Research & Community Outreach Newsletter

FORETHOUGHT

As William Gibson famously observed, the future is with us now, it is just not evenly distributed. As we move towards Tier One status and recognition as a national research university Gibson’s observation is particularly germane. Indeed, our colleagues are already generating new social work knowledge in the manner of a national research university. From innovative individual research projects, to cutting-edge scholarly articles, and forward-looking research centers, our school is advancing the frontiers of social work research. The context in which this is occurring is, however, one of transition, marked by systems, resources and supports that can no longer keep pace with the rapid rate of change; here the future is unevenly distributed, with traditional approaches and innovative, disruptive approaches living in an uneasy cohabitation.

At its deepest level, the Research Development Office (RDO) is a builder of bridges to the future as we become a national research university; bridges that connect us to the emergent in a clearly articulated, purposeful fashion. The RDO is working with community research partners, the university’s office of research, multi-disciplinary collaborators, and social work researchers from across the country, to better align our resources and supports with the work and aspirations of our faculty colleagues.

The awards, collaborations and ambitious projects that are featured in this issue of the research newsletter epitomize this notion of building bridges to the future. They share an orientation towards problem-solving emergent unmet social needs calling upon the best-available tools and knowledge, while also aiming to push the envelope beyond what is known. In them we see guideposts to the future of social work research, and the betterment of the lives of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations.

EDUCATIONAL OFFERING

Semester in Review
Brown Bag
Vijay Pillai, PhD—Introduction to Multilevel Analysis
Randy Basham, PhD—Overview of Scholarship Methods
Sarah Panepinto, Director, Grants & Contract Services—Grants & Contract Services
Dr. Hoefer is taking an on-line course called Confident Teleseminar Leadership. Confident Teleseminar Leader provides online training for professionals to learn to create, and present teleseminars and webinars from an educational perspective, including understanding the technology and marketing of teleseminars and webinars. The information gained from this 16-week training will be used to create and present trainings in these ways for the Center for Advocacy, Nonprofit and Donor Organizations (CAN-DO) and for continuing education webinars.

Dr. Alexa Smith-Osborne will attend a two day research training symposium sponsored by the Military Child Education Coalition and the University of Virginia Youth-Nex Center for Youth Development for military children. It also provides for a follow-on consultation with the Center to develop the targeted research projects. The award also provides an additional stipend upon initial publication of research findings. The fellowship proposal included the Youth Resilience study and the Promoting Resilience Among Enlistees study, a prevention research project for high school enlistees during their early enlistment and deployment phases.

Dr. Catheleen Jordan and Dr. Peter Lehmann will use the award to hire consultants to help put together a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) grant entitled Desistance From Crime Over the Life Course. The grant builds on the Innovative Community Academic Partnership (iCAP) funded Youthful Offender Diversion Project grant (YODA) in which UTA faculty collaborate with the Tarrant County Courts to treat 17-25 year old youth who have committed a violent act toward a non-intimate partner (usually the Mother). With NI funding, Drs. Jordan and Lehmann will expand the grant to Dallas County and compare the primarily white, non-Hispanic participants treated currently with Hispanic youth.

Dr. Pillai will be conducting initial data analysis on the relationship between reproductive health and son preferences in Asian countries such as Pakistan and India. The finding from these analysis will be used to seek funding for research on son preference. Dr. Pillai is hoping to compete for grants concerning reproductive health in an international setting. The unique component of the research includes the phenomenon of son preference which is poorly understood. Both exploratory and explanatory research is needed to effectively intervene and restrict sex selective abortions leading to skewed sex ratios.

Dr. Small will visit the University of Nairobi to develop international study opportunities designed to enable students to experience a new culture, to see different social service systems and gain insights into the needs of people in the US and abroad. Since international research is his focus, he intends to explore data collection possibilities that will allow him to investigate the intersection between the twin epidemics of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and HIV in Nairobi Kenya.
Dr. Moon will take a seminar about HLM (Hierarchical Linear Model) which is an approach to specify and estimate relationship between variables that have been observed at different levels of hierarchical data structures. In his study, counties and cities will be a possible level. The research is unique in that there is growing recognition and evidence that parenting and family interventions may be critical in reducing family risk factors associated with substance use among adolescents. Although service providers have strongly agree on the need for developing and implementing a multi-component model including parents, few trials of multi-component models have been under-taken. Thus, there is a need for the creation and examination of the efficacy of multi-component substance use prevention program. Dr. Moon contributes to prevention efforts by proposing to develop a multi-component substance use prevention program that includes a parent training and social network based training component.

Dr. Adorno intends to use her award to support the first phase of an exploratory study of Florida’s advance directive statute 765.401(1) (h). This statute allows licensed clinical social workers (LCSW), upon the approval of the hospital’s bioethics committee, to serve as surrogate decision makers for incapacitated and developmentally disabled adults with no family, friends, or guardian who can make medical decisions for them. Phase I involves preliminary interviews with key stakeholders (social workers, bioethics committee members, non-profit and for-profit guardians, hospital attorney, etc.) to explore their experiences with the LCSW as surrogate role and the subsequent decisions that were made. Outcomes from Phase I will be used to develop an interview guide. Phase II involves a more extensive and focused study on the themes derived from Phase I. In particular, the study will focus on the factors that contribute to practice behaviors and the viability of this role for future care of elders. Dr. Adorno plans to use the pilot data to obtain external funding for a Phase III.

