

USM SCHOOL OF  
SOCIAL WORK  
**Annual Report**

2020 - 2021



**NEW LEADERSHIP  
& NEW FACULTY**

Associate Director, MSW  
Coordinator and Assistant  
Professors & Instructor/SSS

**INNOVATIVE  
APPROACHES**

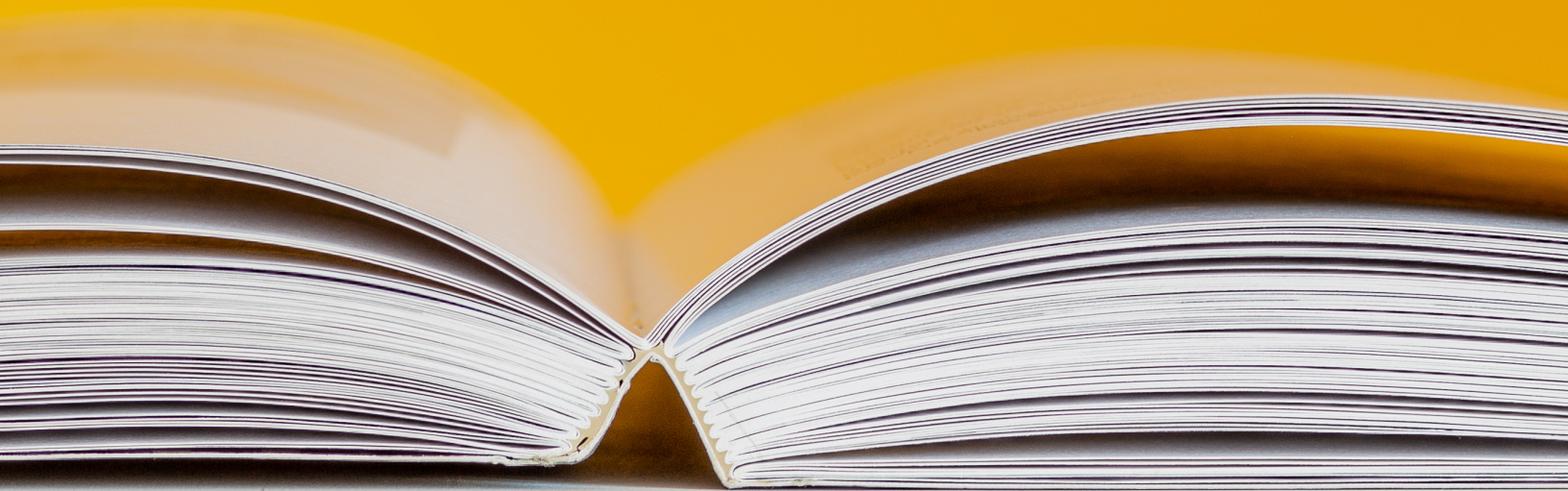
SWIFTS, STRIDE,  
& RISWP

**OUTSTANDING  
ACHIEVEMENTS**

Students, Faculty, Staff, Field  
Instructors, and Alum

# WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 01 A Message From the Director
- 02 2020-2021 At A Glance
- 03 New Leadership & New Faculty
- 08 New Approach to Field Education: SWIFTS
- 16 New Initiatives: STRIDE
- 14 New Initiatives: Curriculum
- 22 Accomplishments & Achievements
- 51 Student Organization: BSW Club
- 53 2020-2021 BSW & MSW Graduates



# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings:

The 2020-2021 Annual Report is intended to share some of the most significant events that were a part of the past year in the School of Social Work. Following a simple, yet powerful contextual overview (2020-2021 At a Glance), the remainder of the Report honors the efforts of our faculty and staff, students, field instructors, alum, and donors who make the School truly great in the most challenging of times.

The Report highlights new leadership and new faculty as well as innovative approaches in Field Education (SWIFTS), implementation of the Resilience-Informed Social Work Practice (RISWP) as the MSW Area of Specialization, and Strategizing towards Racial Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (STRIDE). Included are some impressive metrics related to enrollment, faculty productivity and engagement, and student service to the community. A large portion of the Report is dedicated to the wide array of achievements by our students, faculty and staff, and field instructors. The Report ends with the names of all 124 graduates, all deserving of recognition for their strength and perseverance in successfully completing their respective BSW and MSW degree programs.



**Dr. Jerome Kolbo**  
**Director of the**  
**School of Social Work**





**Dr. Tamara Hurst**  
**MSW COORDINATOR**

Dr. Hurst has extensive experience as a forensic social worker and forensic interviewer. She serves on the Mississippi Human Trafficking Council and is also the principal investigator for the Mississippi Wraparound Institute which assists mental health agencies that support families of children with serious emotional disturbances. She frequently conducts keynote presentations and trainings related to child abuse, neglect, and human trafficking.

**Interests:** Food Insecurity in Higher Education, Nonprofit Agency Development, Prevention and Identification of Child Maltreatment and Exploitation, Training and Education - Child Maltreatment Professionals, & Training and Education - Macro Social Work

Dr. Blackmon received his Ph.D. from the School of Social Work at Louisiana State University. He joined the faculty at The University of Southern Mississippi in 2014. He has taught courses in human development, research methods, social entrepreneurship, and program evaluation. Blackmon has engaged in numerous research projects involving the juvenile justice and educational systems, psychological resilience in disaster-prone communities, and person-centered practices. His work experience includes program development and evaluation for at-risk youth, multi-systemic therapy for youth involved in the justice system, research and training to address substance abuse in collegiate communities, and case management for individuals with spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries.

**Interests:** Person-centered Practices, Disaster and Mental Health, Health Disparities and Healthcare Policy, & Intersections of the Juvenile Justice and Education Systems



**Dr. Bret Blackmon**  
**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**

# New Hires



## **Melody Davisson, LMSW Student Support Specialist & Instructor**

Ms. Davisson is the Student Support Specialist and Instructor for the School of Social Work. She is a Hattiesburg native and received her bachelor's of Social Work from Southern Miss in 2017. She continued her studies at The University of Alabama where she completed her master's degree in Social Work in 2019. Ms. Davisson's professional career started as a medical social worker for a local hospice company.

**Interests:** Adults and Families, Medical Social Work, School Social Work

## **Zibei Chen, Ph.D., LMSW Assistant Professor**

Dr. Chen holds an MSW and Ph.D. from Louisiana State University, and received postdoc training at the Center on Assets, Education, and Inclusion housed in the University of Michigan School of Social Work. She is a poverty scholar with a research agenda centered on understanding financial lives and decision-making of low-to-moderate income families and developing evidence-based interventions that promote financial capability and economic prosperity. Her current research projects include identifying characteristics of the unbanked and underbanked groups and examining access to basic financial services and products, with a particular focus on the role of race, gender, income.

**Interests:** Financial Access and Inclusion, Financial Capability, Financial Knowledge and Behaviors, Economic Justice, & Financial Social Work



## Kim Hogan, Ph.D. Candidate, MA, LMSW

Mrs. Hogan is a current PhD Candidate and holds an MSW from Arizona State University. She has a focus on domestic sex trafficking and the therapeutic needs for exiting. Kimberly is a research scholar-in-training with the Global Association of Human Trafficking Scholars (GAHTS). She has worked closely with community groups, including the United States Department of Justice, National Criminal Justice Training Center, AMBER Alert, Navajo Nation, Las Vegas Rape Crisis Center, City of Phoenix Starfish Place, Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution (S.O.A.P. Project), Starfish Mentoring Programs, and the Phoenix and Las Vegas Metropolitan VICE Units. Her research work spans the prevention, detection, identification, and treatment of minor and adult sex trafficking victims.



**Interests:** Human Trafficking, Homelessness, LGBTQ+ Issues, Social Enterprises, and Social Justice.

## Tamecia Curry, Ph.D. Candidate, LMSW

Tamecia M. Curry received a BSW and MSW from the University of Southern Mississippi. She is currently a PhD candidate in Social Work at Louisiana State University. Her research examines mental health service utilization rates among African American emerging adults with an emphasis on mental health stigma in the Black community and minority help-seeking behaviors. She has worked as a school-based clinician for Hattiesburg High School and a Pine Belt wraparound facilitator serving families and at-risk youth in need of mental health service intervention. As a Southern Regional Education Board Fellow, she travels the nation to participate in initiatives focused on the enhancement of teaching, mentoring, diversity, equity, and inclusion in academia. She is a member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women where she advocates on behalf of girls and women in the areas of education, health, and economic empowerment.



**Interests:** Mental Health Service Utilization |Service Barriers| Emerging Adulthood

# BSW ADVISING



Beginning in 2019, the School of Social Work hired its first Instructor/Student Support Specialist, Lindsey Hardin. She was then joined by Graduate Student Advisor, Shelby Edwards who has been a huge help in the Advisement process throughout the 2020-2021 academic school year.



After Lindsey left in December 2020, Melody Davisson took her place in January 2021 and completes all undergraduate advisement on the Hattiesburg campus. She advises approximately 215 students not including new freshman and transfer students that come in during summer or spring orientations. Our Social Work Student Support Specialists regularly raise the bar in the College of Education and Human Sciences by consistently completing the highest percentage of student advisement each semester in the College. We are proud of our Student Support Specialist and are grateful that Melody joined our team this spring!



# SCHOOL SPECIALISTS

## **JENINE HOUSEWRIGHT, LMSW, FIELD EDUCATION SPECIALIST**

Mrs. Housewright has been a Golden Eagle for more than 20 years, with the majority of that time in the School of Social Work. She has worked in the field office to assistant in all placement needs for students, field agencies and faculty within the school. In 2018, she received her MSW degree from the University of Southern Mississippi.

**Interests:** Field Education, Medical Social Work, & Hospice Behavioral Health



## **MELISSA COKER, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION SPECIALIST**

Mrs. Coker has been with the University of Southern Mississippi for 22 years. She has been a part of the School of Social Work for 20 of those years. Working as the Finance and Administration Specialist, Mrs. Coker manages department budgets, procurement, hiring procedures, assists with grant management, and provides supervision of the graduate assistants and student workers. Currently, Mrs. Coker serves as the Immediate Past President of the Association of Office Professionals (AOP), and as Staff Representative on the CoEHS Dean's Advisory Council. She has previously served as Faculty Senate Bookkeeper 2010-2013 and chaired committees within AOP. In 2004, Mrs. Coker received the College of Health's "Distinguished Office Professional" award. Mrs. Coker has a Bachelor of Science in Office Administration with a minor in Business Administration and is working toward a Business Foundations Certification.

### The Creation of SWIFTS

Like many others around the world, the initial impact of COVID-19 happened without much warning and with no way to prepare fully for the drastic changes and sacrifices we had to make. In March of 2020, the School of Social Work was no exception as we were forced to remove students from in-person internship experiences due to the global pandemic. Under the direction of Dr. Lauren Zakaras, the school's Coordinator of Field Education, an emergency plan was developed and implemented within 10 days to allow students to continue field experiences by completing online trainings and webinars.

In Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, many field placement sites were still unable to accept interns due to COVID-19. Therefore, placement options were extremely limited and there was much concern that students would not be able to complete field hours due to numerous barriers, such as, quarantine, illness, homeschooling their child/children, caretaking of sick family members, and more.

While the quick solution worked well for those in their internships throughout the Spring 2020 semester, Dr. Zakaras realized our students needed the opportunity to do more despite the circumstances. With the help of the 2020 Field Committee, comprised of Ms. Debbie Graham, Dr. Michelle Brazeal, and Ms. Jenine Housewright, a new innovative and dynamic internship experience was formed.

**"I WANTED A MORE ROBUST AND FULFILLING LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS."**

Although the emergency plan worked well, Dr. Zakaras expressed: "I wanted a more robust and fulfilling learning experience for students. After many brainstorming sessions, we decided to elicit the help of the Social Work faculty to create internal internship opportunities. I met with every faculty member to discuss the plan of selecting students to participate in the SWIFTS internship program and operating under the supervision of a faculty field instructor to carry out specialty projects in the field. Many of the core faculty graciously agreed to help students and work together to develop quality field experiences."

Each specialty project, carried out under the direction of faculty members, were unique in

### 2020-2021 Field Committee



**Left: Dr. Lauren Zakaras, Top Left: Ms. Debbie Graham, Top Right Dr. Michelle Brazeal, Bottom Left: Ms. Jenine Housewright, Bottom Right: Ms. Karen Aderer**

nature and provided new opportunities for students that had previously never existed. As a result of the SWIFTS program and despite living in a global pandemic, high quality field experiences were had and SWIFTS set the bar high for field. Students had the opportunity to work closely with faculty and form connections through the process. Social work faculty came together during these difficulty times as they were and are committed to students and their learning. With the program, the School of Social work now has a plan in place should another situation like the pandemic occur again.

The School of Social Work would not be where it is today without the dedication and care for students that Dr. Zakaras has, and continuously shows, in every interaction with students and faculty alike. She has gone above and beyond to ensure our students are given equal opportunities for growth and learning. We greatly value the knowledge and abilities Dr. Zakaras brings to our team. Thank you Dr. Zakaras for all you do for the School and for your students!

