

Message from the Field Director

Welcome to the spring semester! March marks Social Work Month 2019, and the National Association of Social Workers has identified the theme this year as Elevate Social Work. Elevate is a theme we can relate to in field education as we work on elevating the skills and practice experience of BSW and MSW students. It also resonates with the important work that social workers do to elevate a person's sense of empowerment as they attain their goals and rise out of cycles of oppression. Social Work is a profession where every day a myriad of clients are served in multiple arenas such as mental health, child welfare, schools, community resource centers, hospitals. It is an honor for our field education team to work with community partners to facilitate the attainment of growth and development for our social work students in this profession that is so vitally needed and relevant for our modern society. We acknowledge and admire the valuable contributions that our agency field instructors, task supervisors, community agencies and students make in the North State.

As we carry the sentiment of Social Work Month forward throughout the year, we want to state our appreciation of the multiple acts of heroism and resiliency that have transpired following the recent Camp Fire. While the ripple effects of



this North State disaster continues to be profoundly felt by agencies, community members, students and faculty, the stories of human compassion and generosity help elevate hope out of despair. Thank you to the students who helped their agencies evacuate clients during the fire. Thank you to the faculty members who have taken in families who suddenly found themselves homeless. Thank you to the social service agencies and staff who went above and beyond to ensure that impacted fire survivors' suffering was lessened via skillful and compassionate service. Thank you to the caring community members who have offered up space for people to temporarily live and donations that have helped meet some of the need in our community. Thank you to everyone who does their best to elevate the lives of those around us!

Patrick Borel

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Spring Field Instructor Training
- 2 Point in Time Survey
- 2 Faculty Feature
- 3 Alumni: Where are They Now?
- 4 BSW Student Highlights
- 5 MSW Student Highlights
- 6 Important Dates

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Spring Field Instructor Training

Essential Elements of Supervision with Social Work Students

Presented by Patrick Borel, LCSW

The spring agency field instructor training will provide training on some of the important ingredients for the supervision of social work students during their practicum. It will include some of the following highlights: a review of the recent literature in field education, aspects of the supervisorial relationship that can help or hinder student progress, brainstorming session on how to navigate complex student situations, legal and ethical considerations in supervision of social work students, and effective communication in the AFI/task supervisor context.

Date Tuesday, April 2

Time 3-5 p.m.

Location CSU, Chico
Kendall 207

Click [here](#) to register

Community Service Opportunity

The biannual point-in-time count of homeless individuals in Butte County was postponed this year due to the Camp Fire. It is scheduled for Thursday, March 28th. With what we expect is a significant increase in the homeless population as a result of the fire, it will be crucial that we have a good and accurate count as this translates to resources from the federal government. Please consider signing-up to volunteer. Our skills and empathy as social workers are so valuable as they allow us to have positive and helpful interactions with people experiencing homelessness.



Click
[here](#) to
sign up!

Faculty Feature

This spring Dr. Celeste Jones is using her sabbatical leave to write on the research she, along with the faculty learning community, has been conducting for the past several semesters.

An Interdisciplinary Gerontology Class Exercise was implemented in courses across six academic disciplines including recreation and leisure, nutrition, nursing, business, political science, and social work beginning spring 2017 and continuing into fall 2018. The overall goal of the project is to understand students' experiences, views, and attitudes surrounding aging. A pre-post test questionnaire was utilized to help answer research questions such as "does interdisciplinary knowledge lead to a more detailed understanding of the aging process," and "how can young adults become more sensitive to the needs of older adults?"

Much of Celeste's spring sabbatical will be spent evaluating the data and producing two academic articles with the intention of submitting the results to two conferences.

For more information please contact Celeste Jones
cajones@csuchico.edu

ALUMNI *Where are They Now?*

For the spring issue of *Field Notes*, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to talk with alumna Joan Rycraft, who is also the generous donor of two new School of Social Work scholarships. Fall 2018 marked the first year of the Joan Rycraft Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work scholarships, and on February 19, 2019, recipients Antonio Carlos Hernandez Rodriguez (BSW) and Soraya Ebrahimi-Nuyken (MSW) were honored at the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences Scholarship Ceremony.

