



Viewing Social Work

An occasional newsletter from the Viterbo University
Undergraduate Social Work Program

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VITERBO
UNIVERSITY

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From the Director: The Transfer Student Experience

Jennifer Anderson-Meger, DSW, MSSW, CAPSW

Welcome to another fall semester at Viterbo. This fall we welcomed the largest group of transfer students into our Professional Phase. Western Technical College offers a two – year degree in Human Services and Viterbo has an articulated transfer option for these students to complete their bachelor's degree in social work. We are so pleased to have transfer students in our program.

Making the transition to Viterbo can be both exciting and intimidating. Many students will transfer institutions during their college years. Viterbo's Director of Adult and Transfer Admissions helps students apply to Viterbo University and get financial aid lined up. The social work faculty help students understand how their courses from the two-year institution transfer into the four-year degree, get registered for classes, and oriented to the new environment. Viterbo faculty make visits to classes at Western to provide information and help students understand the process.

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Even with assistance, the transfer process can feel intimidating. On the other hand, a new experience challenges one for growth. Transfer students change the dynamic in classes by bringing new ideas. Class discussion is enriched by students from various backgrounds.

Generally it takes about a month to get comfortable at a new institution. With time our transfer students indicate they are very pleased with the move. Transfer students shared some thoughts for this article. One student indicated how helpful the staff and faculty were in her transfer process. Another student said, "Peers have been very welcoming, and the professors have done a really nice job of not only encouraging us to ask questions, but going the extra step to explain things like their syllabus and Moodle pages". Students also indicated that learning the expectations

of a new culture can be intimidating. However, students realize this is a great opportunity to learn new things outside of their comfort zone. Students encouraged others to not be shy about asking for help. One student shared, "everyone at Viterbo is so helpful and they are always there to support you".

Sometimes the change can be overwhelming. One student offered important wisdom stating "Be open minded. It's okay to cut back and do what's best for you. If it means taking an extra semester, so be it. A lot of students are trying to juggle work, school, family, and friends, but make it a priority to take care of yourself FIRST." And then focus on the good things. Like one of our transfer students said, "DO IT! Best decision of my life thus far. I have gained so many valuable skills from my professors. Endless amount of opportunities at Viterbo! Very warm atmosphere!"

Faculty Updates

Deb Daehn Zellmer is entering her 25th year as a Social Work Educator. She has been at Viterbo University for most of those years teaching primarily in the areas of social welfare policy, social work practice and introduction to social work. Deb has also branched out into administrative positions most recently serving as the Interim Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs last year and currently continues in her role as Assistant Dean of the College of Nursing, Health and Human Behavior. This academic year she is back in the classroom half-time teaching Social Welfare Policy and Social Work Theory and Practice with groups. She has recently completed training to become an Advance Care Plan Facilitator. Her current research interests involve mentoring new faculty who are transitioning from professional practice roles (social workers, nurses, dietitians, professional counselors) to teaching and development interprofessional education (IPE) in professional education programs. Deb is chairing a task force in the College of Nursing, Health and Human Behavior focusing on developing curriculum and teaching resources (case studies, simulations and teaching modules) related to IPE. In her free time, Deb enjoys singing in the La Crosse Chamber Chorale, kayaking, traveling, gardening, reading and being "Grammie" to Leo!



Deb Daehn Zellmer

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Faculty Updates

Janet earned her Doctorate of Social Work at St. Catherine University/University of St. Thomas in May of 2018, after completion of her dissertation titled *Professional Identity of Social Work Students in Social Work Education*. Janet continues as Field Director, and is currently working with social work seniors and community agencies to match students for field practicum in the spring. Janet continues in the classroom as well, teaching practice, theory, introduction to research, and senior capstone. Janet conducts Ethics and Boundaries trainings in Wisconsin and Minnesota and provides workshops in area schools on ethics, boundaries and diversity. An area of focus over the past few years has been the development of Interprofessional Education opportunities for students. Janet is currently involved with other departments including nursing, nutrition and dietetics, the interpreting program, and professional programs from UW-L in developing and conducting various Interprofessional simulation activities throughout the school year. In November, Janet will present a paper on the history of Field Education at the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting in Orlando, FL and continues to serve on various committees and task forces at Viterbo.



