Fall 2013

Stimulus, Fall/Winter 2013

UT College of Social Work

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special report:
Mental Health Needs of Tennessee Veterans

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Becky Bolen Chairs New Trauma Certificate Program | Susan Bryant Puts New Focus on Student Recruitment
Children’s Mental Health Research Services Center Helps Treatment Programs Improve Youth Outcomes
Welcome to the Fall 2013 issue of Stimulus. This semester the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, College of Social Work has added a very important component to our academic program with the introduction of the Trauma Treatment Graduate Certificate, open to currently enrolled MSSW students. I am very excited that the college can provide this resource to students as they prepare to meet the needs of so many in our world who suffer the results of severe trauma.

In this issue of Stimulus, we are presenting the key findings of a special report on the mental health needs of Tennessee Veterans. The Social Work Office of Research and Public Service has prepared this needs assessment as a service to the entire state of Tennessee in order help define the best avenues for focusing available funding and energies to assist our veterans and their families.

Active military personnel and Veterans are very much a part of the academic life at our college. Here we are spotlighting three individuals currently deployed across the world that are or have been enrolled in the CSW Online MSSW program. I couldn’t be prouder of these and other members of the military and Veterans who are developing social work skills through our programs.

It seems like each time an issue of Stimulus is published I have good news to announce about the wonderful faculty, alumni, and students of our college. You will be pleased to read about Dr. David A. Patterson being named by the Chancellor for Excellence in Academic Outreach. Dr. Sherry Cummings has been recognized by UT for her Big Orange Big Idea in relation to helping first-generation students to be more successful at our university.

This issue also takes a look at the Online DSW program, which is now entering its third year of operation. A media-enhanced feature will allow you to hear firsthand from students about their experiences in the program.

Additionally, in this issue of Stimulus you will be introduced to Susan Bryant, the new Coordinator for Student Recruitment and Student Affairs. We are looking forward to all the new ways that Susan will reach out to potential students during the next year.

If you have not yet reserved seats for the November 8, 2013, CSW Homecoming Gala, I want to personally invite you to do so. And consider dropping by Henson Hall on the Knoxville Campus sometime to see our new Big Orange player piano that the university received as a gift this fall. We hope the students, faculty, and staff enjoy this beautiful instrument as they gather for impromptu musical events in the first floor lounge area.

Thank you for all you do as proud alums and supporters of our college.

Dean M. Jones
Military Personnel Earn MSSW Degrees

CSW Online Master’s Program Allows Active Duty Servicemen and Servicewomen to Prepare for Social Work Careers

by Kirche Rogers

“The need for experienced social workers who understand the military is very important,” says SFC Juan Garcia, an MSSW student who is currently serving his country in Afghanistan. The college has reached out to servicemen and servicewomen through its Online MSSW program, accommodating their special circumstances to allow them to earn a master’s degree while still on active duty.

The program gives members of the military the opportunity to complete their degrees wherever they are deployed. From registering students for classes to structuring courses so that class resources are easy to find, the Online MSSW program is committed to helping these online learners succeed.

Kate McCleron-Chaffin, director of the college’s Online MSSW program, explains, “UT College of Social Work’s Online MSSW program provides the opportunity for soldiers to work on their degrees while anywhere in the world that there is an internet connection. Often there is downtime during the day that soldiers can use toward earning a degree so that when they return home they can use their skills to effectively help others. Many soldiers need to hit the ground running when they return and this degree allows them the freedom to do just that.”

Three military students recently described their experiences in the program and discussed their plans for a future in social work. Here are their stories.

Bruce Marshall

Bruce Marshall graduated from the MSSW online program in 2011. He is on his sixth deployment in Southwest Asia. In his current role, he leads a team of chaplains and chaplain assistants who provide counseling, pastoral care, and worship for all the personnel on his base. Prior to this deployment, he developed a resiliency program for a clinical study addressing military suicide rates for the USAF Research Laboratory.

Marshall has also served as a licensed mental health clinician. He believes that his multifaceted career has helped him define his role as a social worker. “Each role has allowed [me] the wondrous privilege of walking alongside others on their life’s path, listening to their stories, and hopefully helping them find balance, purpose, and healing in their lives,” he says.

