As the summer winds down, we look forward to welcoming a new group of MSW students to the School of Social Work. We admitted 25 new two-year MSW students, 20 new advanced standing MSW students and 40 new three year Distributed Learning MSW students. We also have 24 concentration year MSW students beginning their second year of the program. There is a record 65 BSW seniors in our traditional program and 8 Distributed Learning BSW students all of whom will be beginning their field placements this fall. Whew!! We have secured placements for all of our students and are busy organizing for the year. We are excited that our program is growing and thriving and very grateful for all of the agencies and field instructors that continue to support our program.

I want to let our readers know that I will be taking a sabbatical leave for the fall 2015 semester. I will be using this time to work on my research on secondary trauma. I hope to gather qualitative data regarding the impact of secondary trauma on social workers. Specifically, I am interested in interviewing social workers willing to share their experiences with exposure to secondary trauma. If you would like to know more about my research or possibly participate in an interview please feel free to contact me (phunter@csuchico.edu).

During my absence, Jean Schuldberg (jschuldberg@csuchico.edu) and Andrea Rioux (alrioux@csuchico.edu) will be covering the various aspects of my position. I am confident they will be able to address any concerns or needs that may arise. In addition, Nicole Davis has returned from her maternity leave, the field office is in very good hands!!

There are a number of events that have occurred over the past couple of months, and we have highlighted a few of those events in this newsletter. Please enjoy the pictures and news and I hope the last few weeks of your summer are relaxing and invigorating.

Patty Hunter

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This summer, Dr. Seema Sehrawat became the School of Social Work’s new Distributed Learning coordinator. Seema joined us in fall 2009, after receiving her PhD in social work from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Her dissertation focused on factors impacting social engagement among community-dwelling older adults. Her research interests are international gerontology, civic and social engagement, use of technology, and social policy surrounding older adults. She worked with various community-based and social service agencies as a social worker and initiated the development of an innovative residential program for homeless older adults in India. Seema is very excited and eager to focus on technology and our Distributed Learning program!

For more information on the Distributed Learning Program, please visit their website.
This past spring two of our faculty members, Dr. Celeste Jones and Dr. Seema Sehrawat, traveled to Dublin, Ireland to present at The International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics European Region Congress. Their research, titled The Intergenerational Storytelling Pilot Project (ISPP), explored the use of digital storytelling as a tool for intergenerational collaboration and student engagement in aging research. This research sought to understand the use of digital storytelling as a method for enhancing social connectedness among older adults. Digital storytelling uses technology to allow individuals to share moments in time that are parts of their life story. The ISPP used digital storytelling as a mechanism for intergenerational collaboration. The participatory action research engaged several college students in this research project as collaborators, researchers, and participants. The students were paired with an older adult to form intergenerational teams for the digital storytelling process. In the end, the older adult participants reported an increase in social connectedness that they call the wave of connectedness. These older adults shared their digital story not only with family and friends but also with other groups, with one older adult who reported sharing her digital story to over 1,000 people! The digital stories allowed the students to become an “insider” and experience moments with their older adult partner. This study also enhanced intergenerational collaboration and increased social connectedness among older adults.

It was incredible that three students were able to accompany Celeste and Seema on this trip. One of the students had never traveled outside United States. Celeste and Seema say that the best part of the trip was seeing the students present the information on this project. Their eyes lit up as they presented about how this project and collaboration with the older adult partners impacted them.

Seema and Celeste started on this path in 2011 and have since conducted numerous digital storytelling workshops with a variety of groups including faculty participating in Academy e-Learning, student groups, community members, Osher Life Long Learning Institute (OLLI) participants and others. They are working on creating a website for this project and in the interim have a YouTube channel called 'MyStory-MyVoice' showcasing some of the digital stories produced through these workshops.

Click here to view the MyStory-MyVoice YouTube channel.

