

reach



Next-generation social work

A new era in teaching and research begins at the Faculty of Social Work

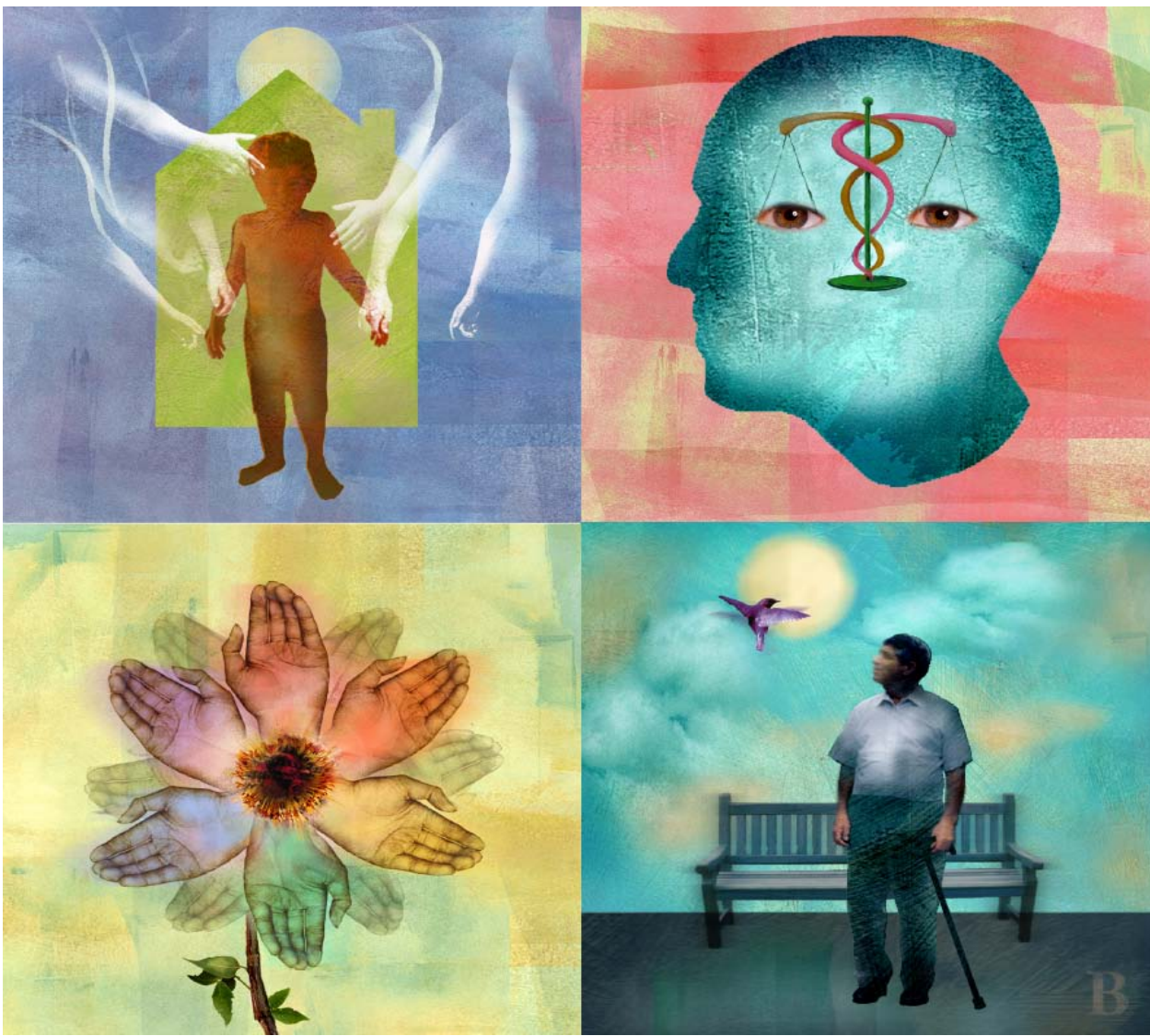


Illustration: Clemente Botelho

Spirited debate on a wide array of social issues is a staple at the Faculty of Social Work, but in the last year there's been a new subject on the table – the future of the Faculty itself. A university-wide academic planning exercise prompted professors, students, staff and community partners to reflect on the best directions for the Faculty, leading to exciting new developments in teaching and research.