In April 2017, Joan returned to her alma mater to meet with faculty, staff, and students, and also to guest lecture for the class “Child Welfare.” Coincidentally, it was a child welfare course taken during her undergraduate program that ignited her passion for working with children and families. However, Joan recalls that her interest in child welfare began even earlier as a high school senior learning about child psychology. Joan, a first-generation college student, attended California State University, Chico in 1968 before the School of Social Work was established in 1999. Joan received a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and social welfare, then moved to Redding to work for Shasta County Children and Family Services. From there it was on to California State University, Fresno to pursue a master’s degree and return to Northern California as the first MSW in Shasta County Child Protective Services. She worked her way up from caseworker to administrator. When Joan was in her 40s, she decided to continue her education yet again, this time pursuing her PhD at the University of Colorado, Denver. She is professor emerita at the University of Texas at Arlington and was a former associate dean and director of the PhD Program.

As I talked with Joan, her passion for helping children was evident. She told of her reputation as a social worker who made all the kids go to school, physically

walking them into the classroom to ensure they attended. “Most kids, if you support them, will do everything they can to make you proud. This is the motivation, to make them feel like you have their backs,” she said. Joan still receives holiday cards from the now grown children she supported throughout her career in child welfare—a true testament to the impact she has had on so many.

Chico State holds a special place for Joan, as the institution that provided her with the foundation to a remarkable career in helping others. It is because of this, Joan decided to give back to the students through her scholarships. With the support of her father, Joan was fortunate enough to go through her educational career without having to work or take out student loans. She recognizes that not every student has that luxury and hopes these scholarships will help ease the burden of paying for higher education.

For Joan, her life’s mission is to make sure all children have the chance at a good life, a mission that continues into retirement. Her time is spent providing forensic case analysis on standards of care for consultation firm Park Dietz, based in Newport Beach. As the child welfare expert in the firm’s forensic social work department, Joan has the opportunity to draft opinion statements and provide depositions for cases across the country. Joan also serves on the Jackson County Citizen Review Board in Medford, Oregon, where she lives.

When asked what advice she has for incoming social work students, Joan emphasizes the importance of exploring all fields of practice in order to find your niche. She comments on the breadth of the profession and how many options there are for social workers: from child welfare to school social work to policy practice. It is much more than just a job.

Reflecting on the success of her own career, Joan states, “With lots of hard work, dedication, and loyalty, you can make social work a profession.”

BSW & MSW
Scholarship recipients
Antonio Hernandez &
Soraya Ebrahimi-
Nuyken along with
Dean Eddie Vela
and Professor Pamela
Johansen



Student Highlights

BSW Honors Projects



Natalie Lowden

For her honors project, Natalie Lowden wanted to focus on empathy and homelessness, since they are prevalent topics in Chico at this time. She is passionate about this research because she strongly believes that people do not fit under a single label, but are extremely complex and each individual has something valuable to offer. Natalie is also learning of the complexity of homelessness at her internship this year at Chico Housing Action Team (CHAT). CHAT is a non-profit organization that is working diligently to connect individuals who are experiencing homelessness with housing and then to support them as needed once they are in housing.

Natalie's desire with this research project is to look for ways to decrease stigma around the topic of homelessness, and to test whether exposure to video narrative might be one way to accomplish this. With the help of faculty advisor, Susan Roll, she is conducting a study that analyzes the presence of empathy toward those experiencing homelessness, particularly the level of empathy of students in a few different classes at Chico State. Natalie is looking forward to analyzing responses and seeing whether the data might show the effectiveness of using video narratives to engender empathy.

Natalie Lowden was awarded third place at the Provost's Student Awards for Research and Creativity Competition this spring!

