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Spring 2004

# UA61/5 Social Work Newsletter

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# SOCIAL WORK

## NEWSLETTER



Spring 2004  
Susan Wesley, Editor

### Western's BSW Students Enjoy Studying Abroad

Think back to your days as a BSW student at WKU. How many times did you hear the suggestion, "Let's have class outside today?" Over the winter break, Jan Peeler, Western's Director of BSW Field, not only took her class outside, she took them all the way to London, England. Imagine having the opportunity to learn about social welfare agencies and policies through firsthand experience in the nation that legislated the Poor Law in 1601. Four of Western's BSW students did just that over the 2003-2004 holiday break when they participated in the London Winter Program of the Co-operative Center for Study Abroad (CCSA).

As the world continues to grow smaller, social work faculty increasingly recognize the importance of international perspectives on social welfare issues. Intrigued by the opportunity to offer such an opportunity to her students, Jan Peeler developed a CCSA course entitled "Comparative Analysis of Social Welfare Services and Policy: Great Britain and USA." Students departed the U.S. on December 26, 2003 for a two-week stay in London and the surrounding area. "Class" was held in various social service agencies in London, including Paddington Family Support, a public, child protective service agency; Shelter of London, whose staff are engaged in advocacy work for the homeless; and the Freud Museum, London residence of Sigmund Freud where his famous couch still sits! Students took the "tube" to the southwestern part of the city where they visited the Children's Society of London and learned about services

for children involved in child prostitution. Visits to the Elderly Accommodation Council and sessions in the Courts of Justice, where students observed judges in traditional wigs, completed the class schedule.

CCSA sponsored several tours and other opportunities for students to take in the culture. A half-day bus tour highlighted the city of London and its parks, cathedrals, and other famous landmarks.



WKU students Mindy Bishop (far left), Alisha Brewer (front center), Ashley Webb (back center) and Maleka Holmes (far right) participated in CCSA's study abroad program in London, England.

drals, and other famous landmarks. Since London is known for its theater, CCSA participants enjoyed such plays as *Blood Brothers*, *Anything Goes*, and *Woman of No Importance*. Castles at Dover and Warwick, Shakespeare's home in Stratford, cathedrals in Canterbury, and the hot springs at Bath were some of the highlights of three one-day bus tours. On their own, students enjoyed an impressive display of fireworks at Big Ben on New Year's Eve.

Opportunities for international study are available throughout the year. For more information, contact Jan Peeler at [jan.peeler@wku.edu](mailto:jan.peeler@wku.edu) or visit the CCSA website at [www.ccsa.cc](http://www.ccsa.cc).

### Focus on Field: MSW Field Supervisor Bill McMican, MSW, CSW

Serving children and families has been a consistent theme across the two decades of Bill McMican's career in social work. Bill, who is from Marion, Kentucky, received his MSW from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Post graduate work at the University of Louisville lead to his licensure as a Marriage & Family Therapist in the state of Kentucky. Bill's professional work experiences range from front line social worker with the Jefferson County Department for Social Services to private practitioner and finally to Service Region Clinical Associate with the Cabinet for Health & Family Services, where he is currently employed.

Bill brings a rich history of experience to his work as a field supervisor for Western's MSW program, having supervised BSW and MSW students from various social work programs. He is especially enthusiastic about Western's MSW program and its efforts to bring MSW education to the western part of the state. As Bill noted, "Social work is all about serving the client and the WKU Master of Social Work program is modeling and practicing that ethic."

Thanks to Bill McMican for the important part he plays in making MSW education a reality in the western region of the commonwealth.

## **SSW: Student Social Workers Then and Now**

The Fall 2003 edition of the Social Work Newsletter reported that \$110 was raised for Bowl for Kids' Sake by SSW in 1995. Meredith Young, WKU alumna who is Case Manager for Big Brothers & Big Sisters provided an update for 2004: "This year there were five teams from the Social Work Department raising \$1,111.00. We would like to express our appreciation for all of the continued support that the Social Work Department continues to give our agency."



