Happy new year, and I hope you had a wonderful holiday season! January is often a time that we reassess our busy lives and think about what we want to accomplish or do to balance our lives during the new year. This is always a challenge for me as the spring semester is very busy and balance is sometimes elusive. Working with students who will soon be entering the field, however, is a great incentive for me to continue to aspire to find more balance. We work in a field that is demanding of our physical time as well as our psychological/emotional time. If we don’t give ourselves permission to find balance, no one else will. I hope to have social workers in the field that are healthy, physically, psychologically, and emotionally. I need to model that behavior myself and encourage students to also aspire to find balance as they enter the field. I hope this is a goal we can all work on together.

Just a couple of quick reminders: We will be emailing a survey to our agency field instructors inquiring about your intentions for hosting social work students next year. I hope you will have a conversation with staff to determine what your capacity for students will be for the 2015—2016 year. The survey will inquire as to the number of students you would like to have placed with your agency, MSW and BSW, and ask you to identify the person at your agency whom you would like students to contact for placement interviews. This year, we are also inquiring about Live Scan/fingerprinting requirements as we are trying to get some sense of agencies that may be able to work with students with criminal backgrounds and under what circumstances agencies are able to accommodate criminal background charges. We really appreciate your willingness to work with us to educate and train our future social workers. Please note that the survey will be sent to you from Barbara Heidinger. Barbara will be filling in for Nicole Davis this spring, as Nicole will be on maternity leave. We are very excited for Nicole and appreciate Barbara’s willingness to help us out! We will not be doing a summer newsletter, so look for our next one in August.

Welcome Barbara Heidinger to the School of Social Work. Barbara retired from Chico State three years ago after working 21 years in Continuing Education and 10 years in the psychology department. Since retirement, Barbara has enjoyed traveling and working as a retired annuitant in various departments on the CSU, Chico campus. We are excited to have Barbara work with us this spring semester! If you have any questions please contact Barbara at bheidinger@csuchico.edu or 530-898-5632.
Alumni: Where Are They Now?

Gail Garcia is our featured graduate. Gail works for Northern Valley Indian Health’s Children’s Health Center as the licensed clinical social worker. She related that one of the many benefits of this position is that it offers her the ability to provide integrated mental health in collaboration with BCDBH-Chico Community Counseling Center. She works closely with the clinician and psychiatrist at BCDBH for patients (up to 18 years old) that are in need of assessment for psychiatric evaluations and also for those patients who have received mental health treatment, are stabilized on medication, and are ready to return back to their primary care provider at the Children’s Health Center for ongoing follow-up. Gail indicated that she enjoys working with Behavioral Health and creating a smooth transition for children and families. Having an LCSW in the children’s clinic allows the patients to have both their medical and behavioral health needs addressed all under the same roof. Gail is also involved in community networking as part of her job and is a member of the Butte County Child Abuse Prevention Council and the Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder Workgroup.

Gail has stayed connected with the Chico State Social Work Program and serves as an agency field instructor to help MSW interns get hands-on experience working in the field. She also has her own private practice, providing therapy to youth and young adults from the local community in the evenings. Gail shared that she loves being a social worker and is truly glad she chose this profession when it came time to decide her future. She believes it is a degree with a never-ending list of options and opportunities that she has embraced and will continue to enjoy for years to come.

Annual Field Fair

As we begin the new year, the Field Education Program is busy planning spring events. The first big event is the annual Field Fair where we invite agencies that have previously provided social work student internships as well as agencies that may be interested in establishing a placement for an undergraduate or graduate student. At this event students have the opportunity to interact with the field placement agencies on an informal basis. The students can ask questions about what a potential field placement at the agency might involve and acquire information that will help them better choose a field placement site in the spring. Last year we had approximately 45 agencies and 80 students in attendance—a great turnout!

We ask that all agencies that are interested in attending this year please RSVP so that we can reserve a table for you. You will be assigned a table and have space to display agency handouts and information. Many agencies choose to have their current student intern attend with the agency representative as the interns are a great source of information for students interested in learning about the agency. If your agency is interested in attending the Field Fair on Wednesday, March 4, 12—3 p.m., please RSVP to Barbara Heidinger bheidinger@csuchico.edu. This year the Field Fair will take place in Colusa Hall 100 A&B on the CSU, Chico campus.
MSW student Alex Brown is completing her concentration year field placement at Catalyst Domestic Violence Services as the LGBTQ+ outreach specialist and at the Gender Health Center as a counseling intern. Alex is conducting a thesis exploring shame and vulnerability experiences of cisgender (non-transgender) women who have relationships primarily or exclusively with other cisgender women. The experience of shame has long been studied by various researchers; however, little has been done to explore these experiences from the perspective of women who have relationships with other women. The experience of shame has long been studied by various researchers; however, little has been done to explore these experiences from the perspective of women who have relationships with other women. The qualitative study uses the groundbreaking work of Dr. Brene Brown, who developed Shame Resilience Theory (SRT) by interviewing thousands of men and women, as a foundation for the development of an online survey. The survey invites participants to identify their personal definitions and experiences of shame and vulnerability and to discuss how these experiences have impacted their intimate partnerships. The data from the study will be compared to SRT and will highlight the unique stories of the population being explored, identify population strengths, and build a body of research on this topic. Alex’s thesis topic’s emphasis on LGBTQ+ identities and relationships is highly influenced by her work, as both field placements seek to legitimize and give voice to sexual and gender minorities, and to work toward greater safety and access to resources for these communities.