# SWIFTS FACULTY PROJECTS

---

"My project is the Waking Joy Project, which aims to bring mirth and joy into one or more low income, Covid-impacted nursing home. The four interns will be working to come up with programs to make this happen, starting with research to choose our first facility, narrowing down our mission and vision, needs assessment and implementation of programs. Some initial ideas involve gathering donations of art, art/craft supplies, DVD's, plants and other things that will increase social interaction, comfort, color, joy and activity within the facility.

We would also like to gather self-care items for those working in the facilities, so they will feel appreciated for working with our most vulnerable population. We hope to see if technology and staff assistance within the facility might allow us to facilitate things through Zoom, such as meetings with family members, listening to music together, or guest teachers who might do a seated stretching class or music concerts that is piped into a TV in the recreation room. "



**Ms. Karen Aderer**



"I'm having one student develop a conceptual social service program and a grant proposal. Another student is taking a deep dive into social entrepreneurship to restructure class modules and eventually develop her own conceptual social enterprise."

**Dr. Bret Blackmon**

# SWIFTS FACULTY PROJECTS

---



## Dr. Michelle Brazeal

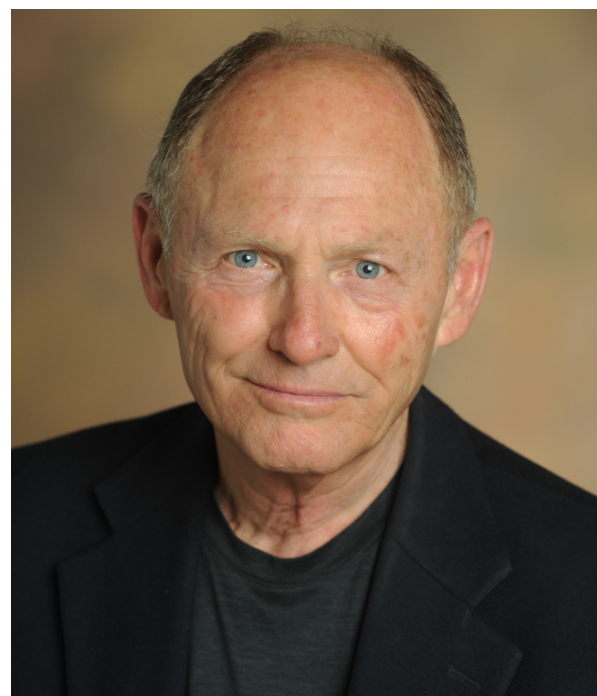
### Non Profit Program Development.

This project will require students to develop a community service program designed to be implemented as a stand-alone agency. Students will begin by determining target population, program scope, and developing vision and mission statements. At the conclusion the project will have a complete business plan to include policies, procedures, needed resources and funding options. Students will also receive training in the service model.

"One student is working with me on "reimagining" social work policy advocacy, expanding attention from a largely singular focus on petitioning formal policy makers (legislators, agency administrators, etc.) to forms of activism that build agency and power among disadvantaged/oppressed/exploited populations. We're beginning close to home, with an examination of employee unions in the higher education context, and in the local Hattiesburg area (starting with the Communications Workers of America). We also hope to engage the NASW-MS chapter and the Mississippi schools of social work in the advocacy reimagining discussion, aiming to advance the case for more assertive, sustained, and politically conscious forms of policy activism.

Another student is working with me to explore the real and potential interface between social work and emergency management. In light of multiple current and emergent crises (health, economic, political, social, and, most notably, ecological), our premise is that building "resilience" across systems, individual through community and organization, will increasingly require the capacity to respond effectively to frequent emergencies.

We're beginning with the examination of two aspects of emergency response – first, the extent to which county emergency management programs affiliated with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) already interface with social workers/social service agencies in local communities; and, second, the extent to which local non-governmental organizations such as Head Start cultivate mutual aid networks among populations served."



## Dr. Michael Forster

# SWIFTS FACULTY PROJECTS

---

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the School of Social Work Field Office has created virtual field experiences. In the BSW field internship, the students will create virtual psychoeducational groups and serve as co-leaders of the groups in a virtual setting. Other students in the program will serve as group members for group role play.

Two MSW students will serve as mentors to the BSW students. The MSW students will be second year students who have completed the MSW course in group therapy. A faculty member will serve as the field instructor to the MSW students to guide them in the mentorship role and responsibilities.

The duties of the MSW mentors include providing guidance, education, direction, motivation and emotional support. The mentors will also give feedback to the students on the classroom assignments including the student's group leadership skills. However, they are not responsible for the student's course evaluation. The mentors will serve as role models and reflect the social work values. This partnership is an opportunity for the MSW students to learn about mentorship.



**Ms. Debbie Graham**



**Ms. Jenine Housewright**

Mrs. Housewright supervised two graduate students placed in community agencies. Both agencies were new placement sites that had no current exposure to social workers. Students were provided an innovative field experience and were able to incorporate the role of a social worker into the agencies, under the guidance and supervision of Mrs. Housewright. She also supervised a MSW student completing an independent study field placement where the student conducted research on a social worker's role on an interdisciplinary team. The student also completed various trainings and certificate programs in various areas of social work that expanded the student's knowledge and increased the student's career marketability.

# SWIFTS FACULTY PROJECTS

---



## **Dr. Susan Hrostowski**

"My student and I will be exploring various aspects of clinical social work beginning with outpatient therapy in the time of COVID 19. We will examine the pros and cons of virtual therapy as well as the effects of COVID 19 on mental health."

"My student is starting her internship by attending a training for those who want to become a certified peer support specialists. It is a 4-day virtual training offered through the MS Department of Mental Health. After the training she's helping create a similar program for human trafficking survivors so they can work as certified peer support specialists for other trafficking survivors. These efforts are supported by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, the Mississippi Wraparound Institute, and the Mississippi Human Trafficking Council."



## **Dr. Tamara Hurst**

# SWIFTS FACULTY PROJECTS

---

Students are currently researching integrated care and how it can be applied to women's health care to increase positive outcomes in women. Much of the research that has been completed focuses on pregnant women and how integrated care can be utilized to address not only the physical health of patients, but the mental health as well. The importance behind this project is to one day have women's clinics utilize integrated care to assist clients with potential mental health disorders that may have negative impacts on clients and their families before, during, and after their pregnancies.



**Dr. Jerome Kolbo**



**Ms. Rachel Lahasky**

"For my SWIFTS project, I have 10 BSW Students and 2 MSW Student Mentors. Our goal is to provide psychoeducational groups to the Intro Lab students this semester. The groups will be based on stress management, living in a pandemic, and surviving college. For some of the students participating in the groups from the Lab class, this is their first semester at USM, so it will also include a good bit of support for them as they transition during this very chaotic time. The groups will last for 5 weeks beginning in mid-September and the BSW students will take the groups from the beginning stages to termination. We believe that this will provide our BSW Field students with some great group experience, and hands on learning. We believe it will provide our two MSW mentors with the chance to sit in a leadership and supervisory role. And, we believe it will provide our Intro Lab students with a look at group work, what being a "client" might feel like, and tons of support this semester!"

# SWIFTS FACULTY PROJECTS

---



**Dr. Joohee Lee**

For this project, students will develop a training curriculum for elementary school teachers on educating and managing children with emotional and behavioral challenges. The curriculum will include education on common emotional and behavioral issues of children, factors that contribute to or exacerbate emotional and behavioral problems, creating positive learning opportunities for children with emotional and behavioral challenges, and effective techniques and skills to manage unwanted behaviors in the classroom. The name of the training will be ACT (Adapting to Change Together): Incorporating the Social Work perspective when educating and working with children with emotional and behavioral issues in schools.

Dr. Zakaras and Ms. Aderer collaborated to supervise eight graduate students that were a part of the USM COVID-19 Contact Tracing team. Students were trained through Johns Hopkins University to become certified contact tracers and completed contact tracing at the University per guidelines and protocols with the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH). This opportunity allowed students to utilize their social work skills while contributing to the health and safety of our campus during a global pandemic.

## **Physical and Behavioral/Mental Health: Disparities and Predictors.**

This project examines racial/ethnic and gender disparities in physical and mental/behavioral health among patients receiving services for a chronic condition at any of Federally Qualified Health Center clinic sites in South Mississippi, with a particular focus on how physical and psychosocial factors are associated with disparities. The project utilizes the ecological systems theory, the biopsychosocial model of health, and an intersectionality approach as conceptual frameworks. Students who are involved in this project are expected to co-author a manuscript with a project faculty. In addition, students are expected to present findings at professional social work-related conferences.



**Dr. Lauren Zakaras**





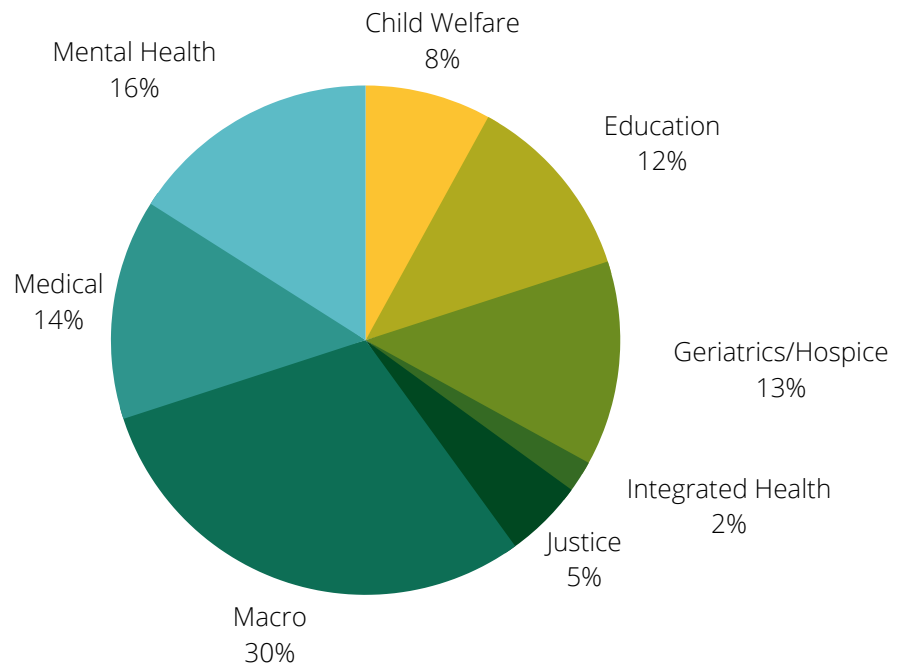
# Field Contributions to the Community 2019-2021

From Spring 2019-Spring 2021 the School of Social Work has placed more than 500 students in the field throughout Mississippi and surrounding states such as Louisiana and Alabama. Over 100 agencies, schools, hospitals, and more have accepted our students and allowed them to grow, learn, and develop skills throughout their time in field.

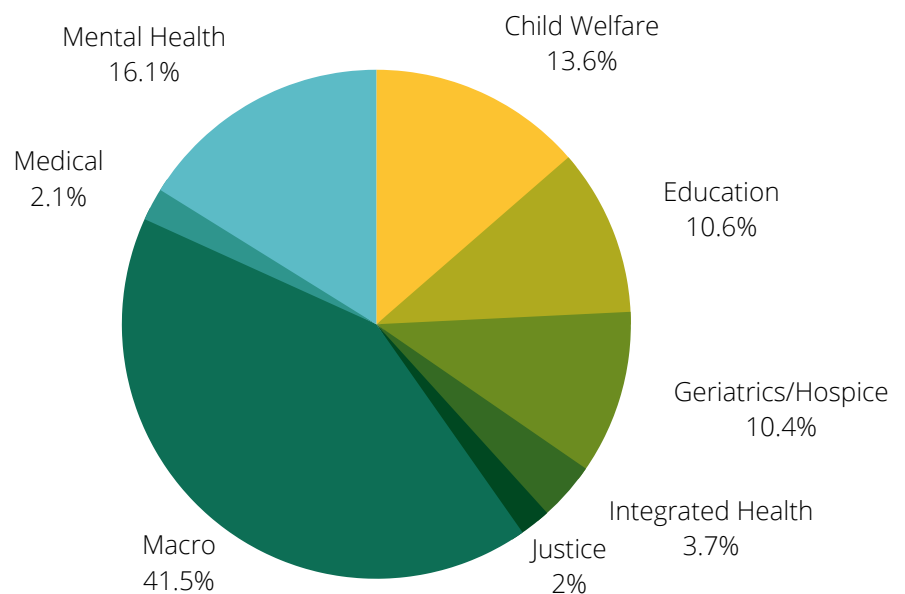
Out of the 100+ field placements, we were able to categorize them into different areas of social work. These areas included: Child Welfare, Education, Geriatrics/Hospice, Integrated Health, Justice, MACRO, Medical, and Mental Health. View the chart below to see the percentage of placements within each category, and the percentage of students at each placement.

From January 2019- April 2021 students have spent **150,095** hours in field placements

**Field Placement Percentages**



**Student Placement Percentages**



# STRIDE STATEMENT

## STRATEGIZING TOWARDS RACIAL INCLUSION DIVERSITY & EQUITY

In late May 2020, following the killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbury, Tony McDade, Botham Jean, Breonna Taylor and countless others, a group of faculty, staff and students began meeting to examine how our school was handling issues of inclusion, diversity, and equity. Two key statements were created and shared publically (see BLM and STRIDE).