One key outcome was the launch this fall of four subject specializations that will be a focal point for the Faculty's scholarly activities: Children and their Families, Diversity and Social Justice, Social Work in Gerontology, and Mental Health and Health (see page 4). In many ways, there is nothing new about the specializations, says Dean Jim Barber. "Faculty members' scholarship had already begun to coalesce around these themes, so it was simply a matter of formalizing our recognized strengths."

September also saw the official start of a revamped Master of Social Work curriculum that gives second-year students the opportunity to delve deeply into one of these four areas. "Social work has clung too long to the notion of

the 'generic social worker' and its inflated claim to competence in any and all fields of practice," says Barber. "By offering our students a rigorous education in a particular area, we are keeping pace with contemporary social needs."

In addition, the four specializations will be at the core of a major new research institute devoted to evidence-based social work practice (see page 3). Once the institute is up and running this winter, the Faculty will be at the leading edge of efforts worldwide to create and promote best practice in the field.

The process that led to the naming and delineation of the specializations was intensely consultative. Faculty members met with dozens of social service agencies to ask them about the primary challenges in their fields and the resulting priorities for social work research and education. Thanks to this close community collaboration, the Faculty's new initiatives are firmly rooted in the current social realities of each specialization. "Overall, it's been an opportunity for the Faculty to revisit and revitalize every aspect of what we do," says Barber.

inside



Lifelong learning: Continuing Education courses 2004-2005

2



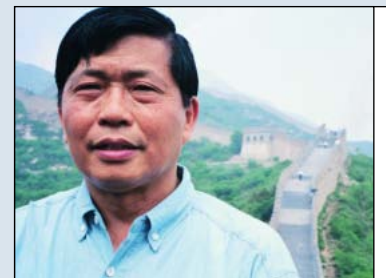
Building best practice: Putting research to work in the community

3



Innovations in aboriginal social work education

6



A staff member goes beyond the call of duty

7

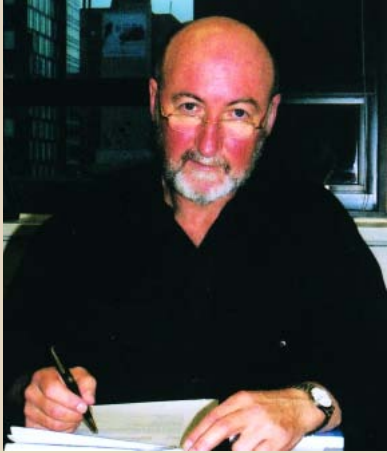


Jails, justice and the fight against globalization

8



Fall and fresh starts at the Faculty of Social Work



For many people, especially those of us in academe, the fall season feels like the beginning of a new year. Here at the Faculty of Social Work, September brought more than the usual excitement that comes with the start of classes and the arrival of a fresh crop of students. With the launch of an innovative curriculum and a one-of-a-kind program for aboriginal social workers, this is an especially exhilarating time to be dean of one of North America's premier schools of social work.

The enhanced Master of Social Work curriculum that you'll read about in the pages ahead reflects the current reality that it's impossible for social workers to be experts in all of today's complex areas of practice. From now on, our graduates will have in-depth knowledge in one of four specializations, distinguishing them from their peers at other universities and preparing them to be leaders in their respective fields.

And on the subject of leaders, this fall we had the privilege of enrolling several practitioners from Native Child and Family Services of Toronto in the master's program. These experienced professionals are the pioneers in the new Aboriginal Advanced Practitioner Initiative, which is outlined on page six. One of the Faculty's priorities is to deepen its commitment to aboriginal social work education, so I'm gratified to see this unique program bring us closer to that goal.

Another new addition to our Faculty this fall is Professor Julia Sudbury, an internationally renowned scholar who comes to us from England via the United States. As you'll see from her profile, Julia is conducting groundbreaking research that will enrich the intellectual community here.

While we've been welcoming new people and getting new programs underway, we've also been preparing for another major project set to begin later this year. Since my arrival at U of T in 2003 I've been working on creating an evidence-based practice research initiative unlike any in North America. As you'll see in the article on the next page, we have the expertise and the energy to do it; now we're working on the funding. Watch upcoming issues of Reach for updates on our progress, and please contact us at reach.fsw@utoronto.ca if you'd like to know more.

* The U of T Faculty of Social Work respects your privacy. We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists. Even if you do choose to receive *Reach*, you may notify us at any time to change your preference.