Vianna Recendez

Vianna Recendez's BSW internship is at Butte County Juvenile Hall with the Boys and Girls Club of the North Valley. The program plans and facilitates after school activities for youth, and makes sure their transition from juvenile hall to the community is a positive one. They also act as mentors and provide support services once the youth are out in the community. Vianna's honors research project entails how youth can positively express their feelings within a juvenile detention facility. She will be working with the youth on their creative writing skills and together will develop writing and art projects that they can utilize to express their feelings. Vianna chose this topic because she is very passionate about juvenile justice. She understands that a lot of youth are in the position they are because of their circumstances. With this project, the youth will be better able to express their feelings and feel more comfortable expressing their feelings in a different and positive manner.



MSW *Student Highlights*

Taylor Storey



Taylor Storey's thesis is titled *An Assessment and Expansion of the Transition Age Youth Work Program at Plumas County Behavioral Health*. Her research is aimed at assessing whether employment-based behavioral health services are successful at assisting Transition Age Youth (TAY) to develop the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to make a healthy transition into adulthood, attain a high quality of life, and ultimately reduce long-term mental health systems usage. Taylor sought to do this by redesigning the TAY Work Program at Plumas County Behavioral Health (PCBH)—located in rural Quincy, California—over the spring and summer of 2018. Her efforts have been informed by social work values, strengths-based and self-determination theories, and preliminary research on the effectiveness of Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programming. Currently, most PEI programming is designed for children but administered to adolescents, and focuses primarily on mental health education rather than addressing the systemic causes of mental illness. Given the gaps in PEI programming, Taylor sought to design a program with the unique needs and experiences of TAY in rural areas in mind. To do so, she established partnerships with two area nonprofits operating within the two main industries in Plumas County, conservation and resource management. Through these partnerships, participants were able to practice and develop social and vocational skills in real-world and relevant settings, while also receiving intensive evidence-based therapeutic interventions from PCBH staff. Developing a holistic understanding of how policy impacts direct practice, and learning how to reconcile the ostensible dissonance between the two, has been an amazing challenge and opportunity for Taylor. She is incredibly proud of this innovative and unique program and hopes that her small contribution assists other program managers in rural areas to develop effective and empowering programs for their clients.

Karen Friese's thesis is titled *Cuffed Together: How Law Enforcement Work Impacts the Officers' Spouses*. She chose this topic because her husband is medically retired from the California Highway Patrol after being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) following a critical incident. They experienced difficulty finding resources and obtaining support partly because of the unique culture of law enforcement and lack of resources in our community. Their journey navigating vicarious trauma led Karen to further her education with the passion to one day create an organization in her community that serves the unique struggles facing first responders and their families. First responders encounter barriers such as stigma that hinder getting support when their job becomes overwhelming. Because there is not an organization that provides the type of programs that are successful at supporting first responders, Karen's current internship does not relate to her goals except that it serves a population at risk of experiencing trauma. Her internship is with ACS, Inc. and provides mental health support and consultation for Head Start families. She has had the opportunity to learn about adverse childhood experiences and how they can predetermine future health. Karen's agency field instructor, Dr. Marvin Ali, has been a significant source of support, encouragement, and knowledge. When she graduates, Karen look forward to pursuing programming and funding to help provide support and services to our local first responders.

Karen Friese





IMPORTANT DATES

APRIL 2

Field Instructor Training

3–5 p.m.

Kendall 207

APRIL 17

Advisory Board Meeting

9 a.m.–noon

Kendall 207



Congratulations to MSW concentration year students Sierra Schmidt and Kathleen Harrington, who were honored at the Soroptomist awards luncheon as the recipients of the Aging and Gerontology Education Award (A.G.E. Scholarship)!

MAY 7

Annual Field Reception

5:30–7:30 p.m.

BMU Auditorium

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY | **Chico**

School of Social Work
Office of Field Education
400 West First Street
Chico, CA 95929-0550

Phone: 530-898-5632
Fax: 530-898-5574
Email: nmdavis@csuchico.edu

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