Under the leadership of Dr. Curtis Davis and other members of the STRIDE Team, several goals emerged: assess and evaluate existing inclusion, diversity, and equity efforts; equip and empower all (faculty and staff, students, and field instructors); elevate and amplify voices (particularly BIPOC) in our school; educate (first within and then outside the school); and engage partners and create new collaborations.

During the past year the STRIDE Team has successfully: institutionalized STRIDE as a standing School Committee; incorporated the STRIDE Statement in all syllabi, program manuals, Professional and Technical Standards, and school website; conducted anonymous surveys of faculty and staff, BSW and MSW students, and field instructors; held special online sessions (such as one for female BIPOC); identified and purchased the most current and relevant resources (books) on inclusion, diversity, and equity for university libraries on both campus; sponsored events to celebrate Black History Month and Latinx heritage; and developed and delivered many trainings on inclusion, diversity, and equity.

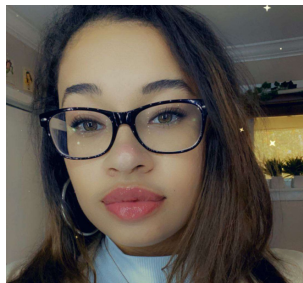
**DR. CURTIS DAVIS**



**MS. KAREN ADERER**



**Brian Beck**



**Darian Jones**



**Maddi Owen**



**Reginald Virgil**

During the past year, active participant of the STRIDE committee included four members of the STRIDE Work Team: Brian Beck, Darian Jones, Maddi Owen and Reginald Virgil, led by Karen Aderer. These four members worked to develop and deliver the trainings on include, diversity, and equity to faculty and staff, students, and field instructors. In addition, along with Karen Aderer and Jerome Kolbo, they presented at the 2021 NASW-MS Annual Conference on *Building an Anti-Racist Program: Strategizing toward Racial Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (STRIDE) at The University of Southern Mississippi School of Social Work.*

2020 - 2021

# STRIDE TEAM

**JEROME KOLBO**

**KAREN ADERER**

**RACHEL LAHASKY**

**LAUREN ZAKARAS**

**JOOHEE LEE**

**MICHELLE BRAZEAL**

**MELODY DAVISSON**

**RAEVIN WADE**

**SHELBI WHITE**

**TANDRA GRIFFITH**

**DARIAN JONES**

**REGINALD VIRGIL**

**BRIAN BECK**

**MADDI OWEN**

FROM THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

# BLACK. LIVES. MATTER.

Systemic racism has existed in our country for centuries, and the killing of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbury, Tony McDade, George Floyd, and countless others has ignited into flame a long-smoldering resistance. The University of Southern Mississippi's School of Social Work shares the outrage and pain at the blatant bias against Black individuals and other marginalized groups. Rampant injustice and repressive violence have reached untenable levels and destroyed any semblance of a united nation. Our School strives to embody the NASW Code of Ethics. We celebrate diversity and uphold the dignity and worth of every human being and believe that all people should be treated with respect; regardless of race, ethnicity, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or any other category of persons. We are compelled, then, to speak out now against a culture of white supremacy, to denounce in the strongest possible terms racism and discrimination in any form, and we fully commit to action that ensures equity and inclusion in every aspect of our shared lives. We believe it is time for bold measures to protect the rights of all persons and to eradicate bias and injustice in every social institution. So what, then, shall we as a School do? How do we best address systemic racism and the pervasive and inescapable injustice created and sustained by a white supremacist culture? How do we fully embrace and value diversity in our community? How do we ensure that our efforts will have impact, real impact, long-lasting impact? The answers to these questions are very important. They will not be answered easily. For now, individually and collectively as a School, we are committed to maintaining a focus on the most pressing current issues, such as police brutality; to examining thoroughly their structural and systemic roots, as well as to confronting our own privileges and biases; to actively listening to (and learning from) the voices of our Black faculty, field instructors, students, and alumni; and to ensuring that we translate intentions into real actions that are in line with the values and principles of our profession. More to come.

With sincerity from Jerome Kolbo, Director, and the Faculty and Staff of the School of Social Work (Karen Aderer, Bret Blackmon, Michelle Brazeal, Curtis Davis, Rene Drumm, Michael Forster, Debbie Graham, Lindsey Hardin, Jenine, Susan Hrostowski, Tamara Hurst, Rachel Lahasky, Joohee Lee, Lauren Zakaras)

# The University of Southern Mississippi School of Social Work STRIDE Statement

## Inclusion Diversity, And Equity

We are committed to fostering, sustaining, and strategizing toward racial inclusion, diversity, and equity (S.T.R.I.D.E.). As a school, we will adhere to this commitment by taking strong positions, taking action, providing help, and being clear on expectations from all affiliated with the School of Social Work at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM). This statement is couched within the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. Lastly, this statement is intended to offer our position, plans of action, and expectations for students, staff, faculty, and field partners.

### What is Our Position?

All students, staff, and faculty are welcome in any School of Social Work setting. We disavow all racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, classism, ableism, and hate speech or actions that attempt to silence, threaten, and degrade others. We recognize that discrimination can be direct or indirect and take place at both institutional and personal levels. Expressions or actions that disparage a person are contrary to the mission of S.T.R.I.D.E. and the school and will not be tolerated.

### How do we Implement Action behind our Position?

We are committed to supporting our students and fostering an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. We will work to promote an anti-discriminatory environment where everyone should feel welcome. During class, your instructors will not shy away from the uncomfortable. The faculty urge you to have the courage to be uncomfortable in class discussions. In exchange for your courage, we will work to ensure a classroom environment that supports your taking these intellectual and emotional risks.

### What does Providing Help Look Like?

If you feel that our courses, programs, or department fall short of this commitment, we encourage you to engage in dialogue with your instructor, staff, or administrator. Your instructors will always be in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said or done that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to an instructor, administrator, or university partner about it. Alternatively, you may file a Statement of Complaint with the **Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity** in person or online at: <https://forms.usm.edu/human-resources/view.php?id=13153>. You may also contact the **Office of Multicultural Programs and Services (Hattiesburg Campus)** to submit complaints in person or online at: <https://www.usm.edu/student-affairs/cares.php#report>.

### Our Expectations

We expect that learning needs will be addressed both in and out of class. The diversity that students bring to class will be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. Courteous behavior and responses are expected at all times. It is likely you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom. We expect you to be able to disagree without becoming disagreeable. Civility and respect for the opinions of others are very important in an academic environment.

# NEW AREA OF ADVANCED PRACTICE

## RESILIENCE-INFORMED SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

*Resilience-Informed Social Work Practice* is the Area of Specialized Practice for the MSW program.

Resilience-informed social work is a forward-thinking collaborative model that honors the strengths of individuals, families, and communities who experience long-term negative outcomes caused by manmade or natural occurrences. The model identifies, addresses, and mitigates risk factors through the use of resilience-based assessments and interventions. The model of resilience-informed practice builds on strengths and protective factors however they are defined while simultaneously addressing the vulnerabilities and socially unjust conditions experienced by and through various ecological systems.

Specialized practice in resilience augments the generalist social work competencies and is grounded in all the values of the profession (Grant, 2014; Greene, 2002), including but not limited to service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry.

The resilience-informed curriculum builds upon the generalist practice through courses and assignments that apply ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels; promotes diversity in practice and advocacy for human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice; engages research-informed practice that is consistent with the social work knowledge, values, and skills and is necessary to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate policy and practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; and extends and expands knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors associated with the nine social work competencies (Grant, 2014; Greene, 2002).

Located in a diverse region marked by deeply entrenched systemic issues and punctuated by damaging natural or man-made crises, the USM School of Social Work challenges students to strategically engage members across all socioeconomic levels in the development and enhancement of individual, family, group, organizational, and community resilience. Students build from a person-in-the-environment perspective, inspiring on-going persistence and determination, as they work to identify solutions to overcome the effects of social, economic, and environmental stressors. Our students are challenged through cyclical integrations of experiential, practice-based, and research-based learning platforms allowing for broad-based application of this specialization in a multitude of settings.

### **Context within Mississippi:**

The history and culture of Mississippi has created and perpetuates a myriad of challenges including poverty, racism, and intolerance as well as injustice/ inequity/disparity in many areas including, but not limited to, health/mental health, education, criminal justice, and child welfare. In addition, Mississippi, especially south MS, has constantly faced disasters, both natural and human-made. Many individuals in MS are in an ongoing process of crisis/disaster response, recovery and preparedness. The poor, oppressed, and underserved face multiple challenges in this process.

Furthermore, Mississippi has experienced a critical shortage of professional social workers in all the practice areas. Nowhere in the United States are client systems more in need of a resilience-informed approach to addressing these inequities.

While Mississippi provides the principal context, the school prepares students for practice in reference to regional, national, and global contexts as well. In these contexts, too, as much as in Mississippi, resilience-informed practice is fully and increasingly relevant to current and emerging societal challenges.

# COMMITMENT TO THE COAST

## A PROPOSAL TO THE COASTAL OPERATIONS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Continuing education for social workers on the Coast was the second strategy to enhance and differentiate the Social Work program at Gulf Park. Quality training for social workers and related professions is critical to meet the needs of vulnerable coast residents and thus improve coastal resilience. The School could leverage its community partnerships and externally funded projects to make the Gulf Park Campus a destination for hosting workshops, trainings, and conferences.

The School's field education office is capable of offering continuing education opportunities for field instructors, the professionals that supervise students in their internships. Continuing education offerings could cover topics that are specific to the Gulf Coast (i.e. disaster preparedness, crisis intervention, trauma-informed care). Additional education topics could provide field instructors with skills needed to improve the quality of care for Coast residents, increase resilience of the Coast community, and improve the educational experience for students. It could also serve as a community empowerment opportunity that can facilitate community partnerships across agencies and with the university.

The School of Social Work currently houses externally funded projects whose purpose is to train professionals from across the state in best practices. One example is Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), a course offered to students and community members to educate on common mental health disorders and how to effectively intervene in emotional health crises. MHFA helps individuals become more prepared to handle mental health crises and better equips them to respond in times of disaster. Therefore, it aids in disaster preparedness and response and serves as an added layer of resilience for the MS Gulf Coast.

Other examples of our externally funded training programs are the MS Person Centered Practices Initiative and the MS Wrap Around Institute.

These programs employ the only nationally credentialed trainers in MS to train professionals on how to improve their work with adults and youth with mental, intellectual, and developmental disabilities. These programs have already hosted workshops at Gulf Park and plan to hold more.

Lastly, there is tremendous potential to partner with state and regional organizations to host conferences at Gulf Park. The annual Social Work Colloquium, National Association of Social Workers – MS Chapter Conference, and Alabama-Mississippi Social Work Education Conference are a few examples that would bring hundreds of professionals and students to Gulf Park.

### **Anticipated Outcomes:**

A. Increase student enrollment in the BSW and MSW programs.

B. Increase the number of professionally trained, licensed social workers on the MS Gulf Coast to address the mental health crisis.

C. Increase community partnerships with agencies and organizations based on the MS Gulf Coast through formal affiliation agreements with the School of Social Work.

D. Increase the number of service hours that our students provide to agencies on the MS Gulf Coast through their field internships.

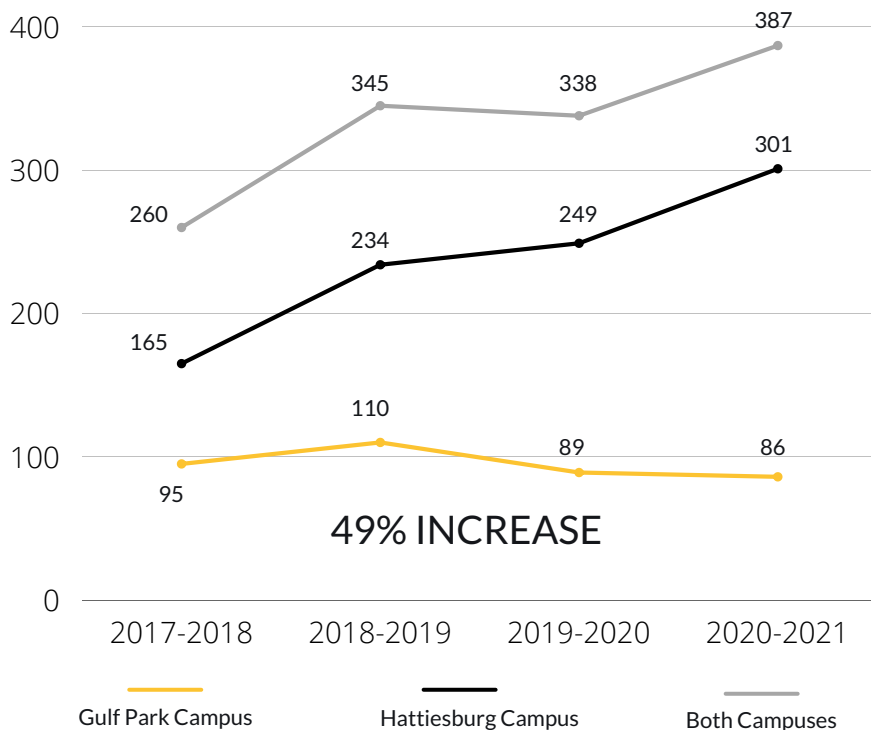
E. Host conferences at Gulf Park to enhance and expand community partnerships.

F. Increase continuing education opportunities for social service professionals at different skill levels through workshops at Gulf Park (licensure preparation, clinical skills, management, etc.).