Faculty Update

What's happening around our world of Social Work

Faculty of Social Work Continuing Education Courses, 2004-2005

One-Day Workshops

- Therapeutic Family Mediation: A Better Way to Mediate
- Responding to Negative Attitudes & Difficult People
- Stress Reduction Using Mindfulness Meditation, Parts I, II, III
- Assessing Parenting Capacity, Parts I, II, III
- Spirituality in Social Work Practice
- Online Search Tools for Human Services Professionals
- Program Evaluation for Community Service Agencies
- Working With Children and Families: An Online Course for Frontline Staff



Illustration: Sara Tyson

Certificate Programs

- Cybercounselling Online
- Crisis Response in Disaster and Workplace Trauma
- Therapeutic Family Mediation
- Solution-Focused Counselling

FOR MORE DETAILS, please consult the web site at www.utoronto.ca/facsocwk/conted.html or contact the Continuing Education Administrator at 416-978-3259 or fsw.conted@utoronto.ca

Research Funding Highlights

Faculty of Social Work researchers had an excellent showing recently in national research grant competitions, with many receiving top rankings from reviewers for their proposals. Here are a few of the newly funded projects:

n Dean Jim Barber and Professor Nico Trocmé

- Reliability, predictive validity and impact of a child abuse risk assessment tool
Funding: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

n Professor David Hulchanski

- Homeless families in Toronto
Funding: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

n Professor Ernie Lightman

- Work, hunger and health in marginalized populations
Funding: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

n Professor Elsa Marziali

- Internet-based health care for caregivers and

care recipients with traumatic brain injury and frontotemporal dementia
Funding: Bell University Labs

n Professor Peter Newman and Professor Charmaine Williams

- Promoting equity in access to post-trial HIV vaccines for black women in Canada
Funding: Canadian Institutes of Health Research

n Sheila Neysmith

- Provisioning, women and community
Funding: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

n Professor Izumi Sakamoto

- Negotiating Canadianness, navigating cultural currents: Chinese skilled immigrants in Toronto
Funding: Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement

n Professor Charmaine Williams

- Subjective perspectives on caregiving in schizophrenia
Funding: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

New scholarship created to honour former dean



Chick Hendry holding Charles Hendry Hain in 1964.

The grandson of former Faculty of Social Work dean Charles Eric (Chick) Hendry has made the first gift toward establishing an Ontario Graduate Scholarship in his grandfather's name. Charles Hendry Hain and his family members want to honour Hendry's influential 19-year tenure as dean and memorialize a man who was a camp counsellor, outdoor lover, storyteller, administrator, teacher and father figure to many. Hendry led the Faculty from 1950 to 1969, making him the longest serving dean to date. He died in 1979 at age 76. "He is remembered widely as a great administrator and facilitator," says Charles. "People liked working with him and through him."

If you wish to contribute to the establishment of the scholarship in Hendry's honour, please contact Charles Hain at 416-465-9046 or charleshain@hotmail.com

Alumnus becomes first Bedouin department chair at Israeli university

Professor Alean Al-Krenawi was recently elected chair of the Charlotte B. and Jack J. Spitzer Department of Social Work at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheva, Israel. This is the first time that a Bedouin faculty member has been named department chair of any discipline at an Israeli university. Al-Krenawi is a 1995 doctoral graduate of the U of T Faculty of Social Work, where his thesis was on the dual use of modern and traditional mental health systems by the Bedouin of the Negev. The Bedouin are a minority within a minority in Israel; they make up about 10 per cent of the country's Arab population.

Alumni In Memoriam

Fay Aldridge (MSW '53), a dedicated volunteer at the Faculty of Social Work, died suddenly Aug. 1, 2004 while vacationing with friends.

Ruth Furman Fisher (DC SW '41), a talented jazz pianist who had a lengthy social work career working with the elderly, died in Montreal on May 4, 2003 at age 84.

Mary Elizabeth Hamilton (DC SW '35), who devoted her entire social work career to the Hamilton Children's Aid Society, died Aug. 31, 2004 at age 93.

Building best practice

Putting research to work in the community

Improving lives and promoting social justice through research and education – it's the mission that has always driven the Faculty of Social Work, and now it's the vision behind an unprecedented initiative aimed at transforming the entire profession. This winter, with help from our alumni and friends, the Faculty will undertake a fund-raising campaign to help launch the world's first "institute without walls" dedicated to building a bridge between social work research and the community.

There is already a vast amount of research evidence that is directly relevant to social work practice, but no consistent mechanism for getting this crucial information to practitioners. While scholars have produced groundbreaking studies on topics such as bullying and child neglect, for example, social workers in the child welfare field don't have these data at their fingertips.