*SSW members, LaToia, Michelle, Rachel, and Jennie show off this year's SSW T-shirt. The back of the shirt is printed with the challenging words of Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

## **Notes from the Department Head**

The new Department of Social Work continues to thrive and develop. An accreditation commissioner from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) recently visited campus in order to evaluate the MSW program relative to Benchmark II accreditation standards. We will not receive official word until June; however, early indicators are very positive regarding the MSW program meeting Benchmark II expectations with the recommendation of moving forward to Benchmark III standards.

A special project, Credit for Learning, was undertaken during the Fall semester. This is a wonderful opportunity for the Department to work collaboratively with the University of Kentucky, the University of Louisville, and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. The goal of this project is to provide Cabinet employees with educational and training opportunities for academic credit.

Western's gerontology program was recently moved to the College of Health and Human Services. Dr. Susan Wesley was appointed by the Dean to coordinate the university's gerontology program and minor.

The BSW program continues to prosper and flourish as well. The BSW program and the WKU Elizabethtown Extended Campus have been working closely to address the need for BSW education in the Elizabethtown region. University administration enthusiastically supported the Department in addressing this issue. A report was submitted to the CSWE and was subsequently approved. An additional faculty member will be added to the BSW program for both the 2004-05 academic year as well as the 2005-06 academic year. This is an exciting opportunity for the Department to reach out and address BSW education needs beyond the main campus.

The Department also continues to be energized by new faculty and staff. Dr. Michelle Blake, Mr. Jeff Dongvillo, Dr. Muh Bi Lin, and Dr. Cindy Snyder provide a wealth of energy, ideas, enthusiasm, and expertise within the faculty. At the beginning of the academic year, Mr. Lance Frazier was hired as a part-time office associate to assist the MSW program. Mrs. Marsha Hopper recently joined the Department as an office associate with the Credit for Learning project. Their professionalism and energy are also greatly appreciated. It is truly exciting to see the faculty and staff working so hard to create a Department of Social Work that helps the University achieve its mission as well as meet the needs of our community and state. This growth and development will continue for years to come. The plan is to add four new faculty members to the Department next fall.

## **MSW Accreditation Update**

The MSW program has completed its first annual candidacy visit by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Dr. Earlie Washington, of Western Michigan University, was appointed as our commissioner. Over the span of two days in February, she visited with Western's MSW faculty and students, community partners, and university administration. In her role as the eyes and ears of CSWE, Dr. Washington examined all aspects of Western's developing MSW program. She provided feedback on progress for accomplishing Benchmark II criteria for accreditation. Her formal recommendations were then given to the Commission on Accreditation. In June the Commission is scheduled to vote on our status.

Dr. Suzie Cashwell, MSW Program Director, described the visit by Dr. Washington as "extremely successful . . . Dr. Washington was able to help us clarify a few points concerning accreditation as well as give us her perception of the program. Her final report had 8 areas of strength and 3 areas of further development along with her positive recommendation for continuance."

Dr. Washington's review included the following:

**Areas of Strength:**

1. The MSW program has been deliberate, intentional, and systematic in crafting a concentration curriculum—direct social work practice in rural settings—that reflects and is attuned to the needs of the region.
2. The university's central administration, including the president, provost, dean of the college of health and human services, and the graduate dean, strongly support the development and accreditation of the MSW program and view the program and department as integral to the mission of the university.
3. The program has a dedicated and committed faculty who are highly regarded by students, field instructors, and community advisory board members.
4. The program has an outstanding administrative team. The MSW program director and the department head have provided vision for the program and have taken steps to mobilize support for the program on campus and in the broader community.
5. There is strong support for the MSW program from the practice community. Social work practitioners and agencies are invested in the program and are committed to the mission and continuous quality improvement.
6. The program has an outstanding group of students who are actively involved in program planning and development activities. They serve on program committees and have an equal voice in decision-making. As a group, they present good exemplars of future professional social work colleagues.
7. The extent to which the faculty has and is using innovative and creative instructional teaching technologies is exemplary and consequently increases accessibility of social work education to students in rural areas.
8. The program has excellent library support and access for students who are taking courses at various off-campus sites.

**Commissioner Recommendation:**

- The program has demonstrated sufficient progress and should continue in candidacy and work toward achievement of Benchmark III.
- The program is continuing to work toward Benchmark III, the draft self study, and expects to receive full accreditation by June 2006.