Dr. Cronley will attend the Inter-University Consortium for Political Social Research (ICPSR) training on mixed methods research. This training will provide the opportunity to acquire more specialized techniques for integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods. She plans to apply these enhanced research skills to a study exploring the extent of collective efficacy among groups of individuals who are homeless, and how participating in projects such as community gardens may strengthen a sense of collective efficacy within these communities. Subsequent research may study how such group-level interventions can help to improve individual outcomes. The proposed research is unique in that very little research in social work has been done exploring the group dynamics within homelessness and more critically, how these dynamics can be leveraged to help individuals who are homeless to reintegrate back into stable housing.
COLLABORATIONS

Criminal Justice
Drs. Courtney Cronley and Elissa Madden, along with Dr. Jaya Davis of the
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, are currently engaged in an
interdisciplinary study exploring the use of service learning in social work
and criminal justice higher education. While both disciplines are community-
based and practice-oriented, the service-learning pedagogy is often
under-utilized compared to other forms of experiential learning such as field
education. Moreover, very few cross-disciplinary studies of service learning
exist. It is expected that the results of this study will inform discipline-specific
recommendations about how to increase use of service learning among
faculty members and identify creative ways by which to use service learning
to engage students and promote social justice.

School of Urban and Public Affairs and Criminal Justice
Dr. Small is working with both the School of Urban and Public Affairs and the
Criminal Justice departments on the Mankind Project. The project aims to
engage otherwise ‘unemployable’ individuals in paid employment
constructing low-cost modular homes. This is a social venture that
constructs modular homes to the benefit of the workers. The workers gain
valuable skills, receive psychosocial benefits from regular employment, earn
a living wage and stock or share for each house that they are able to
contribute to.

Nursing
Dr. Blakey is currently working with Dr. Judy Leflore on a project proposal
designed to prepare advanced nursing and social work students to provide
comprehensive family centered acute, critical, and chronic health care to
neonates, children and their families in a variety of settings. A second
purpose of the project proposal is to increase the number of culturally
competent neonatal, pediatric nurse and healthcare social work practitioners
who are educated within a technologically enhanced interprofessional
education (IPE) environment. These objectives will be accomplished by
linking the curricula and clinical practice of advanced practice nursing
students and social work students through gaming technology,
web-conferencing, and high-fidelity, mannequin-based simulation. In
addition, this multi-technological project will provide practice opportunities
with telehealth and standardized patient (SPs) scenarios, in order for
students to learn to work together to develop a holistic, family-centered,
team-based approach to meeting the physical and psychosocial needs of
infants, children, and their families. The overall goal of this integrated inter-
professional learning project is to prepare neonatal and pediatric nurse
practitioner students to deliberatively work together with social work stu-
dents for the common goal of building a collaborative, respectful and effect-
ive patient-centered relationships to improve patient safety and quality.

ANNOUNCEMENT

FALL 2012—COLLOQUIUM
Social Innovation for
Change: Microfinance,
Individual Development
Accounts & Social
Enterprise for Meaningful
Social Impact

Sponsored by the Research
Development Office (RDO) and
Innovative Community Academic
Partnership (ICAP)
COLLABORATIONS cont’d

Criminal Justice

Drs. Catheleen Jordan and Peter Lehmann are currently working with Dr. Alejandro del Carmen from Criminal Justice on the Youthful Offender Diversion Project (YODA). Violence against a parent or family member by youth is a criminal offense subject to arrest and prosecution in all 50 states. This social problem is of interest to researchers and practitioners because these youth represent a group at risk for continuing such behavior into adulthood. Consequently, there is a pressing need for courts and community programs to assist adolescent youth to end their violence by locating pathways that will promote their family’s safety and well-being and encourage nonviolent lifestyles.

To this end, a proposal was submitted to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) aimed at articulating the processes involved with adolescent desistance from violence. The purpose of this NIJ submission is to evaluate a voluntary three-phase court diversion program for youth aged 17-24 charged with violence against a parent or family member. The study seeks to establish whether an intervention aimed specifically at desistance from violence will be more effective compared to court-ordered treatment as usual (TAU), one size fits all Anger Management Group. The three-phase Youthful Offender Diversion Project (YODA) treatment consists of (1) assessment and case management, (2) individual Solution-focused Brief Therapy, and (3) family therapy plus teleherence (a technology component involving texting messages and reminders to youth). YODA is currently being pre-tested in Tarrant County Court 5 and preliminary results have been promising and have created some “buzz” in the field. Faculty have presented their findings at Conferences in Washington DC; Basel, Switzerland, and Scotland. YODA will be expanded into Dallas County Courts upon receipt of the grant.

CONGRATULATIONS

Katherine Sanchez, LCSW, PhD was awarded a $30,000 grant by the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, in cooperative agreement with the US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health to conduct a literature review and author a technical report, *Eliminating Disparities through the Integration of Behavioral Health and Primary Care Services for Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and Persons with Limited English Proficiency: A Review of the Literature*.

The technical report provides a comprehensive summary of literature on the state of integrated care for racial and ethnic minority and LEP populations, highlighting cultural and linguistic competency and best practices in integrated health care. The report also examines highly relevant materials including reports and articles from both peer and non-peer reviewed publications, compiles the available evidence from practice, and summarizes the knowledge base of cultural and linguistic competence in the delivery of primary health and behavioral health care.

A key purpose of the report was to provide a context for an expert panel meeting, setting a platform of identifying best practices in integrated health care while examining approaches on key elements needed to improve overall health outcomes and reduce health and behavioral health disparities. Recognized experts in the fields of health, mental health and addictions, integrated care, and cultural and linguistic competency met to share their best practices, offer insights and provide recommendations to help create national models to improve integrated health care for racial and ethnic minority and LEP populations.

Dr. Sanchez also authored the seminal consensus report, which contains the consensus statements and recommendations from the 2-day expert panel meeting, *Eliminating Behavioral Health Disparities through the Integration of Behavioral Health and Primary Care Services for Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and those with Limited English Proficiency*. 

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