# ENROLLMENT INCREASES

From the 2017-2018 school year, to 2020-2021, the School of Social Work has seen a great increase in enrollment. In 2017 we had a total of 260 enrolled student; we are now up to 387 enrolled students despite living in the middle of a global pandemic.





# Intellectual Contributions

## Brazeal, Michelle

### Journal Article (Published)

Jeanfreau, M. M., Hess-Holden, C. L., Brazeal, M. (2020). Our Money, My Secrets: Why Married Individuals Commit Financial Infidelity. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 42(1), 46-54.

### Journal Article (Accepted)

Choi, H. W., Brazeal, M., Duggirala, L., Lee, J. (in press). Loneliness and depression among adults living on MS Gulf Coast: individual, interpersonal, and community predictors. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*.

## Chen, Zibei

### Journal Article (Published)

Chen, Z. (2020). Families' Financial Stress & Well-Being: The Importance of the Economy and Economic Environments. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 1-18.

### Journal Article (Published)

Chen, Z. (2020). The negative association between alternative financial services usage and financial well-being: Variations by income. *Social Work Research*, 44(3), 183-204.

### Journal Article (Published)

Chen, Z. (2020). Saving for college: Perspectives from participants in a universal Children's Savings Program. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 26(2), 151-166.

### Journal Article (Accepted)

Chen, Z. (in press). The racialized financial market in the United States. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*.

## Drumm, Rene' D.

### Book Chapter (Published)

Rosario, A., Cincala, P., Penno, D., Drumm, R. D. (2021). Research methodology. *Qualitative research for practical theology* (pp. 137-159).

### Book Chapter (Accepted)

Drumm, R. D. (2021). Ethics in qualitative research. *Qualitative research for practical theology* (pp. 256-267).

### Journal Article (Published)

Drumm, R. D., Sedlacek, D., VanderWaal, C., Trecartin, S., Carblnell, N. (2020). "Life is getting better:" Understanding stabilizing factors in conservative Christian families post-coming out. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*(doi:10.1080/1550428X.2020.180054), 15.



# Intellectual Contributions

## Drumm, Rene' D. (cont.)

### Journal Article (Published)

Drumm, R. D., Sedlacek, D., Baltazar, A. (2020). "My life has been just like a big expectation:" Role expectations and mental health concerns of adult children of Seventh-day Adventist pastors. *Social Work & Christianity*, 46(3), 86-104.

### Journal Article (Published)

Sedlacek, D., Drumm, R. D. (2020). A Study of Seventh-day Adventist Parents and Their Responses to Their LGBTQ+ Child's Coming Out. *National Council on Family Relations Network*, 33(1), 17-18. Andrews University

## Kolbo, Jerome R.

### Journal Article (Published)

McLeod, S., Bradwell, M., Lei, Z., Ismail, O., Eden, B., Funchess, T. H., Kolbo, J. R. (2020). Factors Associated with History of Unintended Pregnancy Among Mothers in Mississippi. *Journal of Public Health in the Deep South*, 1(No. 2), 22-38. 118 College Drive

### Journal Article (Published)

Herring, A. L., Kolbo, J. R., Choi, H. W., Harbaugh, B. L., Molaison, E. F., Hardin, L. A., Gordy, X. Z., Ismail, O. (2020). Breastfeeding History, Preschool Children's Sleep, and Obesity. *Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Nursing*, 1-11.

### Journal Article (Published)

Funchess, T. T., Bradwell, M., McLeod, S., Eden, B., Kolbo, J. R., Lei, Z., Ismail, O. (2020). Racial Disparities in Reproductive Healthcare among Parous and Nulliparous Women in Mississippi. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*.

### Journal Article (Published)

Molaison, E. F., Kolbo, J. R., Zhang, L., Harbaugh, B. L., Ismail, O., & Yurko, B (2020). Significant Declines in Overweight and Obesity among Mississippi Public School Students. *Journal of the Mississippi State Medical Association*, 61(4), 1-6.

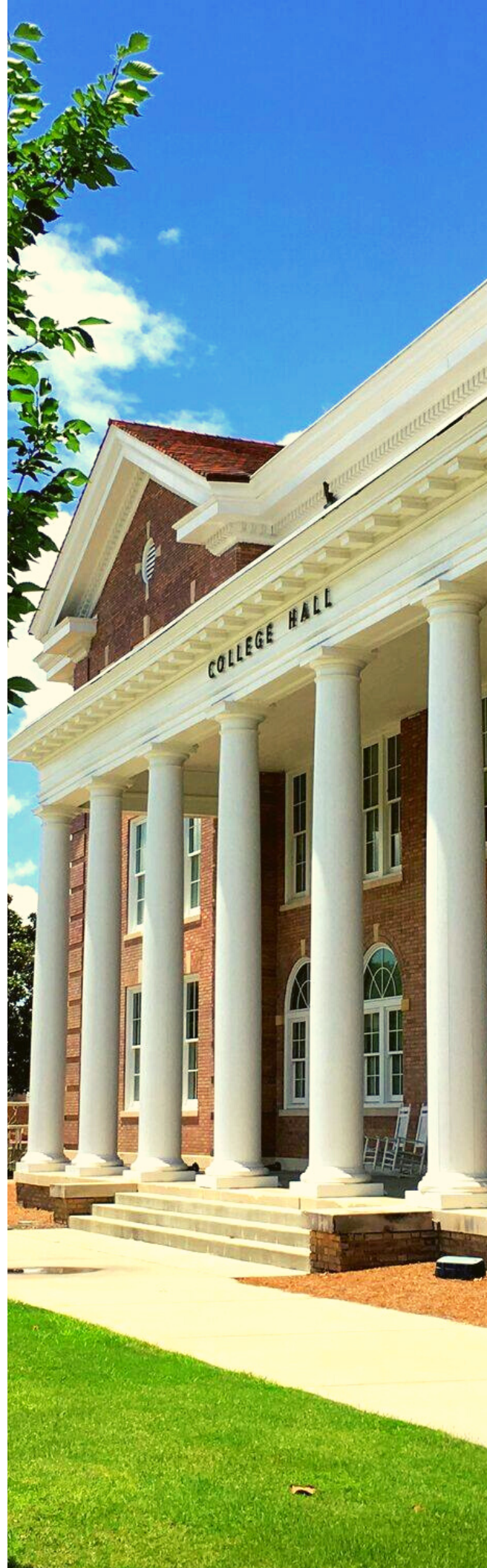
### Journal Article (Accepted)

Gordy, X., Zhang, L., Kolbo, J. R., Johnson, J. (in press). Prevalence and Subgroup Comparisons of Obesity and Severe Obesity among Mississippi Public School Students. *Preventive Medicine Reports*.

## Lee, Joohee

### Journal Article (Accepted)

Choi, H. W., Brazeal, M., Duggirala, L., Lee, J. (in press). Loneliness and depression among adults living on MS Gulf Coast: individual, interpersonal, and community predictors. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*.



# External Funding

## **Blackmon, Bret J.**

Blackmon, Bret J, "Mississippi Person Centered Practices Initiative #5," Sponsored by Mississippi Division of Medicaid, State, \$520,542.00. (February 3, 2021 - February 2, 2023).

Blackmon, Bret J, "Mississippi Person Centered Practices Initiative (Year 4)," Sponsored by Mississippi Division of Medicaid, State, \$301,457.00. (October 3, 2019 - October 2, 2020).

## **Brazeal, Michelle**

Hurst, Tamara E, Brazeal, Michelle (COPI), "Mississippi Wraparound Institute-MDMH #13," Sponsored by Mississippi Department of Mental Health, State, \$401,592.00. (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021).

Brazeal, Michelle, "Forrest General Hospital Family Medicine Residency & SWK Integration," Sponsored by Forrest General Family Medicine Residency Program, Private, \$186,984.00. (February 1, 2019 - January 31, 2021).

Brazeal, Michelle, "University of Southern Mississippi, Opioid and Heroin Data Center and Trend Development Initiative.," Sponsored by Mississippi Department of Health, Health Administration, Pharmacy, State, \$273,213.00. (September 1, 2018 - September 30, 2020).

Brazeal, Michelle, "2018 Opioid Crisis Con-Ag Data Dashboard," Sponsored by Mississippi State Department of Health, State, \$20,000.00. (September 1, 2018 - March 31, 2020).

## **Hrostowski, Susan**

Hrostowski, Susan, Brumfield, Shantrice (Supporting), Steele, Amanda (Supporting), "Reducing Stigma through Education," Sponsored by Gilead Sciences, Business-Industry, \$25,000.00. (June 1, 2019 - May 31, 2020).

## **Hurst, Tamara E.**

Hurst, Tamara E, Brazeal, Michelle (COPI), "Mississippi Wraparound Institute-MDMH #13," Sponsored by Mississippi Department of Mental Health, State, \$401,592.00. (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021).

Hurst, Tamara E, "Mississippi Wraparound Institute #12," Sponsored by Mississippi Division of Medicaid, State, \$129,631.00. (October 2, 2019 - October 1, 2020).

Hurst, Tamara E, "Mississippi Wraparound Institute," Sponsored by Mississippi Department of Mental Health, State, \$417,766.00. (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020).

## **Kolbo, Jerome R.**

Kolbo, Jerome R, "Evaluation of the Mississippi Better Sight for Better Learning Program," Sponsored by Center for Mississippi Health Policy, Foundation, \$69,873.00. (August 2020 - June 2021).

Kolbo, Jerome R, "2019-2020 Child and Youth Prevalence of Obesity Study," Sponsored by Center for Mississippi Health Policy, Foundation, \$153,377.00. (December 15, 2018 - May 31, 2020).

## FACULTY PRESENTATIONS

### Aderer, Karen A.

Aderer, Karen Anne (Lecturer), Kolbo, Jerome R (Professor), Krasner, Darian (Graduate Assistant/MSW Student), Virgil, Reginald (Graduate Assistant/Graduate Student), Owen, Madison (Graduate Assistant/Graduate Student), Beck, Brian (Graduate Assistant/ Graduate Student), NASW Mississippi Chapter 2021 Virtual Annual Conference, "Building an Anti-Racist Program: Strategizing toward racial inclusion, diversity, and equity (S.T.R.I.D.E.) at the University of Southern Mississippi School of Social Work," NASW Mississippi Chapter, Jackson, MS, United States. (March 25, 2021).

### Blackmon, Bret J.

Lee, Joohee, Blackmon, Bret J, Williams, Courtney Latrice, Green, Yolanda, Person Centered Practices Initiative: Advisory Board meeting, "Person Centeredness among Human Service Professionals in Mississippi," Mississippi Division of Medicaid, Jackson, MS, United States. (January 29, 2021).

Brazeal, Michelle, Blackmon, Bret J, Zakaras, Lauren Suzanne, SSWR 2021 Annual Conference, "Improving Mental and Physical Health Outcomes through a Collaborative Care Intervention," Society for Social Work Research, United States. (January 20, 2021).

Brazeal, Michelle, Blackmon, Bret J, Zakaras, Lauren Suzanne, CSWE's 2020 Annual Program Meeting (APM) - Virtual, "Effective Interventions to Improve Mental and Physical Well-Being in Underserved Populations,," Council on Social Work Education, Denver, CO, United States. (November 2020).

Brazeal, Michelle, Blackmon, Bret J, NASW, MS Chapter Annual Conference, "Mood and Self-care in Individuals with Type 2 diabetes: Implications for Practice," National Association of Social Workers - MS Chapter, Jackson, MS, United States. (March 26, 2020).

### Brazeal, Michelle

Brazeal, Michelle, Blackmon, Bret J, Zakaras, Lauren Suzanne, SSWR 2021 Annual Conference, "Improving Mental and Physical Health Outcomes through a Collaborative Care Intervention," Society for Social Work Research, United States. (January 20, 2021).

Brazeal, Michelle, Blackmon, Bret J, Zakaras, Lauren Suzanne, CSWE's 2020 Annual Program Meeting (APM) - Virtual, "Effective Interventions to Improve Mental and Physical Well-Being in Underserved Populations,," Council on Social Work Education, Denver, CO, United States. (November 2020).

Brazeal, Michelle, Blackmon, Bret J, NASW, MS Chapter Annual Conference, "Mood and Self-care in Individuals with Type 2 diabetes: Implications for Practice," National Association of Social Workers - MS Chapter, Jackson, MS, United States. (March 26, 2020).

Cochran, David M, Hayes, Christopher Tyler, Choi, Hwanseok W, Paprzycki, Peter Pawel, Lee, Joohee, Brazeal, Michelle, Rehner, Timothy A, Price, Ashleigh Nicole, 84th Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences, "A (Not So) Surprising Convergence of Perception and Reality: Gulf Coast Residents and Water Quality in the Mississippi Sound," Mississippi Academy of Sciences, Biloxi, MS, United States. (February 2020).

Cochran, David M, Hayes, Christopher Tyler, Choi, Hwanseok W, Paprzycki, Peter Pawel, Lee, Joohee, Brazeal, Michelle, Rehner, Timothy A, Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill & Ecosystem Science Conference, "Comparing Perceptions and Reality: Convergence Among Gulf Coast Residents and Government Data on Water Quality in the Mississippi Sound," Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative, Tampa, FL, United States. (February 2020).