Student Highlights

Marina Fox

MSW student Marina Fox is completing an employment-based internship at the CSU, Chico Foster Youth Program, serving as the PATH Scholars program coordinator. Since January 2014, her internship has included the development and implementation of a campus support program for current and former foster youth students at CSU, Chico, similar to other CSU Guardian Scholars programs. Because “student voice” is an important element, participating students selected the name PATH Scholars (PATH is an acronym for Promoting Achievement Through Hope). The three-year grant, provided by the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, requires a “robust mentoring program” in the final year. However, since this venture began, it has become evident that mentoring is an essential component to student success, particularly with this population of students.

Marina’s thesis/project will focus on former foster youth attending CSU, Chico. Research has shown that children and youth who have been involved in the foster care system experience higher rates of mental health issues, substance use/abuse, homelessness, and poverty. Furthermore, 3 to 5 percent of former foster youth graduate with a four-year degree, while approximately 70 percent of foster youth graduating high school have aspirations to attend college (Child Welfare League of America, 2014). These statistics are alarming and illustrate an enormous need to support this population of students with access and retention at the college level. Considering all the risk factors that former foster youth face, mentoring can be an effective intervention to assist students through a successful college experience. As such, Marina is in the process of developing a manual for a mentoring program for PATH Scholars at CSU, Chico. Involving students with a mentoring program as they begin university life will increase retention and lead to higher rates of graduation for foster care students.

California Senior Legislature 2014

This year, six students attended the California Senior Legislative session in Sacramento. It was once again a wonderful opportunity for our students to observe the grassroots process of building legislative proposals. Our students volunteered during the three-day event, serving as resource secretary, committee messengers, and floor clerks. The top 10 state and top four federal proposals covered a broad range of topics including improved senior access to courts, improved medication labelling, fall risk prevention education, the California Death with Dignity Act, and Medicare dental coverage to name a few. The Senior Legislature is composed of 40 senior senators and 80 senior assembly members elected by their peers from their representative service regions. The Senior Legislature advocates for the passage of key policy legislation to improve the quality of life for older adults. Please visit their website for more information: www.4csl.org.
BSW student Bob Meyer feels very fortunate to have been selected by his agency field instructor, January Giles of Northern Valley Catholic Social Service (NVCCS), for his senior year field placement. Established in 1986, NVCCS began as a one person counseling center in Redding, California. Over the last 28 years the agency has expanded into six North State counties and “strives to inspire change in the lives of individuals and families challenged by difficult times” through a wide variety of social service programs.

Bob’s placement includes a dual role. He is learning the basics of ongoing case management in the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program (TAPP) by working individually with young teen parents. “It’s a wonderful learning exchange,” he says “I am learning how to be an effective role model, teacher, and advocate while they are learning how to become self-reliant, caring, and nurturing parents.”

The other role in his internship is facilitating weekly groups for teen dads in juvenile hall. It has been nationally recognized that fathers in general are a relatively underserved population. Many fathers may have come from a culture that frowns upon asking for help or admitting to a lack of knowledge. Some fathers may have come from homes where they had little or no contact with their own father and thus never experienced or learned what a healthy father son relationship looks like. The groups use the Nurturing Parenting Programs curriculum, which promotes a “philosophy that emphasizes the importance of raising children in a warm, trusting, and empathic household.”

The group Bob currently facilitates includes six young men from ages 15 to 18. The unique challenges presented by these gentlemen and their living environment force him to think outside the box in delivering the Nurturing Parenting Programs curriculum each week. The seemingly minor stipulation that he bring no metal into the visitation room makes even delivering handouts and paperwork a challenge.

Bob finds that sometimes the group members are not inclined to fully engage in a facilitated conversation. While they are willing to answer questions and or follow-up questions in the most succinct way, they are not always comfortable with bantering about the subject material. “It has been a rewarding challenge for me to come up with alternate ways to deliver the material,” Bob says “I have made use of journaling, drawing, collaborative assignments, guest speakers, and value sort card decks. Some of these methods have made for a challenging group, and I have been able to learn how not to approach an activity. While other activities have been a rousing success, giving me clues on how to proceed in the future.”

This is Bob’s first group where he facilitates a conversation with young fathers who are also juvenile offenders. While he is just an intern in the BSW program, he understands that his words and actions may have lifelong effects on these six men. Bob works to deliver 100 percent of the material during every group. However, he understands that some of them may not currently be in the right place to be fully receptive to this kind of information. Bob’s faculty field liaison, Dr. Crandall, told us, “You count your successes.” If some small bit of information sticks with any of “my guys” and they use that information to make an informed decision which brings them a positive result, I’ll count that as a success.
1. What do you use as criteria in determining when a student intern is ready to have more responsibility assigned to him/her in their field placement?