One of his most rewarding experiences has been working with young servicemen and servicewomen during times of tremendous stress. That work is one of the factors that drove him to pursue an MSSW. “My deepest aspiration is to continue taking care of these kids. They are our children. And, they have gone to the depths for us, whether we personally asked them to or not. They are strong and courageous and smart and resilient,” he says.

Juan Garcia has experienced a very long career in the military—a total of 19 years to be exact. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1994 and was stationed in Japan as well as North Carolina. After a brief time away from the military, he enlisted in the Army. Garcia decided to enroll in the college’s Online MSSW program after working in the Warrior Transition Unit while at Fort Leonard Wood.

As a squad leader he helped many veterans with their transition after returning from combat, serving as a leader, mentor, financial advisor, marriage counselor, and life coach. “While I was serving in the Transition Unit, I would talk to the soldiers, and they would tell me that they didn’t want to talk to the social workers because they were civilians and didn’t know what they went through.”

After returning to the states, Marshall would like to work with student or veteran populations in a setting where he can use his skills. “Simply put, I want to help alleviate pain and suffering in those places where I can make a difference.”

Liz Evans

CPT Liz Evans, a current MSSW student, is originally from Kennebunk, Maine, and is on her second deployment in Afghanistan. She has had an interest in helping others since her early career in social work as a teacher and social worker. Her goal after joining the Army was to work in the Medical Service Corps as a social worker. “I did not have an MSW, though, so I was placed in the AG office (administrative field),” she says.

The college’s MSSW program has given Evans an opportunity to make her dream a reality. She describes her experience as a perfect fit. “I looked at many colleges and they were either ridiculously expensive or required me to live within a 50 mile radius, or they were mostly live feeds, which I could not do being deployed. UT offered exactly what I needed, and I have had a great experience so far. I am in the extended program, and I think it will fit my needs perfectly,” she states.

According to Evans, the strengths of the MSSW program allow her to succeed. “Each course is so well structured, I was not stressed as to where to find the syllabus, books, etc.,” she says. “I also find the professors and staff exceptional. One lady registered me for my courses! I couldn’t have asked for more.”

Evans hopes to find an internship where she can assist an agency and continue her journey in the field of social work. “My long-term goals will be to get my MSSW and transfer to the Medical Service Corps as a military social worker.”

Army Captain Liz Evans is on her second deployment in Afghanistan and has begun work on her MSSW degree.

With a clinical study addressing military suicide rates for the USAF Research Laboratory, Marshall has also served as a licensed mental health clinician. The college’s MSSW program has allowed Evans to begin studies while completing her full-time military commitment. Marshall chose the college’s MSSW program because it is highly regarded and well-rounded. He states, “I was pleased with the school’s ranking in the U.S. News graduate school ratings. And, I needed flexibility of schedule and location due to my full-time military commitment. The [online] education program provided me the opportunity to begin studies while completing my obligations to the U.S. Air Force.”

As a squad leader he helped many veterans with their transition after returning from combat, serving as a leader, mentor, financial advisor, marriage counselor, and life coach. “While I was serving in the Transition Unit, I would talk to the soldiers, and they would tell me that they didn’t want to talk to the social workers because they were civilians and didn’t know what they went through.”

(Continued on page 8)
Children who are sexually abused, veterans returning from multiple tours of duty in active war zones, families whose homes have been swept away in floods, and women who have been physically abused, all have suffered extreme trauma. These people often need support from skilled professionals who realize how extensive the impact of trauma can be. They need counselors who recognize the symptoms of trauma, and who respond with sound trauma-informed practice techniques that will help them discover pathways to healing.

Because of this pressing need for trauma-focused and informed practice, the UT College of Social Work has introduced the graduate certificate program in trauma treatment. The program, which began in the fall semester of 2013, is open to currently admitted social work graduate students. It provides students with the coursework and practical experience needed to become competent in trauma-specific interventions and trauma-informed programming and policy development.

Trauma Treatment Graduate Certificate (TTGC) students learn to critically assess trauma and traumatic impact, apply current principles of intervention and program planning, and consider the larger social, cultural, and political forces at work that shape both exposure to and recovery from traumatic experiences. Currently 35 students are actively pursuing the trauma certificate. Dr. Becky Bolen, chair of the program, reports that interest in the program was immediate and the college plans to monitor that interest in order to manage the need for growth.