"The problem for social work researchers and practitioners alike is that this knowledge has never been consolidated, nor have the implications for social work practice been satisfactorily identified," says Dean Jim Barber.

"Nobody has ever tried to build a coherent body of practice knowledge based on the research evidence and then put it into a useful, accessible form for social service professionals. We are already among the most research intensive social work faculties in the world, so many of our peers will be watching us with great interest."

Building on faculty members' strengths in the area of child welfare, the institute will start by forging a partnership between the Faculty of Social Work and key agencies providing services to ensure the welfare of children. Over time, however, the institute will expand to compile, create and promote best practice within all four of the Faculty's areas of specialization: Children and their Families, Diversity and Social Justice, Social Work in Gerontology, and Mental Health and Health.

In its first stage, the institute will work closely with community agencies to identify the most urgent practice challenges they encounter, then join forces with university and agency-based researchers to synthesize all existing research



on these subjects. The network of agencies and researchers will begin as a virtual institute that is co-ordinated but not owned by the Faculty. It is an ambitious undertaking that will involve Faculty of Social Work researchers, social service practitioners and policymakers, and scholars from disciplines such as psychology, criminology, nursing and epidemiology.

Once the current research is merged into a best practice database for the use of social workers everywhere, the institute will move into a program of primary research to address new and unanswered practice questions. In the long-term, Barber would like to see the institute become as big as the Faculty itself. Even in its early stages, though, the institute will enrich the Faculty's educational programs, giving students hands-on experience in evidence-based practice and creating a new generation of graduates who will advance this approach in the field. "In the end," says Barber, "the true measure of the institute's impact will be its effect on people's quality of life in Canada and across the world through the improvement of social work practice."

Ambassadors and advocates

Volunteers are vital to the Faculty's success

Volunteers are at the heart of any university's advancement activities, and the Faculty of Social Work is fortunate to have many dedicated individuals working on its behalf. Recently two of these volunteers received a U of T award in recognition of their service to the Faculty.

Julia Paisley and Kar Wah Chan, who have both been working in advancement and fund-raising for the Faculty for approximately three years, accepted 2004 Arbor Awards at a ceremony in September. Sponsored by the Division of University Advancement, the Arbor Awards are U of T's highest honour for voluntarism. Paisley and Chan join an illustrious group of Faculty of Social Work volunteers who have been honoured with this award in previous years.

"The people who freely give their time and expertise to help us achieve our goals are invaluable," says Dean Jim Barber. "Volunteers have been the key to every Faculty advancement success story, allowing us to recruit world-class researchers, provide financial aid to deserving students and enhance our academic reputation. They are our ambassadors in the wider community, and we rely on them in so many ways."

Paisley has a long history of voluntarism in other sectors such as health care, but says she is gratified to now be part of the Faculty's advancement efforts. "My involvement has allowed me to work on behalf of very different populations – children, immigrants and the broad spectrum of people who are in need of a strong social network. The social work researchers are passionate about their projects, which have a tremendous amount of relevancy for the core of our population. It's a cause that will

directly or indirectly benefit our own community." Her contributions to date include securing support from foundations to support the Faculty's Ontario Graduate Scholarship program, organizing Faculty events and serving on the dean's advisory board. In the coming months she will play a role in fund-raising efforts for the new evidence-based practice research institute.

Volunteering at the Faculty is a win-win situation, says Paisley. "The need is tremendous in social work – I relate to it very strongly. And the ambience is creative, stimulating and challenging. It's been a very rewarding experience."

Chan has been instrumental in recruiting the founding members of the evidence-based practice institute. The retired Citibank executive has already used his business acumen to attract new donors to social work and says he is partly driven by the very concrete social impact of the Faculty's research, particularly the studies involving children. "Everybody who has children can identify with this work. It's very useful and noble research. Trying to understand the inner workings of children is a way to help them and prevent them from becoming tomorrow's problem. This is important not only from a humanitarian point of view, but also a socioeconomic point of view."

The dean's aspiration to make the Faculty one of the world's pre-eminent schools of social work also motivates Chan. "Because I believe in the vision of the Faculty under Jim Barber's leadership, then, to me, whatever money I can help raise is a reward in itself."



