



School of Social Work
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL WORK IN ACTION

Fall 2022



SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS



School is alive with fall activities

Hello Friends of the School of Social Work,

The fall season is always so exciting and invigorating. Campus is bustling again, new students are settling in, and we are getting engaged in many meaningful projects. The School is busy as usual delivering our research, teaching, and service missions. Take a look inside to find a sampling of what has been happening.

This newsletter is dedicated to our students as they are such a vital part of what we do here. We have included several pieces in this newsletter that give you more information about the ways we support students and the remarkable things they are doing while at the School. It is indeed one of the highlights of this work to see the future of the social work profession.

We also want to thank our donors who make so much of our work possible. Scholarships to students make an enormous impact, as you can see from the thank-you notes that we share inside.

Thank you to all of the alumni who completed the survey late last spring. It was wonderful to hear from you. We have an active and engaged alumni who would like to find more ways to connect to the School. Please stay tuned for more information about ways to get involved.

Go Green!

Anne K. Hughes, PhD, MSW, FGSA
Director
Associate Professor
School of Social Work

PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

First annual advocacy day event: **Social Work Advocacy in Action**

The profession of social work was founded in social change with the goal of promoting equality, inclusion, and social justice. Social workers are involved in advocacy across the micro–macro continuum. From clinical practice to community work, social workers are an integral part of the change process through individual and collective advocacy.

This coming spring, we will hold our first annual advocacy day event to explore and celebrate social work advocacy. Save the date and plan to join us on April 20, 2023, 6:00

PM–9:00 PM for “Social Work Advocacy in Action”—an exploration of advocacy across systems from community professionals, social work students, and faculty.

If you are interested in delivering a micro-talk (3–5 minutes) on how you use advocacy in your role as a social worker, let us know! Please email Associate Director for Instruction Monaca Eaton at eatonmon@msu.edu. Keep an eye out for more information on our social media channels. We can’t wait to celebrate this important and essential part of our profession with you!

SAVE THE DATE!

MSU SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Social Work Advocacy in Action

FIRST ANNUAL ADVOCACY DAY EVENT



APRIL 20, 2023 | 6–9 PM



OPEN TO FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS, ALUMNI
AND SSW COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Join us for an engaging and inspirational evening with talks focused on the importance of advocacy in professional social work, student poster presentations, and light refreshments.

ERICKSON KIVA, MSU MAIN CAMPUS
WATCH OUR SOCIALS FOR MORE INFO!



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

Student support services continue to adapt to shifting needs post-pandemic

Over the last few years, the School of Social Work has hired student support coordinators to actively engage and support students throughout their academic journeys. In their respective roles, both **Lily Burnstein** and **Raúl Vargas** have been pushed to adapt as they faced the various challenges the pandemic brought to social work students. Both had to revisit their student-centered approach and include the flexibility to adapt and shift to address the ever-changing needs of students and evolve with the professional social work landscape. Although the pandemic brought a wealth of challenges, they have been successful in being present for students and addressing their needs as they manifest.

Now that Lily has transitioned out of the School to pursue other career opportunities, **Emily Langhart** has taken the torch to fulfill the role of student support coordinator for the BASW Program. Emily will use her wealth of experience to navigate her new role and brings a new perspective to address the needs of students. We want to share a little about the work that Emily and Raúl will do and a little about their future projects. See insets.

Both Emily and Raúl navigate their roles differently as the needs of undergraduate students are different than the needs of graduate students. However, they plan on collaborating for future projects as some of the needs of their students overlap. They are excited to seek new and creative ways to collaborate and strengthen programmatic efforts while supporting one another in the coming semesters. They are both excited to share their accomplishments and ways to support students and help the School of Social Work to grow and further become a sought-after institution where students know they will be successful because of the support and resources that were offered during their academic journey.



Emily Langhart is excited to begin her role as student support coordinator for BASW students. For the past two years, she served as an advisor for MSW students. The knowledge and experience gained from that role will help her tremendously to work alongside BASW students

as they pursue their social work education. She is here to help connect students with resources and offer support with professional and academic development and to serve students who may have needs outside the classroom.