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Faculty Updates

Dr. Jennifer Anderson-Meger is the Program Director for Social Work. She continues to teach primarily in research, macro practice, and introduction to social work. Jennie co-facilitates the social work club with Janet Holter. At the university level she serves on the Strategic Enrollment Planning Council, the Undergraduate Research Task Force, the Core Curriculum Task Force, and is a newly appointed Faculty Leader in High Impact Practices. Jennie is collaborating with Dr. Scott Gabriel on a grant-funded research project to examine the effectiveness of faculty mentoring practices. She has a research article in press on *Teaching Personal Epistemology and Decision Making in a Global Leadership Course* in the International Journal for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. She serves on the Human Services Community Advisory Board at Western Technical College and a newly formed advocacy council for Habitat for Humanity. She received the "Involved Faculty of the Year" award in Spring, 2018. Jennie enjoys mentoring summer research projects and worked with two students during the summer of 2018 on projects related to anxiety in the classroom and barriers for resource use in the Hmong community.



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Alumni Feature—Jamie Schoegel

This summer alumna Jamie (Bettesworth) Schloegel accepted an opportunity and challenge she never expected when she left Viterbo University. Soon after graduating with her social work major in May 2006, she accepted a position at the Family & Children's Center (FCC) as the Independent Living Coordinator serving La Crosse county children who were soon to "age out" of foster care. With a caseload of 30-35 teenagers, her job was to help foster kids develop skills, find resources and navigate the transition to adulthood that most teens rely on their parents to help with. Jamie reports a steep learning curve. "My social work degree prepared me well with generalist practice skills and the ability to build relationships with my clients but I was just barely an adult myself teaching kids how to become an adult!" More than once, Jamie called her mom just before meeting with a client to find out how to file income taxes or get a birth certificate. "There was so much to learn and then teach these kids. Everything from how to get a Social Security card to learning to drive a stick shift to filling out a FAFSA form and applying for college. Whatever they needed to become an independent adult, I helped them with it."



After 18 months in that position and pregnant with her first child she realized that she wouldn't be able to be the parent she wanted to be and serve her clients who sometimes needed her day or night. A position opened up at FCC in their development office and she made the switch to fundraising. She believed deeply in the mission of FCC and this new position allowed her to build on her Miss Holmen platform of preventing child abuse. Through getting to know the generous philanthropists supporting FCC, she realized that fundraising has parallels with social work by "connecting people with their passions and helping them fulfill their goals."

Two years ago, Jamie made the move to join the staff at the La Crosse Community Foundation as the program director and this past summer was named Executive Director. Now barely two months into this role she is both excited about this opportunity and a bit daunted by the responsibility. Using her social work problem solving skills to grasp all that her new role encompasses, one entire wall of her office is covered with sticky notes identifying daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly tasks and prioritization for each of these tasks.

These lists will be combined with similar lists from her staff and together they will develop a strategy to move the work of the Foundation forward.



She still claims her roots as a social worker. "It's about meeting basic human needs. People who have been blessed financially have the need and desire to give back and helping them find ways to use their financial gifts to help others in perpetuity is so rewarding." Jamie finds many connections in her current work with her education in social work. Social work taught her how to build relationships using motivational interviewing skills and connect personally with people which is essential to effective fundraising. Systems thinking and understanding our social service and welfare system also is very helpful. "Many people mistakenly think that people in need can simply apply for "welfare" or be served through a government program. However, the reality is that our social welfare system leaves many without services and making the non-profit safety-net system disparately needed. Fundraising for these systems is extremely rewarding!"

Field Instructor Spotlight—Kris Lynch

Kris Lynch is a LCSW social worker at Mayo Clinic Health System- working primarily out of the clinic in Onalaska. Kris has a bachelor's degree in Psychology from St. Norbert College with a minor in Japanese Area Studies, and a master's degree in Social Work from UW-Milwaukee. Kris also holds a certificate in Marriage and Family Therapy.

Kris began her career working in mental health at a community support program (CSP) in Milwaukee. After a few years of being a case manager, she became a supervisor. After approximately four years there, she transitioned to medical social work where she has been for the past 14 years. Kris has worked for three different health care systems, two in Milwaukee (Wheaton Franciscan which is now Ascension and Aurora) and MCHS for the past six years.