Kar Wah Chan



Julia Paisley

Focusing on OUR STRENGTHS

A social work curriculum for the 21st century



Children and their Families

Current challenges

A husband, a wife and a few kids living together in a house on a tree-lined street – that's the

image of family that still predominates our popular culture. In reality, though, family can also be a single father raising his children in an inner city apartment, a divorced couple sharing the care of their child, three generations of recent immigrants living under one roof, same-sex partners or a child with a series of foster parents. There are countless variations on the contemporary family, especially in a big and intensely diverse city like Toronto, and they all have unique struggles and needs. Child maltreatment, family violence, poverty, racism, delinquency, parental mental health issues and substance abuse are only a few of the pressing problems affecting children and their families in today's society.

Faculty research strengths

- child welfare policy
- sexual abuse of children
- children in foster care
- separation and divorce
- peer victimization/bullying
- learning disabilities
- children's aggression and delinquency
- epidemiology of child abuse and neglect
- cyber abuse of children

Educating for the future

Social workers practising with children and families operate within an intricate web of interpersonal and environmental factors that shape their clients' lives. "Family relationships, physical and mental health status, schools, neighbourhoods and cultural conditions all play a role, and students destined for work in this area need to recognize and understand these influences," says Professor Faye Mishna, leader of the Children and their Families specialization. The redesigned curriculum will produce graduates trained to work with children, adolescents and parents from diverse backgrounds at all levels of intervention, from individual, family, couple, and group counselling to community organization and policy development.

INNOVATORS

Professor Nico Trocmé is the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Chair in Child and Family at the Faculty of Social Work and the director of the Bell Canada Child Welfare Research Unit and the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare. He has been the principal investigator on several landmark child welfare research projects, including the first national survey of investigated maltreatment ever conducted in Canada.

HOUSING ISSUES

While housing is not an independent specialization, it is a fundamental subject that pervades all of the Faculty of Social Work's teaching and research. Families' housing situations are a key factor in decisions to place children in care, for example. Homelessness is a serious problem both among older adults and individuals with mental illness. And when it comes to finding housing for immigrants and refugees, there are concerns ranging from the inaccessibility of good quality accommodation to outright discrimination. These issues intersect with each of the four specializations and will be integrated throughout the revitalized curriculum.

Social work scholars at the University of Toronto have been respected leaders in the study of Canadian housing policy since the 1930s, and the tradition continues today with Professor David Hulchanski. As the Dr. Chow Yei Ching Chair in Housing at the Faculty of Social Work, Hulchanski explores the broad range of social issues associated with housing systems through local and comparative studies with places such as Hong Kong. "A sound knowledge of housing issues is a prerequisite for every social worker," says Hulchanski. "Lower-income people in any of the four specialization areas are bound to have significant housing problems, and they can't be ignored."



Social Work in Gerontology

Current challenges

The aging of Canada's population is producing a veritable demographic revolution.

The number of people aged 60 and older will reach 25 per cent of the country's citizenry by the year 2020, and life expectancies for men and women are now up to 76 and 82 respectively. Behind these striking statistics, there are some very human problems facing older Canadians and their families. A greater quantity of life often does not mean a greater quality of life, says Professor Lynn McDonald, leader of the Social Work in Gerontology specialization. "Almost half of older single people live in poverty and many suffer physical, psychological or financial abuse at the hands of their families or institutional caregivers." The majority of older adults have one or more chronic health conditions and the prevalence of dementia increases with age. Most people want to stay in their homes and maintain their independence as they age rather than live in institutions, leaving friends and family as the central caregivers for this burgeoning population.



Diversity and Social Justice

Current challenges

The ever-increasing diversity of Canada's population has immeasurably enriched the country's social and cultural life, yet it has also thrown the realities of oppression and exclusion into sharp relief. When communities are made up of people of different ethnicity, gender, age, class, sexual orientation, religion, and mental and physical abilities, there are multiple and overlapping possibilities for discrimination. And when individuals experience personal injustice because of their unique identities, it is often inextricably linked to larger issues of inequity in society. Canada faces a monumental task in the years ahead: it must not only find a way to provide accessible, culturally appropriate social services to all of its citizens, but also protect them from harassment and persecution because of their differences.