# FACULTY PRESENTATIONS

## Chen, Zibei

Chen, Zibei, A Convening on Financial Capability and Asset Building: Advancing Education, Research and Practice in Social Work, "Examining the role of secured and unsecured debt among pre-retirees," University of Washington at St Louis Center for Social Development. (February 25, 2021).

Chen, Zibei, 2020 AFCPE conference, "Making the Invisible Underbanked Visible: Who Are the Underbanked." (November 16, 2020).

Chen, Zibei, Financial Capability and Asset Building: Achievements, Challenges, and Next Steps (2020-2025) Conference, "The impact of using payday loan on household financial well-being: A propensity score matching approach," University of Washington St Louis. (September 24, 2020).

## Drumm, Rene' D.

Drumm, Rene' D. (Presenter), End-it-now Virtual Summit on Abuse, "Church toolkit: Practical tips & resources for safe churches and schools," North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, MD, United States. (November 2020).

Drumm, Rene' D., VanderWaal, Curtis (2nd author), Sedlacek, David (3rd author), North American Association of Christians in Social Work 70th Annual Convention, "I think it has helped my faith:" Parental faith journeys post-coming out," North American Association of Christians in Social Work, Washington DC, MD, United States. (November 2020).

VanderWaal, Curtis (Co-presenter), Drumm, Rene' D. (Co-presenter), CSWE Annual Program Meeting, "Conservative Christian parents' experiences with LGBTQIA+ children coming out: Struggles and growth," Council on Social Work Education, Denver, CO, United States. (November 18, 2020).

Drumm, Rene' D. (Presenter/Author), 25th International Conference on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma, San Diego, CA., "Transforming trauma through research: Making a difference in IPV interventions in faith communities," Institute on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma, San Diego, CA, United States. (August 31, 2020).

Drumm, Rene' D. (Presenter/Author), Carbonell, Nancy (Author), Trecartin, Shannon (Author), 32nd Annual Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference, "It Really Changed the Way I Relate to My Church:" Parent's Spiritual Adjustments Following a Child's Coming Out," EQRC, Las Vegas, United States. (February 24, 2020).

## Forster, Michael D.

Forster, Michael D (Sole presenter), National Association of Social Workers Mississippi Chapter Virtual Annual Conference 2021, "Policy Activism and Community Building for the Biden Era and Beyond," National Association of Social Workers Mississippi Chapter, Virtual. (March 25, 2021).

Forster, Michael D, Canopy Children's Solutions 7th Annual Mental Health Summit, "Social Media and the Making of Young Citizens," Canopy Children's Solutions. (May 7, 2020).

Forster, Michael D (Presenter), 18th Annual Mississippi Child Welfare Institute Conference, "Raising Citizens, Not Consumers," Jackson State University College of Health Sciences, Jackson, MS, United States. (February 7, 2020).

## Hrostowski, Susan

Hrostowski, Susan (Presenter), Brumfield, Shantrice (presenter), Steele, Amanda (presenter), NASW Mississippi Chapter Annual Conference, "Reducing HIV Stigma through Education," NASW MS, Jackson, MS, United States. (March 26, 2020).

## FACULTY PRESENTATIONS

### Hurst, Tamara E.

Hurst, Tamara E, National Association of Social Workers Mississippi Annual Conference, "Human Trafficking in Mississippi: What's New?," National Association of Social Workers Mississippi. (March 26, 2021).

Hurst, Tamara E, International Symposium on Child Abuse, "Wraparound as a Care Planning Approach for Survivors of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking," National Children's Advocacy Center, Huntsville, AL, United States. (March 25, 2021).

Hurst, Tamara E, McDowell, Elizabeth (Co-Presenter), 7th Annual One Loud Voice Conference and CAST Symposium, "Wraparound as a Care Planning Approach for Survivors of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (cancelled due to COVID-19)," Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi, Biloxi, MS, United States. (March 20, 2020).

Hurst, Tamara E, Goulet, Betsy (Co-Presenter), 7th Annual One Loud Voice Conference and CAST Symposium, "Trauma-informed Teaching and Child Advocacy Studies (cancelled due to COVID-19)," Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi, Biloxi, MS, United States. (March 19, 2020).

Hurst, Tamara E, Hammett, Rickelia (co-presenter), Conference of Southern Graduate Schools Annual Meeting, "The Eagle's Nest Food Pantry: A Non-Profit Learning Lab," Conference of Southern Graduate Schools, Birmingham, AL, United States. (March 6, 2020).

### Kolbo, Jerome R.

Aderer, Karen Anne (Lecturer), Kolbo, Jerome R (Professor), Krasner, Darian (Graduate Assistant/MSW Student), Virgil, Reginald (Graduate Assistant/Graduate Student), Owen, Madison (Graduate Assistant/Graduate Student), Beck, Brian (Graduate Assistant/ Graduate Student), NASW Mississippi Chapter 2021 Virtual Annual Conference, "Building an Anti-Racist Program: Strategizing toward racial inclusion, diversity, and equity (S.T.R.I.D.E.) at the University of Southern Mississippi School of Social Work," NASW Mississippi Chapter, Jackson, MS, United States. (March 25, 2021).

### Lahasky, Rachel S.

Lahasky, Rachel Spinner, "Surviving the Pandemic with our Kids: Support for Social Workers and Parents," NASW-MS, Hattiesburg, MS, United States. (March 2021).

Lahasky, Rachel Spinner, Fay Kaigler National Book Festival (Conference Cancelled), "How Do I Talk About it With Them? Explaining Death and Loss to a Child Through Books," Fay Kaigler Book Festival, Hattiesburg, MS, United States. (April 2020).

Lahasky, Rachel Spinner, Henry S. Jacobs Parent Forum, Spring 2020, "Keeping our Children Healthy During Covid-19," Henry S. Jacobs Camp, Hattiesburg, MS, United States. (April 7, 2020).

### Lee, Joohee

Lee, Joohee, Williams, Candace, Skanes, Jessica, NASW Mississippi Chapter Annual Social Work Conference [Virtual], "Mental Health Among Black/African American Adults with Physical Health Conditions: Gender Differences in Psychosocial Predictors." (March 26, 2021).

Lee, Joohee, Blackmon, Bret J, Williams, Courtney Latrice, Green, Yolanda, Person Centered Practices Initiative: Advisory Board meeting, "Person Centeredness among Human Service Professionals in Mississippi," Mississippi Division of Medicaid, Jackson, MS, United States. (January 29, 2021).

# FACULTY PRESENTATIONS

## Lee, Joohee

Cochran, David M, Hayes, Christopher Tyler, Choi, Hwanseok W, Paprzycki, Peter Pawel, Lee, Joohee, Brazeal, Michelle, Rehner, Timothy A, Price, Ashleigh Nicole, 84th Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences, "A (Not So) Surprising Convergence of Perception and Reality: Gulf Coast Residents and Water Quality in the Mississippi Sound," Mississippi Academy of Sciences, Biloxi, MS, United States. (February 2020).

Cochran, David M, Hayes, Christopher Tyler, Choi, Hwanseok W, Paprzycki, Peter Pawel, Lee, Joohee, Brazeal, Michelle, Rehner, Timothy A, Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill & Ecosystem Science Conference, "Comparing Perceptions and Reality: Convergence Among Gulf Coast Residents and Government Data on Water Quality in the Mississippi Sound," Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative, Tampa, FL, United States. (February 2020).

## Zakaras, Lauren S.

Brazeal, Michelle, Blackmon, Bret J, Zakaras, Lauren Suzanne, SSWR 2021 Annual Conference, "Improving Mental and Physical Health Outcomes through a Collaborative Care Intervention," Society for Social Work Research, United States. (January 20, 2021).

Brazeal, Michelle, Blackmon, Bret J, Zakaras, Lauren Suzanne, CSWE's 2020 Annual Program Meeting (APM) - Virtual, "Effective Interventions to Improve Mental and Physical Well-Being in Underserved Populations,," Council on Social Work Education, Denver, CO, United States. (November 2020).

Zakaras, Lauren Suzanne (Faculty), Byars, Thomas S (LMSW), 12th Annual Mississippi Addiction Conference: Healing the Soul of Addiction, "Utilizing Social Workers to Overcome the Unique Challenges of Addiction Treatment Marketing," Professionals Health Network Inc., Jackson, MS, United States. (February 27, 2020).

Zakaras, Lauren Suzanne, 12th Annual Mississippi Addiction Conference: Healing the Soul of Addiction, "Ethical and Clinical Issues in Integrated Care: Overcoming the Obstacles to Provide Optimal Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services in Primary Care," Professionals Health Network Inc., Jackson, MS, United States. (February 26, 2020).

## Williams, Courtney L.

Lee, Joohee, Blackmon, Bret J, Williams, Courtney Latrice, Green, Yolanda, Person Centered Practices Initiative: Advisory Board meeting, "Person Centeredness among Human Service Professionals in Mississippi," Mississippi Division of Medicaid, Jackson, MS, United States. (January 29, 2021).

# Faculty Engagement

---

## Aderer, Karen A.

- Contact Tracing Team Member. (September 8, 2020 - Present).
- Member, Summer Student Support Committee. (May 28, 2020 - Present).
- Member, Administrative Team. (July 2019 - Present).
- Coordinator, Golden Basket Campus Wide Thanksgiving Basket Initiative. (September 2017 - Present).
- CARES Team Member, CARES Committee - Gulf Park Campus. (2014 - Present).
- Member, Undergraduate Admission Committee. (2012 - Present).
- BSW Club Faculty Advisor, BSW Club - Gulf Park. (2011 - Present).
- Board Member, Common Cause, Jackson, MS. (June 2019 - Present).
- Volunteer, Bay St. Louis, MS Frida Fest and Dolly Should Yearly Festivals, Bay St. Louis, MS. (2017 - Present).
- Legal Protest Observer, Mississippi Center for Justice / ACLU, Jackson, MS. (June 6, 2020 - Present).
- Organizer, USM Golden Basket Thanksgiving Basket Project, Long Beach, MS. (2012 - Present).

## Blackmon, Bret J.

- Member, College Curriculum Committee. (August 2020 - Present).
- Member, Graduate Council. (August 2020 - Present).
- Member, Graduate Assistant Application Review (GAAR) Committee. (May 2020 - Present).
- Co-Chair, Senior Faculty Leadership Team. (January 2020 - Present).
- Member, Dean's Advisory Council (DAC). (January 2020 - Present).
- Co-Chair, SWK - Coastal Operations Leadership Team. (November 2019 - Present).
- Chair, Faculty Search Committee. (September 2019 - Present).
- Member, Accreditation and Reaffirmation Committee. (January 2019 - Present).
- Faculty Advisor, MSW Club - Gulf Coast. (August 2017 - Present).
- Chair, COVID-19 Public Interface Committee. (June 7, 2020 - July 1, 2020).

## Brazeal, Michelle

- Member, Strategies toward Racial Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity - STRIDE (June 2020 - Present).
- Member, Scholarship and Awards Committee. (January 3, 2020 - Present).
- Co-Chair, Accreditation and Reaffirmation Committee. (August 2019 - Present).
- Member, Return to Research Ad Hoc Committee. (May 2020 - June 2020).
- Task Force Member, Terrorism and Disaster Coalition for Child and Family Resilience. (September 2017 - Present).
- Reviewer/Referee, Social Work in Public Health Journal. (January 2020 - February 2020).
- Reviewer/Referee, Social Work in Public Health. (July 2020 - August 2020).

## Chen, Zibei

- Member, IHL Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award Selection Committee. (November 5, 2020 - Present).
  - Committee member, MSW program admission committee. (January 12, 2021 - January 12, 2022).
  - Member, Faculty Search committee. (October 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021).
  - Reviewer/Referee, Family & Consumer Sciences Research Journal. (January 1, 2020 - Present).
-



# Faculty Engagement

---

## Davisson, Melody S. N.

- Chapter Advisor, Phi Mu Fraternity. (February 1, 2021 - Present).
- GA Search Committee. (February 1, 2021 - Present).
- STRIDE Committee. (February 1, 2021 - Present).

## Drumm, Rene' D.

- Faculty mentor, Affiliate faculty mentor with USM's Drapeau Center for Undergraduate Research. (August 1, 2018 - Present).
- Committee Member, Career Services Advisory Board – Gulf Park. (September 30, 2017 - Present).
- Committee Member, New Faculty Transition Committee. (August 15, 2017 - Present).
- Committee member, IHL Diversity Committee. (August 15, 2016 - Present).
- Committee Member, Pathways Committee. (June 15, 2016 - Present).
- Club Sponsor, National Alliance on Mental Illness Club. (January 15, 2016 - Present).
- Board of Advisors, SDA Kinship International Advisory. (February 2, 2015 - Present).
- Board of Advisors, Adventist Human-Subjects Research Association (AHSRA) Board Members. (2018 - Present).

## Forster, Michael D.

- Member, University Faculty Handbook Committee. (May 15, 2020 - Present).
- Member, University Promotion & Tenure Committee. (August 18, 2018 - Present).
- Member & Chair, CoEP Promotion & Tenure Committee. (August 18, 2018 - Present).
- Member & Chair, University Faculty Handbook Committee. (May 8, 2019 - May 15, 2020).
- Reviewer/Referee, Administration in Social Work. (August 15, 2010 - Present).
- Chairperson, NASW-MS subcommittee on racial justice and social work students, Jackson, MS. (May 2020 - October 2020).
- Board of Advisors, AAUP - USM chapter. (June 1, 2019 - May 31, 2020).
- Board Member, Common Cause Mississippi, Jackson, MS. (September 1, 2019 - Present).
- President, Forward 365 Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS. (January 1, 2018 - Present).