Kris grew up in healthcare; her mother was a nurse, and she had a lot of interactions with different health care providers. Kris states that she likes to serve as a social work field instructor "because it is my way of giving back to the social work profession... My hope is that through my work as a field instructor, I am able to provide a good learning experience for students that sets them up for success in their careers as social workers".



Scene from Field Fair

Social Work Club



Social Work Club is already working hard this semester to raise awareness about the social work profession and to fundraise money for those in need. Club Officers this year are Emma Pieper, Makenzie Vesbach, Aubry Berlin, and Samantha Bohland. The club joined with other clubs at Viterbo to provide flood relief to devastated local communities. Activities for the year include Giving Tree/Adopt a Family, Trick or Treat for Food, and lunch panel presentations by local social workers on current topics. Social work club is a great way for students to be involved in service activities and connect with the community. Students from any major are welcome to join the club!

Field Instructor Spotlight—Ashley Sammann

Ashley worked at Winona Health in the nursing home and inpatient behavioral health unit as a CNA and HUC until receiving her BSW from Winona State University. She was hired at Catholic Charities from an internship and worked in emergency services. Based on the work she completed with the '08 flooding, Ashley was hired on to the Wisconsin VOAD (voluntary organizations active in disasters) and supervised the case managers working with flood victims in 13 counties across western Wisconsin. Ashley worked at Bethany St. Joseph Care Center for a few years, then went back to Catholic Charities as an adoption and birthparent support social worker. Ashley started working pool at Mayo in 2012, working in the EUCC, Inpatient Behavioral Health unit and Acute Medical floors. Ashley started the part-time MSW program through UW-Madison in the fall of 2013. Ashley completed her MSW field practicum at Gundersen HealthCare where she had the opportunity to work as an individual psychotherapist. Ashley graduated with an MSW with emphasis in clinical mental health in 2015, beginning in her current position full-time.

In her role as a Clinic Social Worker, Ashley helps patients/families with anything from finding ways to afford their medications, to completing an assessment for someone who is actively suicidal or psychotic. They help people with advanced directives, homelessness, nursing home admissions, aftercare post surgery; community resources, care conferences and, interdisciplinary team work. No two days are the same and you really never know what your day is going to look like when you walk in the door, which is actually what she really likes about her job.

Ashley works with students because she was one not very long ago! Ashley states that she “feels like we have a unique position that allows students to see a variety of cases and experiences”. Ashley states she has a passion for her work, but she can also set some realistic expectations for students. “Social work is hard work and exhausting sometimes (a lot of times!), but can be so rewarding and fulfilling if your heart is in the right place and you’re able to find a good balance of heart and mind. I want students to be prepared to warm up those “magic wands”, but know right away that they can’t fix everything at the same time”.

Current Issue: Children’s Mental Health

According to an article in *Social Work Today*, there is an acute health crisis occurring within the youngest generation of Americans. There are roughly 15 million children ages 3-17 who have a diagnosable mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder. Only 20% are being diagnosed and 12 million children are not receiving treatment. Dr. Harold Koplewicz, founding president of The Child Mind Institute, a nonprofit children’s mental health advocacy group says, “Child and adolescent mental health disorders are the most common illnesses that children will experience under the age of 18. It’s pretty amazing, because the number’s so large that I think it’s hard to wrap our heads around it.”

Research also suggested that 1-2% of children ages two to five may have depression and if it stays untreated, it can lead to more depression later on in their lives. Young children have complex emotions and are aware of their emotions in their environments. This depression may show up with sadness and low self-esteem. The child may not want to play with their favorite toy anymore. Nearly 50 percent of cases of mental illnesses begin by the age of 14. Koplewicz said, “Teenagers have a different kind of depression. They don’t seem sad. They seem irritable. This really has an effect on your concentra-

Kids at risk

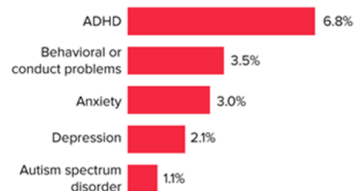
Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people, aged 10 to 24

1 in 5, or 15 million, American children and young adults up to age 25 struggle with a mental illness or learning disorder

And 2/3 or 10 million are undiagnosed or untreated



Children ages 3-17 diagnosed with:



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



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Think About an Extra Internship!