Members of the college faculty bring diverse experience and research backgrounds to address the wide range of traumatic experiences. Dr. Bolen, who has been involved in the process of developing this program over the course of several years, has written extensively in the area of child welfare and child sexual abuse. Also working in the program are Dr. Camille Hall, whose expertise focuses on support for persons serving in the military and veterans, and Dr. Mary Rogge, whose expertise in environmental risks includes a broad understanding of disaster management, as well as Sarah Keiser, LCSW, and Ashley Childers, LCSW, both of whom have expertise in the clinical treatment of trauma.

“Knowledge related to trauma and its treatment has grown exponentially in recent years,” explains Dr. Bolen. “Much of this is due to the increased understanding of the neurophysiological effects of trauma. For instance, young children who experience traumatic events can exhibit an inability to connect feelings with thoughts and may demonstrate physiological changes in brain organization traceable to events or patterns of trauma.”

Dean Karen Sowers commented on the launch of TTGC. “The college has determined to broaden our course offerings in order to give our clinicians the tools they require to adequately meet the needs of traumatized clients. Both clinical and macro courses address modes of trauma treatment and neurophysiology, while supervised field placements with trauma populations allow students to assess and respond to traumatized clients or systems.”

Beyond Combat: Military Social Work Practice and Disaster Management

The military social work course draws from research data that explore the effects of deployment and combat stress on the physical and mental health of active duty U.S. service members and their families. Students receive course instructions on the modalities grounded in a synthesis of trauma, attachment, and cognitive-behavioral theories including individual, couple/family, group, and clinical case management approaches.

J. Camille Hall, PhD, LCSW, associate professor for the College of Social Work, is also a clinical social work officer, Major, U.S. Army Reserve. This gives her a unique perspective to teach the trauma certificate course entitled Beyond Combat: Military Social Work Practice.

Another of the certificate courses is entitled Disaster Management and is taught by Mary Rogge, PhD, whose research interests include environmental justice, climate change and climate refugees, technological and natural hazars, as well as disaster management, all in both local and global contexts.

For more information about trauma-informed social work practice and details related to the Trauma Treatment Graduate Certificate, visit Stimulus online at: http://www.csw.utk.edu/about/stimulus

Trauma comes in many forms, from battlefield fatigue, to natural disasters, to personal abuse or disaster, the CSW TTGC teaches students to understand traumatic impact.
In Memory of Tommy Perkins, Founding Member of the Board of Visitors

by Stephanie Piper

The UT College of Social Work lost a dear friend and loyal alumnus last spring. Tommy Perkins, a 1959 graduate of the College of Social Work master’s program and a founding member of our Board of Visitors, died April 9, 2013, in Chattanooga.

Perkins was a beloved figure in the field of social work, and an inspiring example of dedication and hard work. He served as director of Child Welfare for the state of Tennessee and later became the first director of Family and Children Services, Chattanooga, now called the Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults, which served as a model for other agencies. After retirement he worked as a Fellow for the Child Welfare League of America.

This civic leader served on numerous local, state, and national boards in the field of social work. He received many honors and awards over the course of his long and distinguished career, including the Jim Pryor Child Advocacy Award presented by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.

“Tommy was my mentor,” said Farrell Cooper, a College of Social Work graduate and Board of Visitors member. Cooper succeeded Perkins as director of the Partnership when Perkins retired.

“Tommy served as a model for so many people in the community and state and across the nation through his work with the Partnership and later with the Child Welfare League,” Cooper said. “He was always nurturing and supporting people—he was the greatest hugger I ever met!”

Dean Karen Sowers remembered Perkins as a trusted friend and adviser. “Tommy’s wisdom and genuine compassion for people at risk inspired everyone who knew him,” she said. “When I organized the Board of Visitors 15 years ago, I knew that we needed his gifts and leadership. We were truly blessed by the friendship of Tommy and his wife, Helen.”

— Stephanie Piper is the Development Director for the College of Social Work

First-Generation Mentoring Program

Late in August, 15 students met together in a large conference room, uneasy because this was the first week on campus for many of them and because this was the first time that anyone from their families had ever been enrolled in any college. However, within minutes another small group entered the room—faculty, staff, and administrators who, though not nervous now, remembered the anxious moments of their own beginning moments on campus.