## Graham, Deborah N.

- Committee Member on the Faculty Search Committee, committee. (January 2020 - Present).
- Field Instructor, USM School of Social Work. (2018 - Present).
- Committee Member of the MSW Application Review Committee, committee. (April 2017 - Present).
- Committee Member, Fellowship Health Clinic, Hattiesburg, MS. (2015 - Present).

## Hrostowski, Susan (Full Professor)

- Chair, Council on Academic Excellence. (September 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020).
  - President, Faculty Senate. (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020).
  - Committee member, USM Emergency Grant Relief Program. (April 20, 2020 - May 31, 2020).
  - Senator, Faculty Senate. (August 1, 2012 - May 30, 2020).
-

# Faculty Engagement

---

## Hurst, Tamara E.

- Graduate Coordinator, School of Social Work. (January 1, 2021 - Present).
- Chair, Finance Committee, Faculty Senate. (September 1, 2020 - Present).
- Member, Faculty Senate. (August 16, 2019 - Present).
- Reviewer, Institutional Review Board. (August 2019 - Present).
- Faculty Affiliate, Drapeau Center for Undergraduate Research. (August 2018 - Present).
- Chair, School of Social Work MSW Admissions Committee. (August 2016 - Present).
- Faculty Mentor and Supervisor, The USM Eagle's Nest Food Pantry. (June 2016 - Present).
- Member, School of Social Work Policy and Handbook Committee. (August 2013 - Present).
- Faculty Advisor, School of Social Work, Student Association of Social Workers. (August 2014).
- Committee Chair, College and University Anti-Hunger Alliance, Jackson, MS. (November 2018 - Present).
- Faculty, ChildFirst Training, Childrens' Advocacy Centers of Mississippi, Jackson, MS. (2013 - Present).
- Reviewer/Referee, Science and Engineering Ethics. (August 17, 2020 - Present).
- Board of Advisors, MS Department of Health/Office against Interpersonal Violence, Jackson, MS. (2019 - Present).
- Task Force Chair, MS Human Trafficking Council/Strategic Planning and Trafficking Protocol Subcommittee, Jackson, MS. (2019 - Present).
- Candidate, Fulbright Specialist Program Roster. (August 2018 - Present).
- Reviewer/Referee, Child Abuse & Neglect. (2018 - Present).
- Conference Planning Committee, One Loud Voice Annual Conference. (2014 - Present).

## Lahasky, Rachel S.

- Program Review Subcommittee, Academic Council, Program Review Subcommittee. (October 2020 - Present).
  - Committee Member, Academic Council. (August 2020 - Present).
  - Committee Member, Scholarship and Awards Committee. (November 1, 2018 - Present).
  - Committee Member, Conduct Hearing Panel. (October 31, 2018 - Present).
  - Social Work Ambassadors; Faculty Advisor, Social Work Ambassadors Student Organization. (August 2017 - Present).
  - CARE Team Member, CARE Team. (August 2016 - Present).
  - Commencement Volunteer. (December 10, 2015 - Present).
  - BSW Club Faculty Advisor, BSW Club, School of Social Work. (August 2010 - Present).
  - Instructional Continuity Committee Member, Faculty Senate. (June 1, 2020 - August 15, 2020).
  - Supervisor, LCSW Supervisor, Hattiesburg, MS. (June 2015 - Present).
  - Board Member, JCRS, New Orleans, LA. (February 2018 - Present).
  - Committee Member, Jewish Community Legacy Project, Hattiesburg, MS. (March 15, 2021 - Present).
  - Board of Directors, Camp Dream Street, Utica, MS. (May 1, 2020 - Present).
  - Board Member, Temple B'Nai Israel Sisterhood, Hattiesburg, MS. (August 1, 2019 - Present).
  - Committee Member, Mississippi Center for Justice Fair Housing Outreach Committee, Hattiesburg, MS. (February 15, 2021 - May 15, 2021).
-

# Faculty Engagement

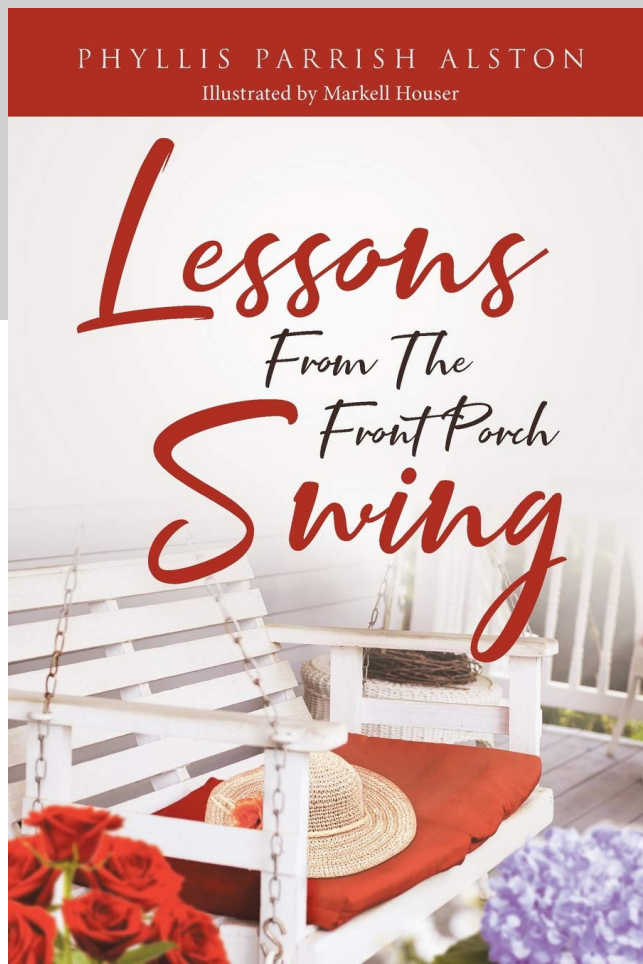
---

## Lee, Joohee

- Committee Member, Institutional Review Board. (February 2021 - Present).
- Committee Member, Accreditation Reaffirmation Committee. (January 2020 - Present).
- Committee Member, Senior Faculty Leadership Committee. (January 2020 - Present).
- Chair, Faculty Evaluation Committee. (August 2019 - Present).
- Committee Member, The School's Unit Policies and Procedures committee. (August 2018 - Present).
- Committee Member, Faculty Search Committee. (August 2013 - Present).
- Committee Member, Tenure & Promotion Committee. (August 2012 - Present).
- Chair, Program Evaluation Committee. (August 2007 - Present).
- Committee Member, Curriculum Committee. (August 2006 - Present).
- Reviewer/Referee, Journal of Psychosomatic Research. (November 2020 - January 2021).
- Reviewer/Referee, Children and Youth Services Review. (June 2020 - July 2020).
- Reviewer/Referee, PLOS ONE. (March 2020 - April 2020).
- Editorial Review Board Member, Korean Academy of Social Welfare. (November 2020 - Present).

## Zakaras, Lauren S.

- Member, Specialized Class Activities Committee. (June 2020 - Present).
  - Member, Continuing Education Unit Committee. (April 2020 - Present).
  - Member, Curriculum/Accreditation and Reaffirmation Committee. (August 2019 - Present).
  - Member, Evaluation Committee. (August 2019 - Present).
  - Chair, Field Education Committee, School of Social Work. (July 2019 - Present).
  - Member, Administrative Team. (July 2019 - Present).
  - Member, Integrated Health Scholarship Committee, member. (July 2019 - Present).
  - Committee Member, Alliance of Social Workers in Sports. (August 2019 - Present).
  - Committee Member, National Association of Social Workers. (2012 - Present).
  - Conference-Related, Lead organizer of Summer Continuing Education Series for Field Instructors. (May 2020 - Present).
  - Chairperson, MS Field Consortium. (July 2019 - Present).
  - Committee Member, North American Network of Field Educators and Directors (NANFED). (July 2019 - Present).
  - Committee Member, Diabetes Coalition of Mississippi: Southern Chapter, MS. (2016 - Present).
  - Conference-Related, Lead Organizer for 1st Annual Field Symposium. (July 2019 - March 2020).
  - Committee Member, Terrorism and Disaster Coalition for Child and Family Resilience Task Force. (August 2017 - Present).
  - Member, Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce, Inc., Coast Young Professionals (CYP), Gulfport, MS. (April 2019 - Present).
  - Member, Terrorism and Disaster Coalition for Child and Family Resilience, Gulf South Coalition. (August 2017 - Present).
  - Member, Diabetes Coalition of Mississippi, MS. (2017 - Present).
  - External representative for the Hiring Committee at Back Bay Mission, Back Bay Mission, Biloxi, MS. (December 21, 2016 - Present).
-



## AUTHOR AND INSTRUCTOR: PHYLLIS ALSTON

Ms. Alston received an MSW from the University of Alabama and is an LICSW, PIP and a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers. She spent 32 years with the Department of Veterans Affairs serving as a clinical social worker, Assistant Chief of Social Work, Chief of Voluntary and Recreation Services and Public Affairs Officer. Following retirement from the VA, she began a career in academia that has lasted over 15 years. She served as adjunct instructor and Distance Education Coordinator at the University of Alabama and is currently a visiting instructor at USM. Her first book, *Lessons From the Front Porch Swing*, was recently published. Through her company, Alston Consulting and Training, she has presented numerous workshops and conferences. Phyllis was inducted into the Alabama Social Work Hall of Fame.

### Book Summary:

Selma, Alabama, native Lula “Mama” Sharpe possessed all the characteristics of a forceful Southern grandmother: undeniable charm, strong personality, ability to dish out unsolicited advice, unreserved love, remedies for ailments from broken arms to broken hearts, and a frank way of delivering the lessons she valued. Each day, weather permitting, Mama sat on her front porch swing while teaching, advising, and encouraging her two granddaughters

and anyone else in the community she deemed in need of guidance.

You too can learn life sustaining lessons from Mama as you read short vignettes about her life in this book aptly entitled, *Lessons from the Front Porch Swing*. The stories will delight you and the lessons can help you in all walks of life; at home, school, work, or play.

### Some of the lessons instruct you to:

- Listen to Wise Counsel
- Appreciate Bosom Buddies
- Acknowledge Tough Stands Require Courage
- Practice Self-Control
- Make Life Special for Others
- Never Tolerate Abuse of Any Kind
- Avoid Dwelling in the Past

Mama is not the only one to teach these lessons; her lessons are supported by quotes from the Bible and from famous historical figures. These lessons can benefit high school students, college students, and adults who want to improve the way they interact with their peers, parents, spouses, bosses, coworkers, and strangers.



## A Celebration of Service: Ms. Debbie Graham

"Debbie Graham has been an inspiration to me since first stepping into her classroom as an MSW student over a decade ago. She has mentored me throughout my career and had a significant impact on me as a person and a social worker. It has been an honor to call her my colleague in the School of Social Work, and I feel lucky to have her as a friend. Debbie's guidance and encouragement have helped me and so many others, and her expertise, experience, and compassion will be greatly missed in the School of Social Work."

- Dr. Lauren Zakaras

### Years of Service:

As a Greenwood, Mississippi native and Southern Miss alumni, Deborah Graham has devoted decades of service to our school of Social Work, as well as to countless communities throughout the state of Mississippi. She has been a force in the field of Social Work with specialized interests in Mental Health Assessment and Treatment, Addiction Assessment and Treatment, Posttraumatic stress disorder, Trauma, and much more. Her approach to practice is relational, strength-based, and person-centered – through these frameworks, she has taught hundreds of students at the undergraduate, graduate, and supervisory level in courses related to foundation practice, advanced assessment, diagnoses and treatment, and theory.

Debbie's contributions extend far beyond the school of social work, as she has contributed extensive research to the field and has also served as the Clinical Director and Senior Clinical Therapist for Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services and as the Social Work Consultant for Edward's Street Fellowship Health Clinic for several years. Throughout her time at USM she has developed invaluable relationships with her colleagues and students, that will continue to impact our program following her departure.

Thank you Ms. Graham for the care, dedication, hard-work and guidance you have put into your time here at USM and throughout your service as a social worker in our community.

### Message of Gratitude:

"Ms. Graham has been my 'go to' person for just about everything. Her willingness to share her clinical knowledge and creativity in the classroom has made me a better instructor and social worker. I will miss our discussions about teaching, social work and my favorite, debates about cognitive vs behavioral interventions."

- Dr. Michelle Brazeal

"I have truly loved my time working with Debbie G in the field office. We have seen many challenges and rewards while in the field office together. There were very few days a student did not say to us 'Mrs. Graham said...'. She is someone you can always learn from, lean on and depend on. I will miss having her knowledge, expertise and humor in the office."

- Jenine Housewright

# HAGANS SUPPORT USM SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK WITH \$1.1 MILLION PLANNED GIFT

By: Megan Burkes

During Dr. Lynn Hagan's time as a student at The University of Southern Mississippi in the '90s, Ms. Oseola McCarty's unexpected act of charity made global news. McCarty's generosity continues to inspire Lynn's philanthropic vision. Recently, she and her husband, Don, documented two bequests through a charitable remainder unitrust totaling \$1.1 million. The Hagans' planned gifts will benefit two existing funds they established more than a decade ago through the USM Foundation – the Lynn Purnell Hagan Social Work Support Endowment and the Lynn Purnell Hagan Social Work Scholarship Endowment.