Faculty research strengths

- immigrant and refugee settlement and adaptation

INNOVATORS

Professor Usha George is director of the Anti-racism, Multiculturalism and Native Issues (AMNI) Centre at the Faculty of Social Work and director of the Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS), a consortium of Toronto-area universities and community partners with core funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

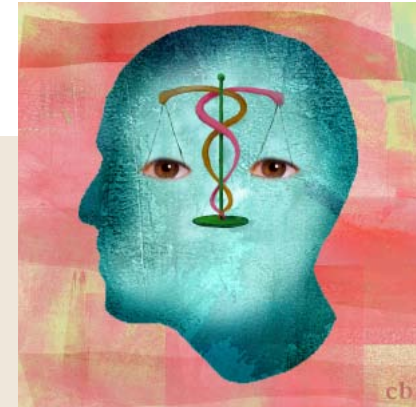
Professor Julia Sudbury is the Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Social Justice, Equity and Diversity. Funded by the federal government, the CRC program awards national research professorships to top scholars in their respective fields. (See Sudbury's profile on page 8)

The Dr. K.K. Leung and Sons Social Work Chair in Multiculturalism has been established to develop world-class research programs to address issues related to multiculturalism and immigration.

- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered social work
- cultural identity and transculturation processes
- community organizing by women of colour and aboriginal women
- anti-oppressive social work in multicultural and marginalized communities
- international social work
- organizational responses to diversity
- health consequences of oppression and racism

Educating for the future

Social workers have always been advocates for marginalized members of society, striving to reduce inequality and promote social justice. To be effective in these efforts, they must both understand the dynamics of oppression and know how to counteract it. "Social workers with this expertise can help individuals from diverse communities break barriers and achieve personal and collective well-being," says Professor Usha George, leader of the Diversity and Social Justice specialization. Students in this stream will not only gain a sound knowledge of the social structures that create marginalization but will also learn to transform and oppose these structures using strategies such as community development, policy work, popular education and empowerment. Graduates will be powerful champions for disenfranchised communities, working for and with them to create a more equitable society.



Mental Health and Health

Current challenges

There have been dramatic reforms to the physical and mental health care systems in Canada in recent years, and the changes are far from over. The result of all this restructuring is an environment of uncertainty and instability for those coping with illness and the people who care for them. The shift towards providing more care in the community rather than in hospitals and psychiatric institutions, for example, has far-reaching implications for patients, families, health care professionals and social workers. Canada's increasingly heterogeneous population adds another dimension to the changing health care context. Widely divergent cultural beliefs about illness and caregiving present challenges and opportunities both to those on the frontlines of health care and those responsible for policy-making.

Faculty research strengths

- recovery from trauma
- stress in health care providers
- mental health policy
- children and adolescents at risk of suicide
- HIV prevention and risk behaviour in the developed and developing world
- social and psychological aspects of living with serious mental illness
- caregiving in schizophrenia
- mental health of adult survivors of child sexual abuse

Educating for the future

Influential research organizations and funding agencies are paying a growing amount of attention to the social determinants of health – the ways that social factors such as income, family structure and education can affect people's health. Social work researchers and practitioners have a pivotal role to play on inter-professional health care teams in investigating these factors and mitigating their negative impact, says Professor Cheryl Regehr, leader of the Mental Health and Health specialization. Graduates from this stream will understand the link between social policies and individual well-being, the conditions that reduce or increase vulnerability to poor health and the best interventions for supporting people's adaptation to illness and disability. This specialization will also produce a generation of social workers adept at managing the psychological, social and cultural issues involved in community-based care, says Regehr. "Families and friends are now providing huge amounts of care, and social workers are in a position to examine the burden on caregivers and devise supports that could assist them in doing this vitally important work."

Faculty research strengths

- caregiving
- impact of parental death on adult children
- older workers, retirement and poverty
- elder abuse
- community care for elderly people
- social policy issues that affect women as they age
- life course issues

Educating for the future

Whether they are developing social policies or designing recreational programs for older adults, social workers are uniquely qualified to help individuals, families and communities meet the challenges of an aging society. The gerontology curriculum will prepare students to become leaders in the provision of services designed to enhance the quality of life of older Canadians and their caregivers. Armed with advanced

knowledge of the biological, psychosocial and spiritual aspects of aging, graduates will be able to apply their expertise in a wide variety of settings ranging from intergenerational support initiatives to home-care programs. They will also be vital contributors to multidisciplinary health care teams and important consultants to government in the crucial years ahead.

INNOVATORS

Professor Emeritus Elsa Marziali is the Norman and Honey Schipper Chair in Gerontological Social Work, the first chair of its kind in Canada. This unique chair was established by Joseph and Sandra Rotman and J. Richard and Dorothy Shiff. Marziali provides leadership for the Ben and Hilda Katz Centre for Gerontological Social Work at U of T and the Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care. The Katz centre conducts innovative research, education and training in gerontological social work.