These are the 2013 members of the First-Generation Mentoring Project. First-generation students have been paired with successful members of the faculty and staff at UT who, like these students, were the first members of their families to attend college. Throughout the coming year, mentors and mentees will meet at least six times to talk about such things as how to choose a major, how many courses is it wise to schedule in a semester, and how to avoid the pitfalls of the first year away from home.

Sherry Cummings, PhD, and associate dean of the Nashville campus of the College of Social Work, stumbled upon the idea for this program while participating in a project for women in educational leadership roles. In conversations with six other leaders at UT, including the Chancellor and Provost, she asked whether first generation students at UT received any particular kind of mentoring. All six answered, “No, but what a great idea!”

This fall the idea has become reality for the students who will receive support as they transition to college. Mentors will provide role models, emotional support, insight, and general knowledge of the resources and services that UT can make available to them.

Chancellor Jimmy Cheek, himself a first-generation graduate, will be addressing the program participants in January to encourage them as they enter the second semester of their college careers. He and Cummings envision that this program will increase the retention for those in the program as well as assisting them to grow professionally. Cummings hopes the program provides mentors with an avenue for imparting their success to someone else, helping these freshmen grow in academic achievement and in the creation of a positive life legacy.

In the creation of a positive life legacy.
There are 501,665 Veterans of the Armed Forces living in Tennessee. Some of these Veterans face significant mental health challenges, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Major Depressive Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Substance Abuse.

In 2012, the National Council on Behavioral Health estimated that 15,936 of the 52,943 Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) living in Tennessee had been diagnosed with a mental health disorder. To better understand the mental health needs of Tennessee’s Veterans, the University of Tennessee College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) conducted a needs assessment in February and March 2013, on behalf of UT’s College of Social Work. This needs assessment relied upon a comprehensive review of available literature as well as telephone interviews with stakeholders familiar with Veterans’ mental health concerns in Tennessee.

More detailed information can be found in the 2013 full report, Invisible Injuries: The Mental Health Needs of Tennessee Veterans. A companion document of the report’s key findings was also published in June 2013. This article provides an overview of those key findings.

Types of Need
Most frequently, Veterans’ mental health needs include reintegration stressors, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI). If these challenges are not addressed, they can lead to substance abuse or suicide.

Reintegration Stressors
A 2012 Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) survey found that a majority of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans reported relationship and family difficulties stemming from their deployment and subsequent return home. Stakeholders interviewed in Tennessee reported that the Veterans they work with often face reintegration stressors. One provider who works in an outpatient mental health setting said that the majority of his clients are Veterans and their significant others who are in need of “couples therapy” to cope with post-deployment reintegration issues.

Reservists and members of the Tennessee National Guard also face challenges returning to the workforce, and these challenges are made worse by a lack of decompression time. As one stakeholder explained, Guardsmen “…left a plumbing job, and then they are in a war zone, and then they are expected to come back to their old life…”

PTSD, Major Depressive Disorder, and TBI
Although they are separate disorders, PTSD and Major Depressive Disorder have a high rate of comorbidity. The National Council for Behavioral Health found that 30% of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans in Tennessee have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder. PTSD and Major Depression are the most common diagnoses. Nationwide, almost 20% of OEF/OIF combat Veterans reported experiencing TBI symptoms.

Substance Abuse
Roughly 7% of all Veterans in the U.S. met the criteria for a substance abuse disorder, and 20% of OEF/OIF Veterans who received care from the Department of Veterans Affairs between 2001 and 2005 were diagnosed with a substance abuse disorder.

In Tennessee, the Veterans Administration plays a slightly larger role in treating substance abuse compared to VA facilities nationwide. For example, in 2011, the VA ran 2.4% of the substance abuse facilities in Tennessee, while only 1.6% of such facilities were run by the VA nationwide. Also, more Veterans in Tennessee (4.3%) utilize the VA for substance abuse treatment than their counterparts nationwide (3.0%).

UT College of Social Work supports research on Veterans’ mental health needs.
Suicide
In 2008, the VA estimated that 6,500 Veterans of all generations commit suicide annually. Vermont Senator Bernard Sanders, chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, recently stated in a Senate hearing that according to VA reporting, “Up to 22 Veterans commit suicide each day.”