For students seeking professional development support, she will help with resume building, personal statements for graduate school, networking and informational interviewing skills, mock interviews, as well as job searching. She will also focus on aiding students with navigating the social work field, learning

about the differences between macro and micro social work, and finding social work careers. For students seeking academic support (outside of advising), she will assist with finding on- and off-campus resources, navigating My Spartan Story, finding experiential learning opportunities, and connecting students to any other resources and supports students may need.

Emily will be connecting with other offices and networks within and outside of the University to ensure she is able to provide students with holistic support during their time in the program and beyond.

Emily will prioritize working with BASW students to find out what support they need most and curating resources, events, etc., to meet those needs. She is looking forward to building relationships with students and making sure that every student has what they need to be successful and make an impact in the field of social work. Emily loved her social work education and is so thankful for the people who were alongside her on that journey. She feels honored to hopefully be a small part of that same journey for other students.



As the student support coordinator of the MSW Program, **Raúl Vargas** had to adapt very quickly when he was hired during the first year of the pandemic. Using a bottom-up perspective and a student-centered framework, Raúl has focused on hearing the needs of students and used that

feedback to curate programmatic efforts.

During his first year in this role, he focused mainly on developing career resources with the support of enthusiastic faculty and staff, as students were uncertain about employment prospects as they graduated in a time of uncertainty during the early years of the pandemic. These newly developed professional resources included effective resume development and strategies on how to interview remotely as the career-seeking landscape has been pushed to evolve in that direction.

With the pandemic shifting into a new stage, so have the needs of students. This has placed Raúl in a position to be innovative in developing new resources for students. In recent months, he has been given the

opportunity to integrate two new additions to his role as student support coordinator: academic advisor for the MSW Weekend Program and faculty advisor for the Phi Alpha Honor Society student group, both of which he has found to be incredibly rewarding. These new roles have given him a different avenue to reach students and explore new solutions for student concerns.

Currently, Raúl looks to innovate support for students by exploring new ways to include Michigan State University partners in his efforts. He is examining ways for current students to begin building those professional relationships with our ever-supportive partners so students may begin their post-graduation journey with those relationships already established. This will also expose students to new areas of social work that they may not have known existed.

The field of social work is growing and expanding its reach. Raúl believes that giving students a more holistic and expansive view of social work in the professional arena can give them the courage to explore new ways to use their social work degree in a field outside of traditional social work. Raúl will also be working diligently with staff to further develop components of the MSW Program to provide the School with a competitive edge in attracting talented and passionate prospective social work students.

Donor scholarship support eases financial burdens and is deeply appreciated

Student scholarships make a large impact on the students who receive them. Whether it's offsetting the cost of books or helping to pay for gas to get to their field placement, scholarships help students stay in school. Today's students are often juggling multiple demands, and financial stress can interfere with their ability to succeed. Support from donors ensures that students get the assistance they need to stay and complete our programs. Some students share how meaningful this support is to them:

- “I would like to express my deepest gratitude for this scholarship. It is an honor to accept this gift to further my career goals in child welfare. Upon graduation, I aim to become a foster care worker and help children in need of a supportive, loving, stable, and supportive home. I feel extremely thankful to have been given this award as it pushes me to keep going!”
- “This scholarship will help me pay for my graduate school applications and supplies to help me achieve my goal of becoming the first person in my family to attend graduate school. This funding will help me to remain focused on what's most important: my education. I come from a very poor background, and I have always had to work hard, but I'm hoping that in my senior year I can just stay focused and do my very best.”
- “I am sincerely honored to have been selected as the recipient of this scholarship. Thank you for your generosity, which has allowed me to pursue my Master of Social Work at MSU. I am currently in my first semester of the clinical program, with intentions to work with the Deaf community in the future. Because of your generosity, I also look forward to completing certificates in child welfare and trauma practice. Thank you, again, for your thoughtful and generous gift.”
- “I would like to express my extreme gratitude in regard to receiving financial assistance through this scholarship. Working full-time, undergoing an internship, and taking a full class load requires me to be very organized and very dedicated to obtaining my goals. The financial support from this scholarship allows me to continue being motivated to put forth my best efforts in all that I am and all that I do to allow me to develop into a strong and vigorous social worker ready to enter the field and make a difference in the lives of others. Being in an MSW program is much different than an undergraduate program, and there are typically many less resources and opportunities to receive financial assistance. With your help, I have found continued motivation and a financial resource to continue on in this program and obtain my MSW. I am extremely grateful for your contribution to my education, and I hope that you are aware your assistance will only further help me achieve my dream to make a difference in the lives of others.”
- “Thank you so much for providing me with this scholarship. This lifts a huge burden off my shoulders, as I've just run into some costly vehicle repairs! My sincerest gratitude for the aid. You are helping MSU students in many ways!”
- “I would like to convey my gratitude to you for awarding me this scholarship. I was recently forced into working part-time, and I do not have financial support to help offset my monthly expenses. This scholarship eases my burden of surviving while being able to remain in the social work program and focus on achieving success as a future leader in the field.”
- “I want to express my deepest gratitude for your generous contribution. Because of you, I will have the opportunity to broaden my skill set as I continue to build upon my career in political and legislative advocacy. Thank you for lessening the financial burden on social work change makers as we seek to make the world a better place.”
- “This scholarship has helped me pay for tuition and helped reduce some stress about paying for school, books, and housing.”
- “I am beyond grateful for your generosity. The financial support I am receiving will positively impact me in various ways. It will alleviate my financial stress around affording my education, and it will allow me to focus more on the general stress of being a student. I'm sure this scholarship will allow me to be a better scholar and classmate. As a first-generation student that grew up in a low-income family, it's important for me to establish financial security in my early adulthood, and—with your help—I will be able to do that. Thank you for caring for my education and for playing an important part in my success in graduate school. You are truly helping me immensely, and I'm thankful.”

Student success in the digital age: Hybrid for the win

Student success speaks to both persistence and retention of students as they meet their educational, personal, and career goals. The BASW Program staff has been focused on understanding the unique pathways students take to become a professional social worker and wrapping students in support as they reach for their goals.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the pivot to remote learning and student services caused the BASW team to explore the use of digital technology in supporting students. With a focus on consistent outreach and engagement, the BASW team works to make sure that not only are they providing information necessary to navigate MSU but doing so in a way that meets the student where they are at and does not rely on the student reaching out to the team.

“We are still working to find the right balance between in-person, hybrid, and digital support for our students. We have seen that barriers to access can be greatly reduced by using tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams to work with our students. Another benefit of hosting events in online spaces is that it allows us to have a digital copy or archive of the information to share with students who were not able to attend. Everyone has gotten very comfortable using digital communication; we are trying to really capitalize on that to build community and support in various spaces,” BASW Director Monaca Eaton shared when talking about the changing landscape of higher education.

For example, this fall, BASW Student Support Coordinator Emily Halling put together a “pathway” for graduating students to explore in both synchronous and asynchronous spaces. This included a pdf with links

to videos from the team, options for group Zoom info sessions, links for digital in-person or Zoom appointments, and a curation of University resources to be supported in their post-BASW Program plans.

Academic Advisor Jamie Griggs is finding a higher level of engagement using Zoom for video appointments than with office-based appointments. “We are definitely seeing that students have a lot on their plates and are juggling so many different responsibilities. Using tech to reach out to our students to make individual connections helps them

to stay connected to their goals and know they are not alone in their journey. Being easily available to meet with them “where they are” using Zoom, reaffirms that all of their story matters and that we can consistently work together to overcome obstacles and avoid roadblocks and unnecessary detours.”

Moving forward, the BASW Program plans to keep using technology to promote access and in the support of learning goals but still plans to make sure students have access to in-person support services, events, and opportunities.



The BASW Team: L-R, Director Monaca Eaton, Academic Advisor Jamie Griggs, and Student Support Coordinator Emily Halling at a freshman fall welcome event.

Dr. Terry Mizrahi visits MSU School of Social Work

Voting Is Social Work!

Dr. Terry Mizrahi recently visited MSU Social Work as a guest lecturer to promote her nationwide initiative Voting Is Social Work (<https://votingissocialwork.org/>), which is “a nonpartisan campaign that provides social workers with the knowledge and tools to raise awareness about voting and to increase voting registration and participation.”