“Dr. Hagan exemplifies how graduates of our School of Social Work are serving their communities around the globe using the knowledge and skills instilled in them at USM,” said Dr. Trent Gould, dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences. “We are grateful for the Hagans' benevolence to our college, which will continue Lynn's impact on the lives of others. These gifts will remove financial barriers that can slow down and sometimes stop students altogether from completing their degrees. By providing unrestricted support for the School, their contributions will also enhance the meaningful community engagement programs our faculty, staff and students administer.”

Now the School of Social Work's largest benefactors, their path to USM was fortuitous. During a camping trip at Paul B. Johnson State Park, located just south of Hattiesburg, Don and Lynn followed a billboard to Southern Miss. The beauty of the campus, along with graduate program offerings in human performance and recreation (now kinesiology) and social work, sold the Texans on the Hub City. Lynn finished master's degrees in 1994 and 1996, respectively.

After graduation, she launched a successful career as a licensed clinical social worker, providing mental health services across the United States and around the world. Lynn currently teaches the next generation of social workers as an associate faculty member at the University of Phoenix.

Having received assistantships and grants to help offset the cost of graduate school, Lynn knows the importance of these types of assistance. “In addition to a career development grant from the American Association of University Women, my out-of-state tuition was waived and I received a small stipend,” she said. “It wasn't a lot of money, but it helped me stay afloat while earning my degrees. I could not have gone back to school without this assistance, so Don and I want to give that opportunity to others.”



“Dr. Hagan is incredibly generous, selfless and visionary. With the size and scope of her recent gifts being greater than any other the School of Social Work has ever received, we are filled with gratitude and appreciation,” said Dr. Jerome Kolbo, director of the School of Social Work. “Adding to their earlier gifts, the Hagans' contributions will afford significantly more students the opportunity to realize their potential of becoming professional social workers and alter the trajectory and sustainability of our School's academic and community service programs intended to fully actualize human potential and opportunities for change.”

Mostly retired now, the Hagans stay busy with consulting, volunteer work and social engagements. While involved with the Association of Former Students at their undergraduate alma mater, Texas A&M University, Lynn also helped create the Southern Miss Alumni Association Hub in Brazos Valley, Texas.

“We are exceptionally thankful for the Hagans' gifts and continued support of Southern Miss,” said Stace Mercier, executive director of the USM Foundation. “Understanding firsthand the impact financial support can have, their giving exemplifies a commitment to and confidence in Golden Eagles for generations to come.”

Founded in 1959, the USM Foundation is a nonprofit organization committed to serving the University community by overseeing fundraising efforts to raise private support for scholarships and other academic needs at Southern Miss.

# Scholarship Donors & Recipients

---

**Barbara Pease Scholarship:** Kirsten Abbott

**Francis Gandy Scholarship:** Dayra Gutierrez

**Fern & John Pearson Scholarship:** Krijn Paetow, Tiffany Cook, Sanja Daniels, & Angelle Collier

**Elizabeth Boggan and Ronald Charles Howard Family Social Work Scholarship:** Rhiannon Garrett

**Nellie B. Hutchinson Scholarship:** Patricia Kauhane & Simone McKinney

**Nancy Baker Endowment:** Hannah Holland

**Beulah Elizabeth Roberts Compton:** Santiica Doss & Samantha Brown

**Samuel Tucker Scholarship:** Ellie Currie & Therese Reynolds

**Betty Spencer - Gulf Coast Scholarship:** Christina McNair & Greer Massey

**Katharine L. Guice:** Tori Ricks

**Sara Caldwell Graduate Social Work Endowment:** Ri'Kayla Faulkner

**Milton Concannon Scholarship:** Courtney Jackson

**Day/Mehearg Scholarship:** Megan Masters

**Gerry Parish Graduate School Scholarship:** DeAnna Hernandez

**Park Family Scholarship:** Florenciana Abney

**Lynn Purnell Hagan Scholarship:** Charlene Nathan & Ashley Perry

---

# 2020-2021 FACULTY & STAFF AWARDS



BSW OUTSTANDING SOCIAL  
WORK INSTRUCTOR

Ms. Phyllis Alston

MSW OUTSTANDING SOCIAL  
WORK INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Michelle Brazeal



OUTSTANDING SOCIAL WORK  
FACULTY RESEARCH AWARD

Dr. Rene Drumm





# 2020-2021 FACULTY & STAFF AWARDS

OUTSTANDING SOCIAL  
WORK FACULTY SERVICE  
AWARD

Ms. Debbie Graham



OUTSTANDING SOCIAL  
WORK STAFF AWARD

Ms. Jenine Housewright

OUTSTANDING SOCIAL  
WORK SPIRIT AWARD

Ms. Rachel Lahasky



# **BSW & MSW 2020-2021 ADJUNCT PROFESSORS**

Laura Ainsworth

Alvin Baker

April Estill

Angie Fields

Portia Granger

Lindsey Gurley

Riley Herrin

Amy Jackson

Valerie Joiner

Jennifer Mayne

Aldison Middleton

Tonya Rogillio

Lindsey Vining

Dana Watson

**2020-2021  
OUTSTANDING  
ADJUNCT  
PROFESSORS**

**BSW OUTSTANDING**



**LINDSEY GURLEY**



**ALDISON MIDDLETON**

**MSW OUTSTANDING**

## **FIELD INSTRUCTOR OF THE MONTH FALL 2020 - SPRING 2021**

**September:** Dr. Jerry Alliston - Associate Director at the Institute for Disability Studies (IDS)

**October:** Gwen Mitchell Cumberland - Home Care Hospice

**November:** Donna Lewis - Trauma and Bereavement Therapist at Singing River Health Services Outpatient Behavioral Health

**December:** Frances Nixon - Social Worker and Program Coordinator at The Salvation Army

**February:** Angie Fields - Director of Clinical Services of Gulfport Behavioral Health System

**March:** Dr. Linda M. Vasquez - Executive Director of DREAM of Hattiesburg

**April:** Monica Lee - Mitigation Investigator for the Office of State Public Defenders

**May:** Ricardo Bolton, LCSW - Senior Primary Care Social Worker, VA

# FIELD INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR: FALL 2020- SPRING 2021



## HATTIESBURG CAMPUS AWARD WINNER: DANYELLA TERRELL

Danyella Terrell is a native of Pearl, MS. She is the 2nd youngest of 7 children born to her parents. She moved to Hattiesburg in 2003 where she became a 2-time graduate from The University of Southern Mississippi School of Social Work. She began her social work career as a licensed social work intern at Ellisville State School. Her 1st post undergraduate job was with Forrest county DHS where she was assisted in decreasing the custody count from 400 to 76 children over a five-year time span.

Her social work experience includes supervision, front line and regional case management, community partnerships, hospice, Medicaid waiver provider, as well as navigation with the Medicaid Bridge to

Independence program, currently known as Community Transition Services and Clinical therapy.

Danyella currently serve as Medical Social Worker for Halcyon Hospice. She is proud to say, she can serve those who are vulnerable and require additional supports to remain in the least restrictive setting during end of life. She prides herself in knowing as many community resources as possible to assist those served with a greater quality of life

Danyella's hobbies include spending time with her siblings, husband and children, eating, working out, watching television, singing, traveling, shopping, working, learning and helping others.

# FIELD INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR: FALL 2020- SPRING 2021



## GULF COAST CAMPUS WINNER: DONNA LEWIS

I currently am a bereavement and trauma therapist at Singing River Health Services Outpatient Behavioral Health. I have worked in this position since 2012. I specialize in working with people who have been physically and/or sexually abused and have attachment wounds, beliefs, and behaviors that helped them to survive but are now ineffective in their lives. I use EMDR, hypnosis, Therapeutic art techniques, somatic techniques, as well as Mindfulness based techniques like DBT, MBSR, and ACT to empower individuals to change their lives for the better.

I am a social worker because of the role models of two extraordinary social workers I had the privilege of working with in the 80s when I was a therapeutic horseback riding instructor. They put together an agricultural-based program with horseback riding and gardening for sexually abused teenagers and adults. I was so inspired by their work that when I had an opportunity to change my vocation, I followed their example.

I graduated from USM in 96 with my MSW. I received LCSW Supervision from Pat Gunkel who encouraged me to pay it forward.

My contribution to social work is to work experientially as my mentors have and to train interns to provide high-quality clinical social work to the abused and neglected.

I am pleased that USM and other universities have given me the opportunity to pass on the heritage of excellence to 19 MSW's and 10 BSW's since 2010.

“Let us be the change that we want to see in the world. Let us be the light we want to see in the world. The time to make this world a better place is now!”  
Avijeet Das

# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

**MIRANDA ESTES:**

Graduate Student  
Representative NASW-MS

**REGINALD VIRGIL:**

President of Black Lives Matter  
Mississippi

**MARY. ADLEYN FRASIER:**

F.R.E.E.D Public Affairs Officer &  
Young Democrats of Mississippi  
National Committee Woman

**SHELBI WHITE:**

Mississippi Conference on Social  
Welfare Scholarship

**RAEVIN WADE:**

Legislative Chair for the  
Mississippi Conference on Social  
Welfare

**MADDI OWEN:**

Do-er of All Things

**LAUREN SLAY:**

Integrated Health Scholarship

**KELSI FORD & NICOLE WIGGS**

BSW Who's Who

**BRIANA BURTON & KELSI FORD**

Davis Democracy Fellows

**TIFFANY COLE**

Best Citizen Award

**BRIANA BURTON & KELSI FORD**

UCONN Attendees

**HEATHER GILLESPIE:**

Honors Student: Title:  
"Perceptions of Juvenile  
Justice Workers in a Single  
Detention Facility in the Deep  
South" Furthermore, Heather  
has been accepted to present  
at the Undergraduate Research  
Symposium on April 17th,  
2021.

**KELSI FORD:**

Honors Student: Title: "Engaged  
Pedagogy and Teacher  
Discourse: A Critical  
Examination of Public Education  
in Mississippi"

# 2020-2021 STUDENTS OF THE YEAR

## BSW OVERALL WINNERS

Hattiesburg: Kelsi Ford  
Gulf Park: Destiny Marks

## BSW 1ST SEMESTER COHORT

Demecia Edmond

## BSW 2ND SEMESTER COHORT - HATTIESBURG

Miriam Thompson

## BSW 2ND SEMESTER COHORT - GULF PARK

Lori Macy

## BSW 3RD SEMESTER COHORT

Kelsi Ford

## BSW 4TH SEMESTER COHORT - HATTIESBURG

Marissa Blalock

## BSW 4TH SEMESTER COHORT - GULF PARK

Destiny Marks

## MSW OVERALL WINNER

Shelbi White

## MSW FULL-TIME ADVANCED STANDING

Martin Moore

## MSW FULL-TIME GRADUATING MAY 2021

Shelbi White

## MSW FULL-TIME GRADUATING MAY 2022

Andrea Dedeaux

## MSW PART-TIME/ADVANCED STANDING GRADUATING MAY 2021

Sparkle Davis

## MSW PART-TIME/ADVANCED STANDING MONDAY COHORT

Michaela Andrews

## MSW REGULAR PART-TIME COHORT

Reginald Virgil



# MEET THE 2020-2021 STUDENT OF THE YEAR OVERALL WINNERS



## MSW OVERALL STUDENT OF THE YEAR: SHELBI WHITE

"I am truly honored to be chosen as the University of Mississippi, MSW Student of the Year. During my time in this program I have administered the first innovative master-level field placement as the Men's Basketball Sport Social Worker, served as the founding member within the USM Strategizing Towards Racial Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Committee, advanced the launch of the newly statewide Mississippi Human Trafficking Council as the research assistant, and provided culturally responsive and identity informed clinical services as the MSW Social Work Intern at the USM Student Counseling Services. Upon graduation, my goals are to pursue my passion enhancing the provision of mental health services to the intercollegiate athletic community."

## BSW GULF PARK STUDENT OF THE YEAR: DESTINY MARKS

Desitny Marks is a 24-year-old BSW student living on the beautiful Gulf Coast! She loves helping out in any way that she can, and she loves learning, whether it be a new skill or a new fact! After graduation, she will be attending USM's Master of Social Work program with plans to obtain her LCSW in the future to provide clinical therapy to children and adolescents!



## BSW HATTIESBURG STUDENT OF THE YEAR: KELSI FORD

Kelsi Ford is the daughter of Stacey Ford and Anita Ford and is a native of Hattiesburg, MS. Throughout her time at Southern Miss, Kelsi has remained heavily involved on campus by serving as the Vice President of Judicial Affairs for the Student Government Association, President of the Afro-American Student Organization, Ambassador for the Honors College Leadership Council, and Mentor for the Luckyday Citizenship Program as well as a member of Eagle Connection, the Mighty Mu Nu Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, the Black-Eyed Susan's Leadership Honorary, and various community partners. Kelsi has also worked as a Learning Assistant for the History department, a Conversation Partner for the university's English Language Institute, and a Tour Guide for the Office of Admissions for three years. To add, Kelsi has completed her Honors Research Thesis titled "Engaged Pedagogy and Teacher Discourse: A Critical Examination of Public Education in Mississippi" under the advisement of Dr. Julie Reid. In August of 2021, Kelsi will study Crime and Politics in Ireland. Her awards and honors include, but are not limited to, Who's Who Among Students at Southern Miss, Outstanding Freshman of the Year (2018), Barbara Ross Gold Leaf Scholarship Award, Dean's list, and numerous honor societies. Upon graduation in December, Kelsi plans to further her education and pursue a career involving family law and social policy.