Students in the social work program complete a semester-long, 30 hour per week, field practicum as part of their required coursework. Viterbo University has additional internship opportunities for students in all majors. Social work students have gained great exposure and skills by doing additional internships, usually for 1-3 credits during the semesters leading up to their field placement or summers. Viterbo's internship coordinator works with students to identify their interests and helps connect them to community placements.

Last year Shoua Yang and Andi Baecker took advantage of additional internships. Shoua interned at Central High School's Future Center. The Future Center is a program under La Crosse Promise. La Crosse Promise is a non-profit organization with a mission to help the city of La Crosse "improve the quality of life" for its citizens with an emphasis on education ("La Crosse Promise", n.d.). The Future Centers, which are located at Logan and Central High Schools, connect students with post high school education needs. Shoua's role included arranging job shadows for high school students and facilitating post-secondary education



options. She was active in Central's Diversity Day activities and planning. This internship helped Shoua decide she would like a future career in school social work. Shoua is well on her way – she was employed as a social worker in the Children and Families Unit at La Crosse County Human Services following graduation. In this role she works with schools, children, and families to strengthen families.

Andi Baecker had an internship in the LaCrosse and Sparta Public Defenders Office. Her internship was for four credits (192 hours). She gained experience interviewing inmates in the jail, doing research for court and assisting attorneys. Andi felt the most important part of the experience was forming relationships with staff and other interns. She learned a lot from the inmate interviews and gained confidence in her skills. It was a great reward to help others and be an advocate.



Both Andi and Shoua felt that an internship was well worth the time and effort. It helps put classroom learning into practice, looks great on a resume, and offers networking in the community. Many other social work students take advantage of the extra internship and speak highly of the experience.

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tion, which will affect school. It will affect your desire to continue playing sports. It'll affect your desire of being with your friends." Other symptoms may include moodiness, irritability, changes in sleep patterns, and changes in desire to work or socialize. Since numbers are so high and many children are being left undiagnosed, The Child Mind Institute is collecting brain scans from 10,000 children and teens, hoping to identify biological markers of psychiatric illness. The project could improve the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders.

2010

Jamie Sontag-Dayton has accepted a position as the new (first) Palliative Care Social Worker at Mayo Clinic Health System here in La Crosse. She will be transitioning from her Hospice role in October this year. This change will also allow her to start working towards her clinical hours.

Abby Dreger lives in Minneapolis and recently had a job change from being a Case Management supervisor to now working with a different company as an ILS (independent living skills) supervisor. She is married to Kyle, Viterbo Alumni and has two children. Her oldest will be 4 soon, Miles and her youngest is 1 1/2, Marlayna.

Fun fact– they were on House Hunters recently when they bought their current house!



2013

Megan Lewis just graduated with masters in Clinical Social Work from St. Catherine University / University of St. Thomas. She is currently working at the Minnesota Autism Center in Rochester as a Behavioral Therapist Mental Health Practitioner. She is looking forward to her next adventure and is grateful for the education Viterbo provided her to prepare for this journey.

Viterbo University

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Stay in touch! Visit

www.viterbo.edu/social-work/alumni
to update alumni records or send updates
to jaoliver@viterbo.edu

2013

Breanna (Schell) Jaijairam is currently working in Los Angeles County as a Regional Coordinator for Homeless Adults and Youth in Service Planning Area 8 (the South Bay) at Harbor Interfaith Services. She and her husband live in Long Beach, CA.

Codi (Farmer) Wacker and her husband celebrated their one year anniversary this year with a move to Richmond, VA. She currently works for a health plan that services both the Medicare and Medicaid population as a Quality Specialist. In this position, she assists in the accreditation process to ensure members receive the highest quality of care.

2014

Emily (Ernest) Krage married her husband Andrew in 2015. She is currently involved with city's government as a City Council member and works for Olmsted County as a Mental Health Targeted Case Manager.

2017

Mallory Gehrmann recently graduated with her Masters of Social Work from Loyola University-Chicago in May of 2018, with a specialty in mental health. She passed her APSW exam and she is now a Master's licensed social worker in the state of Wisconsin. She also has a job with Rogers Behavioral Health Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin, working as a Social Worker with the adult population.

Kate Kaiser is working in Black River Falls for Jackson County. She is part of the behavioral health team as a comprehensive community services social worker. She is working with adults with AODA and/or mental health issues.