Dr. Mizrahi, an emeritus professor from the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College of the City University of New York, is a nationwide leader in macro social work practice and education. Currently, she co-chairs both the

Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice in Social Work and the National Social Work Voter Mobilization Campaign. She is author of five books and monographs 75 articles.

As a “scholar-activist” fighting for social, health, and voter justice, Dr. Mizrahi met with the MSU social work community over a few days in mid-October to discuss the importance of activism, the future of social work, and need for social workers to vote and advocate for vulnerable populations.

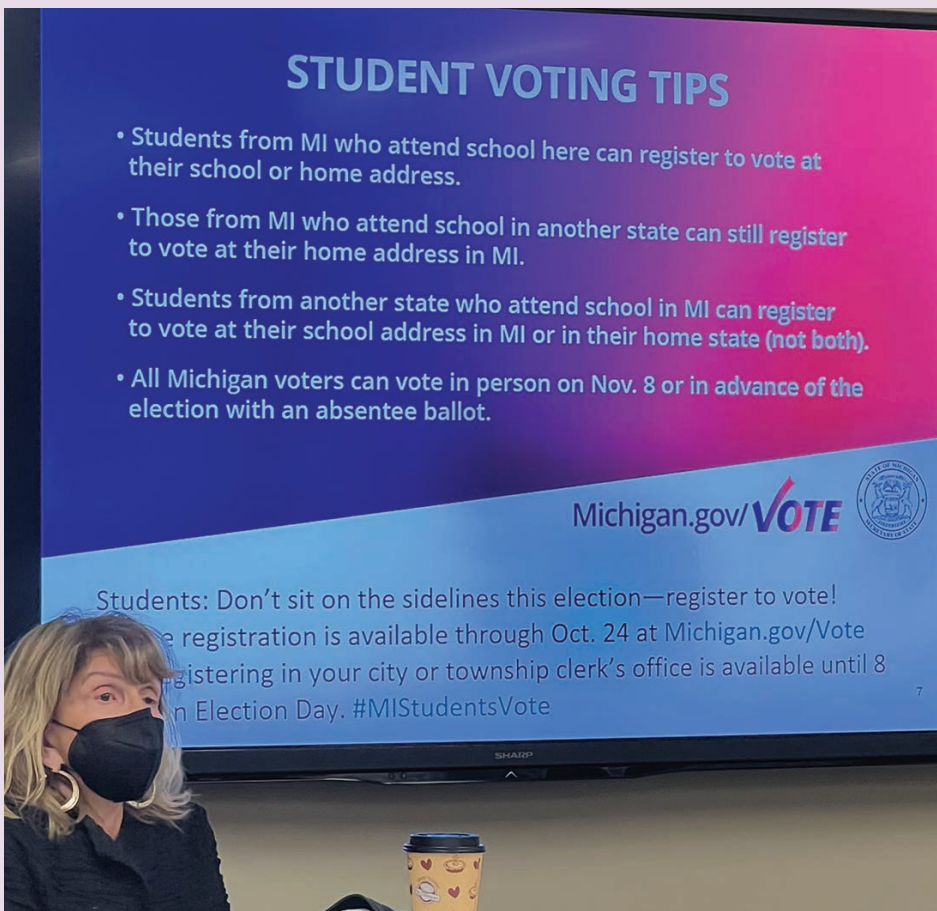
Dr. Mizrahi lectured in several macro and policy classes during her visit. Her discussions with

students demonstrated how social work advocacy links clinical and community practice. Dr. Mizrahi explored her conceptual framework from casework to internal and external change agents to enthusiastic policy and organizational leadership students in the MSW Program. She also held one-on-one meetings with doctoral students, faculty, and field faculty. Doctoral student **Joana Lampe** and joint Law and Social Work MSW student **Joshua Cambri** worked closely with Dr. Mizrahi and helped guide important graduate social work conversations.

Her visit culminated in a joint lecture with the NASW–MI Executive Director **Duane Breijak** in the MSU Union with over 100 undergrad and graduate students, faculty, staff, and community members in attendance. Her talk, “Voting Is Social Work!” highlighted the history of discriminatory voting policy in the United States and the impact of advocating for fair policies that improve voting access for vulnerable populations. Mizrahi explored how voter suppression tactics have included felony voting laws, strict voter ID rules, purging voter lists, reducing poll locations, and gerrymandering.

