collaboratively to provide the best possible services to underserved communities the idea of working in an integrated health care setting appealed to her. More specifically, working with transitional aged youth population in an integrated health care setting allows Gaganjeet to be in a position where she can understand the systems and provide client centered care by eliminating some of the possible barriers. Transitional aged youth are often the individuals that tend to get cut off of services once they age out of the system and end up seeing primary care doctors for their needs because they are not quite sure as to where they can go next.

Some of her interests lie in program development. This year at Ampla Health, Gaganjeet has noticed a great number of “no shows.” She would like to further explore this perceived need by exploring the topic and developing a possible program that addresses the issue. By exploring the perceived need, she is hoping to learn how to advocate for clients and behavioral health in the current setting.

Heidi Crouch, HPPAE

In her second year of the program, MSW student Heidi Crouch decided to complete her field placement at the Connections Program, which is part of the Passages Adult Resource Center in Chico. The Connections Program provides counseling and support in Butte County for adults age 60+ who want and need help with emotional issues in their lives. All visits take place in the home. Some of the services provided are psychosocial assessments, short term counseling, case management and referrals, support groups and education, and outreach. All services are provided at no cost.

Heidi’s decision to apply for the MSW program was so that she could work with older adults and their families, so naturally she was interested in applying for the HPPAE program. She not only recognizes the growing need for trained professionals to care for the needs of older adults but, in her heart, she desires to learn about and work within gerontology. Heidi has personally benefitted from work with older adults both within her own family and in the community, and it brings her great joy and a sense of accomplishment like no other work.

This year, Heidi hopes to learn prevention, new ways to reduce stigma, and early intervention strategies and how to identify risk factors for suicide with this population. She would also like to become familiar with administering and interpreting assessment and diagnostic tools that are appropriate for use with older adults (e.g., depression scale, Mini-Mental Status Exam). She is so excited to become a part of helping society prepare and rise to the challenge in meeting the social, environmental, psychological, economic, and health care needs of our older adults.
Faculty Focus

Asian Social Work Students in the Classroom

Judy Vang and Kui-Hee Song from the CSU, Chico School of Social Work are currently conducting a qualitative research study, utilizing focus groups to better understand the academic learning experiences of classroom participation among Asian social work students; thus, determining best practice approaches in supporting class participation among this targeted group.

The number of Asian students enrolling in social work programs has increased steadily over the past 10 years. Asian students are likely perceived as silent listeners and passive observants. Social work education addresses a wide range of human conditions that social workers deal with on a daily basis. Despite the critical impacts of classroom participation on effective learning process and outcomes, there is little literature exploring Asian social work students’ experience in classroom participation and how their participation impacts their role as future social workers.

As Asian American social work educators, our effort is to learn from Asian social work students about their experience in classroom participation and pedagogical strategies to increase active and interactive participation within the classroom setting. Specifically, the study explores in-depth understandings of the following areas: meaning of being an Asian student in the social work major and the influence of culture, instructor, group dynamics, and geographical location, as well as pedagogical strategies for empowerment in classroom participation.

Asian social work students were invited to participate in the study via email and those interested were to contact the Principal Investigators (PIs), Vang and Song. The first focus group interview was conducted over the summer by the PIs. Four Asian female social work students, who identified themselves as being Asian American or of the Asian descendant, participated in the focus group. The PIs are planning to conduct two additional focus group interviews this fall semester 2016. Those interested in this study or have questions, please contact the PIs directly at tvang@csuchico.edu or ksong@csuchico.edu.

Research Study: Elder Abuse in Tehama County

In collaboration with Passages Adult Resource Center and the Interdisciplinary Center on Aging (ICOA), faculty members Celeste Jones and Seema Sehrawat are currently conducting research focused on elder abuse in Tehama County.