Slightly more than one-third (37%) of respondents in the 2012 IAVA survey reported personally knowing an OIF/OEF Veteran who committed suicide. Additionally, a 2008 report by CBS News found that suicide rates among Veterans were roughly twice as high as non-Veteran suicide rates.

There is growing concern in Tennessee regarding combat Veterans. One stakeholder familiar with issues faced by those in the Tennessee National Guard reported the number of suicide-related events (threats, attempts, and completions) has increased in recent years. Specifically, within the Tennessee National Guard, there were 14 suicide-related events in 2010, 70 in 2011, and 70 in the first half of 2012.

Barriers to Meeting Mental Health Needs
Through interviews with stakeholders, researchers concluded that most of those interviewed believe many of Tennessee’s Veterans are not accessing services. The most frequently cited reasons for not accessing services were fear of stigma, denial or lack of awareness, lack of knowledge about available services, geographic barriers to service, and a shortage of adequately trained providers.

Stigma
Stigma was the most often cited reason why Tennessee Veterans choose not to seek treatment. As one stakeholder who provides mental health services to Veterans explained, “They don’t want to be seen as weak or unfit.” Also, according to another stakeholder, service members who are combat Veterans “fear they will be demoted if they seek help for mental health problems.” According to one service provider, however, the atmosphere at Ft. Campbell and at Tennessee National Guard posts seems to be changing. As she explained, “Commanders are more likely to see that soldiers get help…”

Denial or Lack of Awareness
One interviewed mental health provider said that many of the Veterans he works with appear to be in denial, making statements like, “There’s nothing wrong with me. It’s everyone else.” Other providers reported that their clients were simply unaware they were experiencing symptoms of a mental health disorder. As one provider explained, “[Veterans] don’t know they have PTSD. They have bursts of anger and nightmares, and they think they just need to get control of it.”

Lack of Knowledge About Accessing Available Services
Stakeholders stated that Tennessee Veterans may not access services because they are not aware of existing services or they are not sure how to navigate the complex, time-consuming VA eligibility process. However, the VA has made strides in providing outreach. Stakeholders explained that in Tennessee, the VA provides information to OIF/OEF troops as “welcome back orientations” and by providing community training in military cultural competence.

Geographic Barriers to Services
Veterans in Tennessee’s more rural areas are often underserved because of the distance to available resources, lack of transportation, or other logistical issues. Some private, outpatient mental health care facilities are attempting to address these barriers through online peer support groups and telephone services. Also, Tennessee’s VA outpatient clinics have begun to utilize telehealth and video-to-home technologies so Veterans can receive care from VA providers without leaving home.

Shortages of Adequately Trained Providers
According to stakeholders interviewed for this report, even though there are mental health providers who are trained to work with the general population, very few in Tennessee have received the specialized training to work effectively with Veterans. However, this may be changing. For example, continuing education for social workers related to Veteran-specific issues is becoming more available. Additionally, there are promising signs within the VA. As one stakeholder stated, “The VA is preparing to launch a multidisciplinary team staffing model that will include prescribers, therapists, and administrative support.”

Amy Wilson Hardy, MSSW, LMSW, is a 2002 graduate of the University of Mary Washington, a 2005 graduate of the College of Social Work MSSW program, and works as a Research Associate at UT SWORPS.

New Standards for Practice with Veterans
Along with the basic level of competence required for working in mental health, those who want to work with Veterans need specialized training or experience in order to be effective.

The NASW has taken note of this, and in 2012 released Standards for Social Work Practice with Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families. These practice standards can be viewed online at www.socialworkers.org/practice/military/documents/MilitaryStandards2012.pdf

These 2012 practice standards state that in addition to holding a social work degree, social workers interested in working with this population must also have “specialized knowledge and understanding of military cultures” through their social work program or continuing education. To provide this specialized knowledge and to address the growing need for specially trained providers, NASW launched a webpage with information and resources. The webpage also provides information about a Specialty Credential available free of cost through June 2014 to qualified NASW members who are already working with Veterans, active-duty military, and their families.

More information about efforts to increase the number of specially trained social workers, as well as information about NASW’s collaboration with the White House Joining Forces Initiative are available at www.socialworkers.org/military/asp.