This question really depends upon whether and when the student is ready. The first few weeks are for building rapport, establishing professional expectations, developing routines that support the daily practice, learning the foibles and lingo of the profession, meeting staff at all four school sites, being introduced to the kids, and meeting the many folks from the county community agencies that we work with. It’s a gentle, but very fast-paced start-up that takes two to three weeks.

We try to constantly challenge and encourage students to try new tasks, engage with new groups and clients/kids, and to plow new ground. We start relatively small, with existing students and groups, who already value and take full advantage of support services. Then we introduce (slowly) newer referred students.

As we start, BSW’s begin to consult with staff and observe in all placements, age, and grade settings. The goal is to gradually become acclimated to the public school settings and service models.

Every activity at every site has its own mandatory protocols. Teachers expect certain courtesies and each school has somewhat different rules about when we ask to see kids, how we “ask for” kids, how we document their leaving the classroom, timing of the students ETD, walking the student or calling for the student, when/where/how long will the student be absent from class(es), whether the student will be held responsible for work missed while with the BSW or counselor, the need for privacy and confidentiality balanced with the realities of public school rooms being available and the need for an open door on all meetings with students.

Other firm expectations that must be met before BSW readiness include the BSW knowing how to access information/persons that can outline each students need for direct supervision, each students level of functional independence, whether there are special needs for the student, emergency protocols in effect, whether there is an IEP designating individualized accommodations or modifications—especially with discipline and abnormal behaviors, etc. Until these subtle but cast-iron expectations are mastered by the BSWs, we are not yet ready.

At the same time, we begin to introduce daily parent and staff consultations, to show how record keeping is important, and to document our daily assignments. We start with groups and work up to individual work.

To broaden our skill-base exposure, we work very closely with our other specialists in the district, the high school counselor, the teachers, the aids and office staff, and the administration. Every BSW meets with or contacts each site administrator, every day, on arriving and again at the end of the day. Priorities are set/reset each day. We also work closely with behavior intervention specialists, speech therapists, and other inter-agency special needs staff.

When BSW interns begin to demonstrate increased confidence in their daily tasks, and increased competence at performing daily duties already assigned, we next encourage each BSW to ask for increased responsibilities and duties. Then they are (usually) ready for each next level.

2. What have the benefits been to your own professional development in supervising Social Work student interns?

We enjoy an outstanding working relationship with the CSU, Chico staff and instructors, sometimes through the BSWs themselves following their weekly class meetings about the internship, and sometimes by the CSU, Chico staff being available for questions and guidance. CSU, Chico instructors have met with us, consulted, vetted, and signed off as supporters of multiple grants that we have applied for and been awarded.

The BSW interns also bring an energy and communication style that is very effective with our students and staff. They represent achievement, overcoming adversity (often) and goal setting! They do not let the kids get away with “don’t care” and “why bother.”

The BSWs serve as first-class models for our kids. They bring creativity, enthusiasm and dedication as examples for our small-town, rural Northern California students.
Faculty Features

Faculty Development Course

School of Social Work professor Celeste Jones was selected to participate in the 2014—2015 Interprofessional Faculty Development Course: The Challenge of Providing Quality Care for Older Adults: Preparing the Health Professions for the Aging Century. The course takes place over the fall 2014 and spring 2015 semesters and is provided by the Northern California Geriatric Education Center at the University of California, San Francisco.

The course is a fantastic opportunity to learn current material on the Affordable Care Act, interprofessional work, and aging. All of these areas only add to the material that Celeste brings to the classroom. It is directly associated with the integrated behavioral health grant (discussed in the next article), the policy implementation of ACA (Affordable Care Act that will change how we serve clients through a collaborative approach and co-located work), policy implementation of Katie A (this impacts the interprofessional work of Child Welfare with Mental Health), and Celeste’s work with agencies and students in the field.

During the course of the 160-hour class, Celeste will complete homework assignments, work with a team (the team consists of a nurse, physical therapist, pharmacist, doctor, and Celeste, the social worker), have CEU requirements, and attend eight face-to-face meetings in San Francisco.

For more information on the course, please visit http://geriatrics.ucsf.edu/education/ifdp.html

Behavioral Health Services Grant

This past fall, the School of Social Work was excited to receive a three-year grant named the Behavioral Health Services for Transitional Age Youth (BHS-TAY): A MSW Workforce Training Program.

The purpose of this grant is to increase the number of trained professional MSW social workers in the behavioral health workforce who are versed in integrated health care to address the needs of transitional age youth (TAY) at risk for developing or who have developed a recognized behavioral health disorder.

Currently, there are five concentration year MSW students who are receiving a stipend from this grant. The students are all placed in settings where they are working with transitional age youth and will have the opportunity to provide integrated healthcare.

There will be seven stipends available for the 2015—2016 academic year, and applications will be posted on the School of Social Work website March 10. The deadline for submission will be May 5. Interviews will take place the week of May 18-22.

For more information on the grant please contact Jean Schuldberg jschuldberg@csuchico.edu.

Resources

www.socialworkpulse.org
www.bbs.ca.gov
www.aswb.org