A learning partnership

The Aboriginal Advanced Practitioner Initiative breaks new ground in aboriginal social work education



Left to right: Students Peter Martyn, Faith Crowe, Judy Gallagher-Hall, Jane Harrison and NCFS director Kenn Richard

PROGRAM TEAM

Native Child and Family Services

Kenn Richard, *Executive Director*

University of Toronto

Faculty of Social Work

Professor Adrienne Chambon,

Co-coordinator

Professor Julia Sudbury,

Co-coordinator

Sharon Bewell

Arielle Dylan

Associate Dean Usha George

Rose Mandamin

Roxanne Power

Angela Umbrello

Professor Charmaine Williams

University of Toronto

Transitional Year Program

Professor Rona Abramovitch

Ryerson University

School of Social Work

Akua Benjamin, *Director*

George Bielmeyer, *Associate Director*

This fall saw the launch of a one-of-a-kind educational program for seasoned social workers from Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the Faculty's relationship with the aboriginal community and the School of Social Work at Ryerson University.

Native Child has worked alongside children's aid societies to support aboriginal children and their families in Toronto for more than 15 years, but until now it did not have the authority to investigate and intervene in child protection cases. Circumstances changed when the organization became a provincially mandated child welfare agency. "This is going to allow us to make our mark," says Native Child executive director Kenn Richard, who is also a sessional instructor at the Faculty. "We'll have the same standing as mainstream agencies and our credibility will never be questioned in the courts again." The organization's new authority means that it needs more masters-level social work practitioners.

When Dean Jim Barber heard that the aboriginal organization was undergoing a change in legal status and was encouraging its employees to meet new educational standards, he saw a chance to form a unique partnership. The practitioners at Native Child were trying to upgrade their academic credentials, and the Faculty needed some help attracting and retaining aboriginal students. The result is the Aboriginal Advanced Practitioner Initiative, a pilot program designed to encourage aboriginal students to teach as much as they learn.

"Our Faculty has made a commitment to aboriginal

social work education, but we're new to it," says Barber. "We've been looking for a way to make a start in this area for a long time, so when this opportunity came up we seized it. We have a long way to go in creating a curriculum and culture that are welcoming to aboriginal students, and we're hoping these students will help us learn experientially."

Native Child's social workers currently have a wide variety of educational backgrounds ranging from high school to graduate studies. To accommodate all of these students, the Faculty has designed innovative pathways to an MSW degree tailored to their individual needs and abilities. These pathways have multiple entry points and involve the collaboration of several key partners including: U of T's Transitional Year Program, which prepares adults lacking formal educational requirements for university admission; Ryerson University, which offers a bachelor of social work program; and U of T's First Nations House, which houses the Office of Aboriginal Student Services and Programs.

In September twelve students began twelve unique journeys towards an MSW degree – six at U of T and six at Ryerson. They are studying part-time and continuing to work full-time at Native Child, a double burden that the organizers are keenly aware of. "These students bring a wealth of experience but they will also need to balance their studies with their professional, family and community commitments," says Professor Adrienne Chambon, the U of T program co-coordinator. The students and the organizing team are working at making adjustments. "We've tried to create a model that's good for the students, good for the Faculty and good for the agency while striving to diminish the barriers often experienced by aboriginal people in the educational system."

There are currently no full-time aboriginal faculty members, only a handful of aboriginal students and a dearth of aboriginal content in the curriculum, says Chambon, so the Faculty set out with full knowledge of its shortcomings and is consulting extensively in designing the program. "We know we need to grow and extend our understanding of aboriginal communities and society," she says. "This is an opportunity for us to revisit our curriculum and transform it, guided by the expertise of these students."

To help make the Native Child students and all aboriginal students feel more at home in the Faculty, Chambon and her team have enlisted the assistance of Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo, director of U of T's First Nations House. He and his staff will provide regular on-site support such as financial aid consultation and academic counselling, and students will be encouraged to participate in a mentorship program and other services at First Nations House.

"We're setting out with hope and goodwill, but we don't pretend to be the experts or have all the answers," says Barber. "In the end, we want to be known as a place where aboriginal students feel welcome and learn things they can use in their own communities. Most of all, we want to make a contribution, through our students, to aboriginal social welfare in Canada."

ROSE MANDAMIN

Rose Mandamin's motivation for being involved in the Aboriginal Advanced Practitioner Initiative is both personal and pragmatic. As an aboriginal PhD student in the U of T Faculty of Social Work, she knows what it's like to feel alone in higher education. And as a scholar researching aboriginal experiences in the child welfare system, she understands the urgent need for all social workers to be educated about aboriginal issues.