The College of Social Work has announced the commencement of a Trauma Treatment Graduate Certificate Program, available to current MSSW students. See page 3 of this issue for more information.

—AWH

Dr. David A. Patterson, director of the CSW Doctor of Social Work Program, received the Chancellor’s Excellence Award for social work research, education, and community outreach.

David Patterson Recognized for Excellence in Academic Outreach

Dr. Patterson has directed the Knoxville Homeless Management Information System (KnoxHMIS). HMIS is a web-based data system administered by the College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service. It logs information about the homeless and their needs as well as services provided to these individuals on an agency by agency basis.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), KnoxHMIS has brought together nearly 20 agencies in the community to coordinate the recording of services in order to accurately track and assess the needs of the homeless in this area.

When asked why he thought he had been chosen as this year’s award recipient, Dr. Patterson responded, “The bright and capable people that I work with make me look very good.” Then he listed names, “Deidre Ford, Don Kenworthy, Stacia West, Lisa Higgenbotham, student interns, and others have worked diligently over many years to assure the value of this project. Plus, agency personnel, from front line caseworkers to CEOs have worked to maintain a reliable level of data collection. I am fortunate to be working with such a good team.”

“KnoxHMIS opens an empirical window into homelessness in Knox County,” stated Dr. Patterson. “This is important because it reveals the statistical basis upon which the Continuum of Care (CoC) Homeless Assistance programs are funded. In addition, it informs the United Way and the state and local governments in relation to decisions that are made for distribution of federal pass-through dollars.”

In the fall of 2012, Dr. Patterson and KnoxHMIS received another honor. They received the C. Peter Magrath University Community Engagement Award from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities in recognition of their example of the spirit of the higher education engagement movement.

To learn more about the work that Dr. Patterson and his associates have been doing in the past years, visit the Stimulus media enhanced website at: http://www.csw.utk.edu/about/stimulus/ Or visit the KnoxHMIS website at: https://knoxhmis.sworps.tennessee.edu/

Doctor of Social Work Program Update

A little more than 2 years ago, 20 clinical social work practitioners entered the UT CSW Doctor of Social Work in Clinical Practice and Leadership program. This year, that cohort of students looks forward to graduation at the end of May. Now, a total of 59 students are enrolled in the program of study, which is establishing itself as a pre-eminent DSW in the nation.

Geared to clinical social workers who are actively engaged in providing services to at-risk populations in a variety of settings, the program allows participants to complete this intensive accelerated DSW curriculum while remaining in clinical practice. Dr. David A. Patterson, director of the program notes “The quality of the students and the level of their engagement in the program has resulted in an extremely high rate of retention.” The three-year attrition rate is less than 1.7%.

Students come from 24 different states and they currently work in a wide variety of settings. Dr. Patterson explained, “Most of the students come from four areas of practice. Close to 20% of the students have some relationship with the military or service to veterans, either in active duty themselves or working for the Department of Defense or Veteran’s Administration. Many are in private practice. A large percentage of students work with or for hospitals or mental health service centers, and another group work in academic settings including counseling centers.”

Lavi Wilson, who works at a major university as a substance abuse counselor, recommends the DSW at UT, saying, “The strength of the DSW program is definitely the clinical courses. All the classes that we take, I’m able to put into my practice the next day. That is awesome! All of the classes that we have, we build upon; they make us stronger clinicians.”

Karen Sowers, dean of the college, is enthusiastic about the direction in which the program is proceeding. “The high caliber students enrolled in the Online DSW program already hold highly responsible clinical posts in social work agencies and professional settings. It is wonderful to observe the educational benefits brought about as excellent curriculum, able professors, and gifted students with diverse backgrounds intersect.”

The typical student in the DSW program is a female mid-career practitioner, in her mid-forties. This clinician is 12 years post-MSSW and has 9 years experience as an LCSW. A number of these students have spoken about their experiences during the first 2 years in the program. To see videos of these students, visit the Stimulus media enhanced website at: http://www.csw.utk.edu/about/stimulus
In April, Susan Bryant joined the UT College of Social Work as the new Coordinator of Student Recruitment and Student Affairs. Bryant received her MSSW from the College of Social Work in 1998, so coming back to work for the institution felt like the right thing to do.