Breijak then followed with local initiatives that NASW–MI is undertaking to get Michigan residents registered to vote. He noted that in 2022, 12 BSW or MSW candidates ran for office in Michigan. Breijak discussed what issues were at stake for the November mid-term elections and how students could get involved with NASW–MI.

Despite the packed schedule and overcast skies, the series of macro and policy events was a great success!



Dr. Terry Mizrahi brings Voting Is Social Work! to MSU.



Dr. Fei Sun has been chosen for AgeAlive's 2022 *Research in Aging Award*. This award is presented to an MSU faculty member or team for leadership in aging-related research that adds significant value to lifelong wellbeing through a body of rigorous, innovative scholarship. It recognizes Dr. Sun's substantial contribution to the field of aging and to the quality of life of older adults through his lifelong commitment to aging-related teaching, community outreach, research, and scholarship.



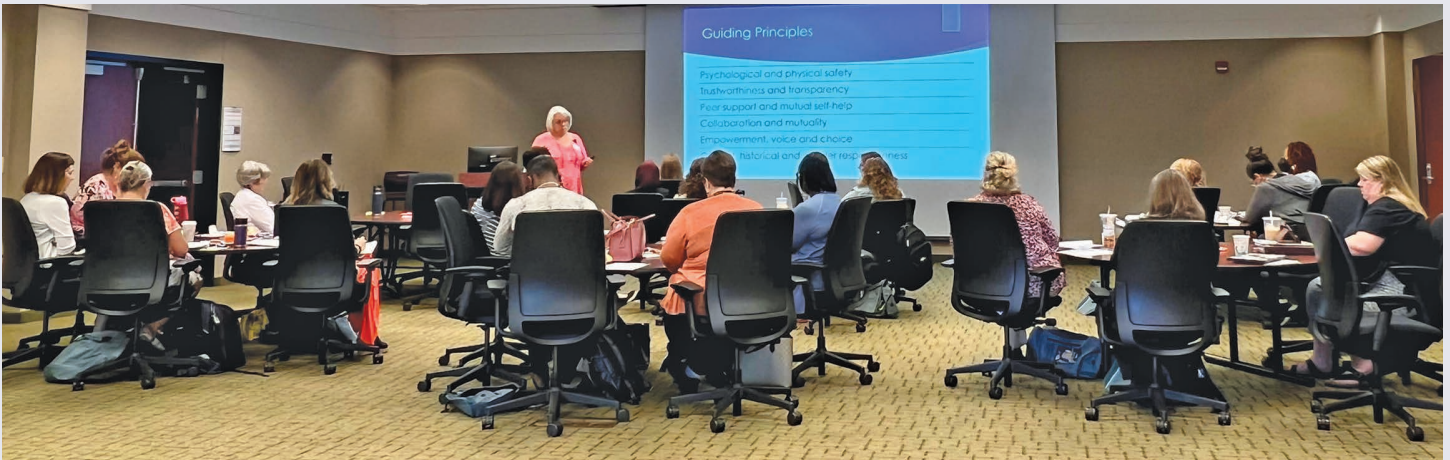
Dr. Gary Anderson was chosen as 2022 *Ambassador of the Year* by the Michigan Federation for Children and Families. This award is presented to a Federation member who embodies the core values of the Federation: all children deserve excellence, strategic advocacy, partnerships and collaboration, and equity, diversity, and inclusiveness.



MSW student Polina Naumova has been chosen as the 2022 Association for Community Organization and Social Action (ACOSA) *Outstanding Student Award*. This award honors a current BSW or MSW student who is doing excellent work in the field of community practice, especially in partnership with marginalized or under-represented populations.



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS



Teaching retreat: Reflect, refresh, and grow

As the bustle of the budding fall semester came to be, School of Social Work teaching faculty gathered at the Henry Center for Executive Development for a day-long teaching retreat. School Director **Dr. Anne Hughes** and Associate Director for Instruction **Monaca Eaton** envisioned this as a day to gather before the semester to focus on strengthening and expanding our teaching skills to best support students.

To determine topics for the retreat, all teaching faculty were sent a survey to gather information on what topics would best support their teaching this academic year. The top two requests were for content regarding trauma-informed teaching and facilitating difficult and charged conversations.