**Faculty/Student Collaboration: Updates**

**HERE Update:** HERE stands for Health Enhancement of the Rural Elderly. The year has been filled with many exciting developments in the HERE office. Faculty member, Jan Peeler, along with HERE student worker, Melissa Eason, completed a Health Resource Guide for the rural elderly of Butler County. Since September 2003, numerous copies have been distributed throughout the county. Work has begun on a similar guide for Edmondson County, with completion expected by summer 2004.

Students from the departments of social work and nursing have been engaged in the design and presentation of educational modules for the rural elderly. Students recruited residents last summer through the local newspaper, radio station, church newsletters, and printed announcements posted in public areas. Twenty-nine older adult residents of Butler County participated in an educational program designed to increase their health literacy. Initial evaluations indicate a positive experience for the participants, students, and faculty alike. Feedback from participants indicated their health literacy increased.

A related program, Rural Elderly Advocacy Program with Students (REAPS) is currently being restructured according to outcomes gained from the educational program

for the rural elderly. Future directions include engaging physicians who will be surveyed about their perception of the health literacy of their older adult patients.

The HERE home page can be accessed via the web page of the College of Health & Human Services ([www.wku.edu/Dept/Academic/chhs/](http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Academic/chhs/)). Locate HERE through the drop down menu under "Centers and Projects" on the CHHS web page.



The "Mobile Unit" continues to travel to Warren and surrounding counties, offering health services to rural Kentuckians who are uninsured, underinsured, and/or lacking access to health care. During the spring semester 2004, BSW student, Davy Rupsch (pictured), enrolled in independent study with the Mobile Unit. As part of his course requirements, Davy organized an informational display for the Mobile Unit's Hispanic Health Fair in February. Approximately 140 participants attended the fair, which was held at the Primary Care Center in Bowling Green.

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You can also e-mail us your information to [swrk@wku.edu](mailto:swrk@wku.edu).

## Meet our New Faculty and Staff: Spring 2004



### **Jeff Dongvillo**

Jeff Dongvillo, MSW, is the newest member of the faculty in the Department of Social Work. Mr. Dongvillo was hired in September 2003 as the Co-ordinator of the Credit for Learning (CFL) initiative, a cooperative program between Western, UK, U of L, and the Cabinet for Health & Family Services. Jeff is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of South Carolina. His dissertation research examined the effectiveness of various teaching modules in moderating the attitudes of social work students towards lesbians and gay men. Mr. Dongvillo's prior teaching experiences include Grand Valley State University (MI), Minnesota State University Moorhead, and the University of South Carolina. At South Carolina, Mr. Dongvillo was awarded the Outstanding Service Learning Award in 1998.

When he's not busily engaged in teaching or research, Jeff finds time to work with Kentucky Youth Connects, an organization that strives to enhance the quality of life for foster care youth enrolled at WKU and local FC youth completing high school. On his own time, Jeff sings in the community chorus, is an avid gardener/environmentalist, and may run into you while he is biking or roller blading!



### **Lance Frazier**

In July 2003, Mr. Lance Frazier was hired as an Office Associate with the Department of Social Work. Lance is a WKU student who plans on majoring in nursing. His ultimate career goal is to become a nurse anesthetist. Prior to his affiliation with the Department, Lance worked as a computer consultant with U.S. Bank. Social Work faculty and staff have quickly come to appreciate Lance and his knowledge of computers.

When he's not in class or on the job,

Lance enjoys playing softball and basketball and spending time with his wife, Amy, an MSN student in Western's nursing program.



### **Marsha Hopper**

The newest Office Associate in the Department of Social Work is also an adjunct instructor with the University Experience program at WKU. Marsha Hopper holds a B.S. in Human Services from Wingate University in North Carolina and an MA in Education from Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville. She has taught the freshman seminar at WKU since the fall semester of 2002. In 2003, Ms. Hopper was awarded the "Master of the Spirit" award as Outstanding Freshman Advocate.

Marsha is married to Dr. Mark Hopper, Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church. She and her husband have two children: Matthew, who is 13, and Michalah, age 10. As a family, they enjoy supporting the Lady Toppers basketball team.