Bryant stated, “I came back to the College of Social Work with great honor. One of the reasons I returned is that this college taught me every skill I have ever needed to practice quality social work. I wanted the opportunity to serve alongside the faculty and staff of the College of Social Work and let young people know about my experience. This position is the perfect opportunity for me to do that.”

Before pursuing her MSSW, Bryant spent many years working in the social work field in various roles. She worked at a domestic violence shelter; as a youth care worker in residential care; with home health and hospice; and she developed a service delivery system for people with HIV/AIDS in the Upper East Tennessee area. After receiving her MSSW she practiced as a therapist at Camelot Care Centers and worked with Project GRAD Knoxville, a comprehensive education reform initiative, developing and managing a social service component for Lonsdale Elementary School in Knoxville. Bryant explained, “During my time at Lonsdale, I supervised the field placement of 35 CSW students over the course of 11 years, including BSSW juniors and seniors and first-year MSSW students.”

As Coordinator of Student Recruitment, Bryant hopes to focus on recruitment of minority students and veterans and to reach the global community with opportunities for social work development. Bryant stated, “I hope to inspire our students and instill in them that their dreams are realities waiting to be brought to fruition, and that they change the world one day at a time, one person at a time. I am deeply committed to their growth and development as professional social workers, and feel honored to be a part of their personal and professional journeys.”

The college is very excited to have Bryant onboard. Dean Sowers stated, “Susan Bryant is an enthusiastic and energetic addition to our team. For some time we have needed someone who could connect with students and communicate the advantages of getting a degree here at the College of Social Work. Susan has hit the ground running, working hard and successfully as she meets students and discovers new pathways for networking in our media-rich world.”

Military Students Earn Online MSSW Degrees

The online program has allowed Garcia to continue with his service and still complete his education and earn his degree. He states that the UT program was the only one that would work with him as a deployed soldier.

“As a soldier that has been away from his family for over 7 months, worrying about how to be able to continue my education was a concern that I didn’t need. The faculty and staff of the university and specifically the MSSW program have been outstanding and very helpful during this process.”

After he receives his degree, Garcia wants to continue helping veterans by working either at the VA, in a military hospital, or in the Warrior Transition Unit as a social worker. “My goal is to be able to give back to soldiers after I retire.”

The experience of being a student while deployed does not come without difficulties, explains the program’s director. “The challenges include time zone differences and internet blackouts. Our faculty understands the needs and works with these students when problems arise. We find that our military students are hard working and well prepared, often getting work done early in anticipation of these very issues.” McClernon-Chaffin considers it an honor to work with servicemen and women whose goal is to help others in need. “I am so proud to work with our military students as they come to the college humble and ready to learn and to become the best practitioners they can be.”

— Kirche Rogers is an Information Specialist in Marketing and Communications for the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

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(1) Dean Karen Sowers and Provost Susan Martin at the Spring 2013 hooding ceremony  
(2) The CSW was a proud sponsor of the Sertoma Center Cool Jazz and Warm Nights gala evening and silent auction. (l. to r.) Susan Bryant, Matthew Theriot, Emily Theriot, Dean Sowers (3) (clockwise) Shauna Cook (seated) Denny Dukes, Connie Armstrong, Sarah Curtis, and Jennifer Rulon of CMHRS gather around the new CSW player piano. (4) Mary Rogge and J. Camille Hall discuss the new Trauma Certificate curriculum. (5) Students Megan Johnson, Michaella Moore, Stephanie Ader, and Anna Claire Daniels, complete field placement in Gulu, Uganda. (6) Chaplain Bruce Marshall (center) with Capt. Julia Yanover, LCSW (r.) and mental health technician Sgt. Norris Jamison (l.). Capt. Yanover is a 1999 MSSW graduate of the UT CSW and Lt. Col. Marshall is a 2011 graduate of the Online MSSW program. (7) Helen Ross McNabb Mental Health Center leadership and Board members celebrate the merger of Child and Family Tennessee and Helen Ross McNabb to promote a safety net of services and continuity of care in our communities. (8) LaChetis Osborne-Brown, senior recorder, Nashville Campus. (9) The CSW Board of Visitors (front row, l. to r.): Dean Karen Sowers, Carol Tindell, Stephanie Piper, Libby McColl, Elizabeth Rukeyser, Betsey Bush, Anne Pennington, Elliott Moore, and Farrell Cooper; back row (l. to r.): James O’Bear, Mike Devoto, Dan Caldwell, and Jo Zarger (10) The annual Pet Memorial Day, hosted by the Veterinary Social Work program, features a memorial quilt made up of squares that attendees design in honor or memory of their beloved animals. (11) (top l. to r.) Dr. Mary Candice Burger and Nashville MSSW students Ashley Hosfield, Hillary Wilkins, Cara Craig, Lauren Ensley, (bottom l. to r.) Valerie Harris, Lindsay Harlin, and Courtney Johnson, participated in the Meharry Consortium Geriatric Education Center’s Inter-Professional Geriatric Case Training.
ARC Program Improves Youth Outcomes in Community Mental Health Programs