Through their engagement and meaningful dialogues, our faculty demonstrated their commitment to teaching the next generation of social workers. Having the opportunity to come together outside of the classroom to share our experiences, strengths, and struggles was a valuable opportunity for reflection and growth.

Associate Director for Teaching **Monaca Eaton** shared, “It is so special when we get the time to connect with each other and share resources and ideas. Our colleagues are doing so many meaningful things in the classroom and are always so gracious in sharing their ideas and materials with each other. The more we share, the stronger our teaching becomes as we work to continuously improve the learning environment for our students.”

We offer a thank you to our presenters for the day! Our morning session, *Trauma Informed Teaching*, was led by our colleagues **Cheryl Williams-Hecksel**, **Kelley Blanck**, and MSW student **Nabeeha Mahmood**. Lunch break sessions included **Dr. Erica Shiflett-Chila** with a hands-on *Desire to Learn* training, and **Dr. Eleanor Louson** from the MSU Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation on the use of the *UnEssay*. Our afternoon concluded with a workshop on guiding principles for difficult conversations by MSU Ombudsperson **Dr. Shannon Burton**.



School of Social Work
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HELLO, ALUMNI

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Let us know what you have been up to

Invest in initiatives meaningful to you

Students enter the profession of social work with a strong commitment to service, integrity, and competence. As social work educators, we believe that the good our graduates do is multiplied and extended across generations, and we are honored to help prepare them for their service.

In keeping with land-grant principles of education, research, and outreach/service, we take seriously our

responsibility to the education and training of students as well as outreach for community engagement.

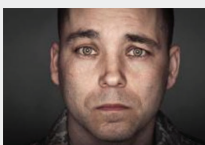
If you share our values, please consider supporting these efforts with a gift to one of the scholarship and endowment funds highlighted below. A full list of giving opportunities and links to donate online can be found at socialwork.msu.edu/Alumni-and-Giving/Endowments.



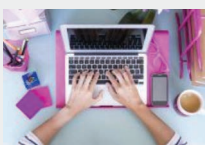
Robert Little Scholarship Fund
This fund provides scholarships for graduate students with a career interest in child welfare, with preference for those who want to work in kinship care.



Dr. Mary Bremer Barron Scholarship Fund
This fund supports scholarships for students, with preference for those from the greater Flint community.



MSW Veterans Scholarship
This fund supports veterans by providing scholarships for study in the MSW program.



Paul P. and Donna K. Freddolino Endowment for Distance Education
This fund supports the School of Social Work's distance educational programs, including both student support and the development of new educational technologies.



The School of Social Work Endowed Fund
This fund provides a range of supports for the School, including student scholarships, support for faculty research, and support for School programs.



Future Leaders Endowed Scholarship in Social Work
This fund supports graduate students through scholarships, assistantships, or fellowships.



Gary R. Anderson Endowed Fund for Child Welfare Leadership
This fund supports workshops, lectures, and scholarships in the School related to child welfare leadership and workplace development.



Chance at Childhood Endowment Fund
This fund supports research, education, training, and outreach concerning intervention and treatment for at-risk children and families; children's justice; and coordination of professionals dealing with at-risk children and families.



Youth Education and Support
This fund helps build, test, and disseminate research focused on real ways to increase child and youth access to accurate, non-stigmatized knowledge of mental illness and recovery.



John R. Sougstad Memorial Scholarship
This fund supports MSW students who are entering the field of school social work and serves to honor the memory of John R. Sougstad.



SOCIAL WORK IN ACTION • Fall 2022

Contributing writers: Monaca Eaton, Pilar Horner, Emily Langhart, Anne Hughes, Raúl Vargas

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MSU School of Social Work

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A Mission of Social Justice and Positive Change: The MSU School of Social Work is dedicated to educating students for ethical, competent, responsive, and innovative social work practice, and to conducting and disseminating high quality research that improves the well-being of the most vulnerable in society. Our teaching, research, and outreach synergistically promote social justice, positive change, and solutions to the problems facing diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Michigan State University is an equal opportunity educational employer.



School of Social Work
College of Social Science
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



OUR SCIENCE **TRANSFORMS THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE**
AND INSPIRES LEADERS