According to the California Department of Aging, the North State has a substantially higher older adult population than the rest of California or the United States. With the increase of older adults in our region, there is concern that cases of elder abuse will be impacted markedly. This study will be an exploratory and introductory examination of all types of elder abuse in Tehama County. Celeste and Seema will explore all cases that were reported, investigated, and those that were prosecuted over the past five years. They will analyze several variables that will inform Tehama County, government agencies, as well as other entities. In exploring all cases of abuse, it will provide an opportunity to focus resources on prevention and intervention in Tehama County. Specifically, Celeste and Seema will determine the method(s) that perpetrators used which will aid in their prevention recommendations at the end of the study.

Research in the area of older adult abuse is so important because it is as prevalent as child abuse yet not reported or prosecuted at the same level. Celeste comments that we have measures in place for children but not for an equally vulnerable population, so the more we know about it, the better we can help and inform. They are hopeful that this is just the beginning of their research and that it will expand to other counties in the North State. Please look for a follow up to this important research in a future issue of Field Notes!
This year, we are excited to welcome Gail Garcia as a new field liaison for the BSW program! Gail decided that she wanted to become a field liaison for a few different reasons, the first being that she really enjoys helping students learn about themselves in the field of social work. Gail has been an AFI for the MSW program with each agency that she has worked for since graduating in 2006 and believes that it is part of the role as a social work graduate to stay connected to the Chico State Social Work Program since she is not working for an agency to provide the role of an AFI, she wanted to join the field liaisons and support the social work students. Gail is looking forward to working with the BSW students this year because in the past she has only worked with MSW students. She will get to experience the newness with the BSW students as they start to settle into the role of a social worker.

Gail recently made a shift in her career and is focusing on building her private practice in Chico and is also a member of the Mothers Strong outreach in Butte County, bringing more awareness and services to Butte County in regards to Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder. Gail has worked for the past 2 1/2 years at Aegis Treatment Center as the regional clinical director, providing group and individual supervision for those seeking their license through the BBS and AOD counselors.

Gail is very excited to join the Social Work Program and is hopeful in becoming more involved as a faculty member!

Richard joined the School of Social Work in August 2016 and brings with him more than four years of mental health administration experience to his position of distributed learning administrative support. Richard is a Chico State graduate with a bachelor’s degree in cellular and molecular biology. He has a keen interest in urban agronomy and plans to start up his own vertical farming business, Verticopia Farms, which will sell produce to local businesses, and designs indoor growing systems here in Chico. His downtime includes hiking with his dog Zeus, travelling throughout California, and watching a healthy amount of football and Netflix.

You can contact Richard at rtdavis@csuchico.edu or 530-898-5235.
Fellow social workers! On behalf of the Masters in Social Work Association we want to welcome you to a new school year! As our year has begun to unfold, we have multiple opportunities that we are beginning to explore. These include a heavy focus on self-care, fundraising for Lobby Days, bringing in speakers, an educational scholarship fund, and other social work-y things. We are excited to announce that collaboration has started with the Macro Student Collective on all of these events. If anyone is interested in club participation feel free to email either A.J. Berndt or Leigh-Ann Schack for meeting times and location, as well as possible opportunities you may think the club would like to take part in. We anticipate this being another exciting year full of growth, discovery, and joy. We hope everyone has a wonderful year!

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A big hello from the BSW Student Association of Social Work and welcome to the fall semester! This year, the social work club will be participating in some exciting opportunities. We hope that you all are taking care of yourselves through this semester and have been enduring any mid-term exams with grace. We have been working to plan self-care activities for our cohort and are welcome to any new ideas. The club will be inviting more guest speakers in the future, so keep your ears open. We want to thank Lloyd Pendleton for visiting our community and teaching us about the Housing First Initiative. Some advocacy and volunteer opportunities to look forward to are Stand Down for homeless veterans on October 22, 2016 in Anderson, CA and Legislative Advocacy Days, aka Lobby Days, on March 12—13, 2017 at the Capitol in Sacramento. And of course please attend our monthly meetings on November 8 and December 6 at 5:00 p.m. in BMU 209. We look forward to connecting with our fellow School of Social Work community.

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