The Children’s Mental Health Services Research Center (CMHSRC) has been working with public and private organizations for more than 30 years, helping to assess culture and climate, evaluate the impact of leadership, and assist in improving organizational effectiveness. In a recent study, the Research Center developed specific measurement instruments in order to profile organizations on several measures:

- Client outcomes
- Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)/Evidence-Based Treatment (EBT) failure or success
- Service quality
- Staff turnover and morale

The primary objective of the study was to determine whether the Availability, Responsiveness and Continuity (ARC) organizational intervention improved youth outcomes in community-based mental health programs.

The second objective was to assess whether programs with more improved organizational social contexts following the 18-month ARC intervention had better youth outcomes than programs with less improved social contexts.

Eighteen community mental health programs that serve youth between the ages of 5 and 18 were randomly assigned to ARC or control conditions. Clinicians (n = 154) in the participating programs completed the Organizational Social Context (OSC) measure at baseline and following the 18-month ARC organizational intervention. Caregivers of 393 youth who were served by the 18 programs (9 in ARC and 9 in control) completed the Shortform Assessment for Children (SAC) once a month for 6 months beginning at intake.

Hierarchical linear models (HLM) analyses indicated that youth outcomes were significantly better in the programs that completed the 18-month ARC intervention. HLM analyses also showed that youth outcomes were best in the programs with the most improved organizational social contexts following the 18-month ARC intervention.

The conclusion of this study is that youth outcomes in community mental health programs can be improved with the ARC organizational intervention, and outcomes are best in programs that make the greatest improvements in organizational social context.

The relationships linking ARC, organizational social context, and youth outcomes suggest that service improvement efforts will be more successful if those efforts include strategies to improve the organizational social contexts in which the services are embedded.

As for impact on the climate and culture of mental health programs, ARC has been proven in randomized controlled trials to significantly:

- improve EBP outcomes
- reduce turnover
- improve staff morale.

Additional information is available in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Contributing Editor Dr. Jeremy Veenstra-VanderWeele interviewed CMHSRC Director, Dr. Charles Glisson on improved youth outcomes in a podcast on the journal website. The interview may be heard at: http://podcasts.elsevierhealth.com/jaac/jaac_pc_52_5.mp3

CMHSRC offers services to agencies seeking to improve youth outcomes. See more about these services at the center website: http://cmhsrc.utk.edu

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Margot Kline, Communications Coordinator, UT Alumni Affairs

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See You at the CSW Homecoming Gala on Friday, November 8!

This year the Gala will include an evening of dinner, dancing, live entertainment provided by the Jimmy Church Band, and a silent auction. Tickets are $30 each and are available through the UT Alumni Office. Go to https://www.sworps.utk.edu/csw/gala and register today!

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Karen Sowers–Dean
Sherry Cummings–Associate Dean, Nashville
Cynthia Rocha–Associate Dean, Knoxville
Paul Campbell–Director, Social Work Office of Research and Public Service
Charles Glisson–Director, Children's Mental Health Services Research Center
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Chaplain Bruce Marshall (MSSW 2011) of the 386 Air Expeditionary Wing of the Air Force (featured on page 2) sent us this picture captured by Nathan Wallin. We love hearing from and about our alums. Where are you and how are you using your social work training in your world? Tweet us @utkcsw, like us on Facebook (utcollegeofsocialwork), or email us at cswnews@utk.edu and let us know what you are doing.