**Kaitlin Hermes**

**MSW Field Student of the Year - HBG Campus**

"Kaitlin has been a valuable addition to the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System over the course of her internship. She has excelled in two very dynamic placements within VA, Suicide Prevention and the Primary Care team. Kaitlin has cheerfully completed all manner of tasks from mailing caring communications and responding to crisis line calls to helping run advance care plan groups and conducting outreach for suicide prevention. She has demonstrated integrity, trustworthiness, and good judgment in her interactions with Veterans and her seeking of supervision when necessary. She uses supervision as a way to gain insight and is responsive to feedback. She is dedicated to improving her knowledge base and increasing skills to better serve the Veterans.

She works with each Veteran from a place of compassion and understanding, demonstrating the social work value of the dignity and worth of each person. In case review, she often has thoughtful comments and identifies additional areas of advocacy or other interventions that could best assist the Veteran. Her conduct throughout her internship has been one of excellence."

**BSW Field Student of the Year - GP Campus**

"As with most students that enter into the BSW SWIFTS Program, Jesse started the semester with doubts about the project that we would be consumed with all spring. However, despite not being placed in a traditional external agency, Jesse's positivity and optimism never wavered. Jesse approached this experience with grace and determination and has been a shining light in our class this entire semester. Jesse has worked well with his co-leader, has been a role model for the other students in his class, and he has adapted well to working with students from both campuses through a tele-therapy platform. Jesse participates every class when others do not, he is the driving force for class discussions and conversations, and is always open to feedback. I have enjoyed getting to teach Jesse this semester and watch his growth as a social worker. He is a natural leader and if I could have 10 Jesse's in my class, I would not be disappointed. On top of adjusting to this alternative field placement, Jesse has co-lead his group therapy sessions with our Intro Lab students like a true professional. He is confident, encouraging towards his co-leader, and always reliable. Jesse is beyond deserving of this honor as one of our SWIFTS students."



**Jesse Gruich**

**BSW Field Student of the Year - HBG Campus**

"During her internship with us at IDS Mrs. Pierce has shown the work ethic and skill level that we would expect to see in a master's level student. She has worked well within our various programs and interacting with the individuals with disabilities and families we serve with grace, humility, and empathy. She has a thirst for knowledge and continues to be mindful of what is being taught to her. She wants to do the best work she can and she has no problem in asking questions on how best to complete tasks or gain clarity to complete a task. Mrs. Pierce has displayed the qualities of a servant leader especially within our Self-Advocacy Ambassador Program, TRIAD AmeriCorps Program, & STEP UP to leadership Council. Our young people with disabilities gravitate toward her as she continuously displays her caring and empathetic nature toward them. She has not only continued to impress us, but our colleagues including our Associate Director. We know that she will continue to grow as a Social Worker and as she continues to find more self-confidence in her abilities. Believe us when we say she has truly set the bar super high for our future Social Work interns."



**Daryn Pierce**

Accomplishments & Achievements: Graduate Assistants

# Graduate Assistants

Fall 2020 - Spring 2021

---

Kirsten Abbott

Brian Beck

Laken Camp

Miranda Estes

McKenzie Garrison

Darian Krasner

Maddi Owen

Zanberg Phillip

Kelli Shoemake

Reginald Virgil

Raevin Wade



# Maddi Owen

*Graduate Assistant - Student of the Year 2020-2021*

Maddi Owen is a current Graduate Student and Graduate Assistant for USM's School of Social Work. She will be graduating with her Master of Social Work degree in May 2021 and has passed her licensure exam to become a LMSW post-graduation. Throughout her time at Southern Miss she has collaborated with students and faculty on the Strategizing Towards Racial Inclusion, Diversity, & Equity (STRIDE) committee to conduct trainings for faculty/staff and students and presented at NASW - MS this spring on STRIDE's work. She has also worked closely with the Field Education Team over the course of her graduate assistantship. Post-graduation, Maddi plans to stay in Mississippi to work with at-risk youth in a mental health setting.

***"Much deserved win for Maddi. She was the field office GA, but served others in the school happily. She kept me on track."***

***- Jenine Housewright***

***"Maddi is the type of student that we all desire to work with as a faculty member. In my eight years of working with students in the School of Social Work, Maddi is the most dedicated, dependable, enthusiastic, professional, and caring student I have had the pleasure of working with. She has been a huge part of the field team and has spent countless hours helping with any task we throw her way. Maddi will do great things as a social worker, and I am forever grateful for her contributions to the Field Office."***

***- Dr. Lauren Zakaras***

When asked about her time as a graduate assistant, Maddi said: "Being a graduate assistant at USM has given me so many opportunities that I am forever grateful for. Not only have I grown professionally and academically, but personally as well. I have formed connections and friendships that I know will last way beyond my time as a graduate assistant. I cannot go without thanking Dr. Lauren Zakaras and Jenine Housewright, both of whom I have worked closely with throughout the past two years. They have been great mentors, educators, and colleagues and I am so grateful for their support! It has been a pleasure working for the School of Social Work and it is something I will never forget."

# BSW CLUB BOARD MEMBERS OUTGOING & INCOMING

**HBG PRESIDENT: CESALEY HAMMOND**  
**GP PRESIDENT: ISRAEL RUSSELL**

The President of the BSW Club was responsible for planning and hosting board meetings. Cesaley's role consisted of creating student involvement, creating gift baskets for the nursing home residents that our club adopted, and orchestrating social work appreciation month. Cesaley also put together small gifts to show our gratitude to our social work instructors during the month of March.

**HBG VICE PRESIDENT: SHANIA DOUGLAS**  
**GP VICE PRESIDENT: SHERMEDRIA JOHNSON**

The Vice President of the BSW Club worked alongside the President. The Vice President was responsible for planning and hosting club meetings. Shania organized health initiatives, for both physical and mental health, each month to our club members. Shania also helped other board members to promote working together as a team.

**HBG TREASURER: OBRIONA BROWN**  
**GP TREASURER: PARIS ROBINSON**

The Treasurer of the BSW Club managed all of the club's finances. Obriona also coordinated fundraisers such as our Hub City Creamery profit share and our new BSW Club T-shirts. Overall, Obriona oversaw checks and balances for the BSW Club.

**HBG SECRETARY: MARA PICKERING**  
**GP SECRETARY: DESTINY MARKS**

The Secretary for the BSW Club is typically in charge of all membership information, dues, and survey forms. Due to COVID-19, the BSW Club decided to avoid memberships in case of any financial hardships brought on by the pandemic. Mara helped come up with ideas to engage students, such as virtual ice breaks, and helped other board members in need.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY: BRIANA BURTON**

The Assistant Secretary of the BSW Club worked alongside the Secretary. Briana takes role at each meeting and keeps up with attendance. Typically, she would assist in keeping up with membership dues; however, we did not do memberships due to the pandemic.

# BSW CLUB BOARD MEMBERS OUTGOING & INCOMING

## **HBG SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST: XERY JOHNSON**

The Social Media Specialist of the BSW Club works to spread the word on campus to inform students about the BSW Club and any upcoming events we have planned. Typically, the Social Media Specialist would attend meeting and events to take photographs for the BSW Club and post it on our social media pages.

## **VOTING CHAIR: ANDREA BOYKIN**

The Voting Chair for the BSW Club was dedicated to helping students get involved in politics. This included voter registration, updates on upcoming local and state elections, and researching issues pertaining to BSW students. Andrea will also cover information on COVID-19 vaccination locations and regulations.

## **ASSISTANT SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST: CHAR'KAYLA FRENCH**

The Assistant Social Media Specialist of the BSW Club worked alongside the Social Media Specialist. Char'Kayla created flyers and photos to be publicized on social media. The Social Media Specialists are responsible for any virtual publications used to inform BSW students. During the Fall 2020 semester, Xery and Char'Kayla created a BSW Newsletter each month to keep everyone updated on upcoming events and meetings.

## **STRIDE CHAIR: TANDRA GRIFFITH**

The STRIDE Chair of the BSW club works closely with the School of Social Work's STRIDE team. Tandra is a representative for the diverse BSW students. Tandra conveys important events and information discussed in meetings as it applies to BSW students. Overall, Tandra's greatest responsibility of STIDE Chair is to bring awareness to cultural competence and eliminate personal biases amongst students with equity whether it is race, sexuality, or religion.

## **GP SOCIAL MEDIA CHAIRS: ALEX ELLIOTT & CHASITY MURPHY**

## **GP PRE-SWK REPS: SAVANNAH DAVIS & SHAYLA LEE**

## **GP FUNDRAISING/EVENT CHAIR: CANDACE STEVISON**

---

## **INCOMING:**

### **PRESIDENT:**

Tori Ricks

### **VICE PRESIDENT:**

Demecia Edmond

### **TREASURER:**

DeMari Blakely

### **SECRETARY:**

Caliyah Moore

### **ASSISTANT SECRETARY:**

Danielle Ezell

### **SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST:**

Jasmine Plummer

### **ASSISTANT SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST:**

Tatum Brown

### **VOTING CHAIR:**

Tyra Briggs

### **STRIDE CHAIR:**

Raven Welch

# FALL 2020 BSW GRADUATES

---

Shenaida Angela  
Virginia Gwen Barham  
Melody Boone  
Courtney Brown  
Ahjana Buckley  
Mackenzie Cooper  
Maya Davis  
Sabria Green  
Audrey Jackson  
Kelsi Dionne Moore  
Kenlynn Morgan  
Megan Page  
Kerri Parker  
Anthony Parkinson  
Kayla Pettigrew  
Harlie Marlina Pounds  
Merritt Price  
Rashee Reed  
Jennifer Rivera  
Raevin Wade  
Amanda Wallace  
Rachel Westmoreland  
My'esha Whitsett

# 2021 BSW GRADUATES

---

## BSW Hattiesburg

Stephanie Andrews  
Jane Claire Arender  
Tamila Barnes  
Ronnisha Bates  
Blake Berry  
Marissa Blalock  
Toni Cockerham  
Kiera Johnson  
Joy Leise  
Lauren Magee  
Allyson McDonald  
Madison McLelland  
Catherine (Kat) Neal  
Daryn Pierce  
Mackenzie Piercy  
Taniji Rogers  
Destiny Sanders  
Anna Sims  
Kaylee Smith  
Alexius Washington  
Myja Watts  
Terrika White  
Nicole Wiggs

## BSW Gulf Coast

Erica Barron  
Ashley Boler  
Alexandria Elliott  
Heather Gillespie  
Jesse Gruich  
Shermedria Johnson  
Destiny Marks  
Aaliyah Morgan  
Chasity Murphy  
Jana Rabun  
Hannah Reitcheck  
Paris Robinson  
Israel Russell  
Joshua Seymour  
Jedidiah Spiller  
Candace Stevison  
Mildred Williams



# 2021 MSW GRADUATES

## MSW Full-Time Regular

Kaneishia Beene  
 Dana Bramlitt  
 Mary Brown  
 Dominique Common  
 McKenzie Garrison  
 Keturah Haggard  
 Robyn Harris  
 Alexandra Jwainat  
 Courtney Lee  
 Angela Mata  
 Taylor Metoyer  
 Laterrica Moore  
 Maddie Morgan  
 Lynn Pendleton  
 Christina Powell  
 Sarah Schlesinger  
 Cierra Sprowell  
 Shawnte Wash  
 Shelbi White

## MSW Part-Time Regular & Advanced Standing

Brian Beck  
 Kurtisha Brister  
 Winstead  
 Shantrice Brumfield  
 Yolanda Clark  
 Jennifer Coleman  
 Sparkle Davis  
 Shelby Dolbear  
 Miranda Estes  
 Stacy Fairley  
 Tenierdra Griffin  
 Angela Harrison  
 Kaitlin Hermes  
 Klara Kersanac  
 Catherine Locklear  
 Margaret McCrory  
 Meredith McGee  
 Jourdan McGrath  
 Shannon Murray  
 Maddi Owen  
 Amanda Steele  
 Angela Tatum  
 Antwon Wells  
 Melissa West  
 Jacquelyn Wilson  
 Charlotte Wingard

## MSW Full-Time Advanced Standing

Chelsea Barnett  
 Tiffany Cole  
 Darian Jones  
 Kyndra Kindler  
 Shannon Locknane  
 LaKeitha Luster  
 Alison McIntyre  
 Martin Moore  
 Haylee Morse  
 Summer Parker  
 Zanberg Phillip  
 Sydney Rester  
 Laekin Rowell  
 Lauren Kelli Shoemake  
 Lauren Slay  
 Kelly Smith  
 LaRayne Taylor



The 2020-2021 USM School of Social Work Annual Report was compiled and created by Dr. Jerome Kolbo, Ms. Rachel Lahasky, Maddi Owen & Raevin Wade

118 College Dr.  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406  
(601) 266-4163

<https://www.usm.edu/social-work/index.php>