Celeste Jones, Lexi Rubins, Jennifer Orlando, Tucker Bowers and Seema Sehrawat
We are excited to have Patrick Borel returning for his third year as a field liaison for our MSW Concentration Year students! In addition to being an adjunct faculty member with the School of Social Work and the Psychology Department, Patrick is a clinical supervisor for Butte County Department of Behavioral Health Chico Youth Services and frequently provides supervision to social work students. Patrick has worked in community mental health for over 20 years and also worked in adult, youth and family behavioral health services providing individual, group, couples and family therapy. His areas of expertise include mindfulness, trauma work, and assisting people cope more successfully with mental health issues ranging from PTSD, depression, anxiety, to substance use.

When asked what he most enjoys about being a field liaison, Patrick says it’s the opportunity to collaborate with the various community agencies, agency field instructors and students. He feels that it has been a very rich opportunity to see first-hand the tremendous work our students and community partners are doing to provide services to people in need. Another joyful aspect is seeing the growth of the students over the course of the year. As the year progresses and their skill set grows, he notices how they successfully navigate challenges that initially had them more intensely consulting and exploring how best to handle that new experience.

For agency field instructors starting their year, Patrick suggests trying to find some extra time to be available for the student intern in the beginning of their placement when they are learning the lay of the land. This provides a solid go-to person who can assist with orienting and grounding the student to the new experience. He would also encourage agency field instructors to reflect on what was helpful for them in their internships and see how they can create some of those supportive dynamics for the students while factoring in their unique learning styles.

During the course of my MSW internship with Butte County Children’s Services, I had the privilege to work toward bridging the gap between Children’s Services of Butte County and the Mexican Consulate of Sacramento. This gap existed because neither agency recognized the need or the ability to collaborate to benefit families and children in need. The primary need that I focused on in my work was the need experienced by children who are being detained by Children’s Services who are not citizens of the United States, or children who’s parents are not citizens and are being deported. When parents are deported children are often left without family and can end up lingering in the foster care system.

The passing of Senate Bill 1064, The Reuniting Immigrant Families Act, brought about the need for child welfare departments to work harder in finding families and doing everything possible to keep children form lingering in foster care. The passing of this senate bill led to my work in establishing an memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Butte County Children’s Services and the Mexican Consulate of Sacramento. As part of this process I connected with other counties in California to see how they worked with the Mexican Consulate in order to address this need and fulfill the requirements of SB 1064; it was interesting to see how many counties did not have an MOU in place.

The collaborative efforts between these two agencies assists immigrant or undocumented families in being able to reunify with their children in their countries of origin. In addition, it assists Child Welfare Departments in achieving the mandate of providing adequate due diligence in locating parents and family members to care for children who have been left with no caretakers due to a deportation. Having a memorandum of understanding institutionalizes this process so that this can happen in a consistent way.

I have to say that this has been a difficult bridge to gap and it has been challenging to navigate the administrative areas of this project. However, I have decided to not give up. Even though I have graduated and I am no longer in my internship, this need persists and I will continue to do even more to fill it. After completing a Family Impact Analysis on Senate Bill 1064 for my policy class and determining that there is still unmet need, I will see it through to the end. I hope that, after the MOU has been approved by both agencies, that a policy and procedure can be created at Butte County Children’s Services in order to help social workers feel confident and have the skills needed to work with undocumented/immigrant families. If even one family is served in a meaningful and positive way, the difficulty and challenges are worth it.

(Tila was a MSW Title IV-E student who graduated from the program spring 2015.)
MSW Student Association

Welcome to the 2015—2016 academic year from the MSW Student Association! The MSW Student Association is an official campus organization for CSU, Chico MSW students. For the upcoming year, the association is planning many events that will engage students further in the campus community and the community of Chico, including participating in Stand Down, Chico Out of Darkness Walk, networking events, and a special screening of *Inequality for All*. Please stay tuned for more information regarding specific dates and locations! Meetings will take place every other week on Thursdays at 6 p.m. We look forward to seeing you there!

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BSW Student Association

Hello, and welcome back students! We have a very exciting year coming up for 2015—16. Our goal as a club this year is to bring the classes together for information sharing, networking, and general fun. In the past, we have hosted various speakers on Motivational Interviewing, Tactical Communication, and De-escalation, and been active in the campus and local community. I personally look forward to meeting you all and taking this journey together toward being true agents of change! Meetings will take place every other week on Tuesdays at 8 a.m. in Butte 207.

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