"I immediately wanted to be an advisor to the program because I know how important it is to get more native students into the Faculty," she says. "I also knew I could be a resource for the new students because of my familiarity with the difficulties native students encounter at university. I empathize with their apprehension and anxiety." Mandamin completed her MSW at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ont., where she had many aboriginal peers and mentors. When she arrived at U of T in 2000 to begin

her doctoral degree, she was on her own and felt quite alienated.

But things are starting to get better, she says, and the current initiative with Native Child is part of the Faculty's overall effort to make a meaningful contribution to aboriginal social work education.

Mandamin's doctoral research is exploring how the child welfare system shapes native mothers' sense of identity as parents. "A lot of people just see native parents as having problems and they don't see the bigger picture. I want to show that there are a lot of historical and social factors that have an impact on native women's parenting skills." The fact that most social workers in child welfare are non-aboriginal can exacerbate the problem, she says, underlining the need for social work faculties to incorporate aboriginal content in their curricula. She is optimistic about the potential for the Aboriginal Advanced Practitioner Initiative to make a difference, even if it is a small difference. "It'll be a learning process for both parties, but it's a great first step."

Gillian Crossin

An early calling: Finding fulfillment in easing children's pain

Gillian Crossin is not your typical academic overachiever. She doesn't take herself too seriously, never allows work to infringe on her relaxation time and even admits to being a bit of a procrastinator. Yet Crossin's stellar marks garnered her the **2004 Hilary Weston Award** for the top graduating Master of Social Work student, a feat attributable more to her passion for children's mental health than an overly stringent work ethic.

The curriculum captured her heart and mind from the outset. "I can't remember a single paper where I didn't really care about the topic," says Crossin, 29, who received the award established by U of T President Emeritus Robert Prichard and his wife Ann Wilson in June. Prichard and Wilson created the award to honour Weston's commitment to social justice during her tenure as Ontario's lieutenant-governor.

Crossin's desire to work with troubled children has its roots in her own childhood. She spent every summer at a girls' camp in northern Ontario, first as a camper and then as staff. It was a formative experience, she says, exposing her to a diverse range of emotional, behavioural and psychological problems in children. "I've always been a good listener, and kids came to me. So I learned very young how to cope with those issues, at least at a layperson's level."

While she initially thought she was destined to become a child psychologist, Crossin changed her mind after meeting two school social workers at a job she took following her undergraduate degree at Queen's University. "I really respected what they did. It was the first time I even knew that social work could fit with what I wanted to do." A short time later she volunteered at Integra, a centre for children with learning disabilities, where her knowledge of the

profession deepened and she decided to apply to the U of T Faculty of Social Work.

Since then she has never looked back. Not only did she excel academically, but she also shone at both her field placements – one at a school board and another at a youth outpatient psychiatry unit. Crossin is particularly proud of her work with the family of a depressed boy. "At the end the mom said she would always remember me because I made such a difference to her family."

This fall she began a fellowship at Toronto's famed Hincks-Dellcrest centre for children with mental health problems. While she acknowledges



"At the end the mom said she would always remember me because I made such a difference to her family, so it was extremely rewarding"

that being a close witness to children's suffering is never easy, her optimistic nature and healthy respect for leisure time keep her balanced. "I love to laugh – I think that's really key. And it's a priority for me not to make work my whole life." Most of all, she says, helping children turn their struggles into triumphs is worth the tough times. "You think they've hit rock bottom and then they bounce back. Their resiliency is amazing, and it's so satisfying to be a part of that."

Simon Woo

Beyond the call of duty:

A staff member's many gifts to the Faculty

On paper, Simon Woo was the Faculty of Social Work's media co-ordinator for 33 years. In practice, he was that and so much more – a translator, ambassador, fundraiser, tai chi instructor and, occasionally, father figure for the Faculty community.

Woo continually went beyond his formal duties because of his deep belief in the importance of the Faculty's work and his sincere affection for its people. Even his retirement in 2002 didn't diminish his commitment; he continues to show up for work on a volunteer basis almost every day. "This is my home – I can't even say second home – and these people are my family," he says.

Photos of his "other family," as he jokingly calls his wife, three daughters and son, are proudly displayed along with countless cards, awards and other Faculty memorabilia in his overflowing office. The shelves hold a mini archive of photos and videotapes documenting the Faculty's last three and a half decades. He taught generations of students and instructors how to use technology to support their learning and research, estimating that he has worked with about seven deans and 6,000 students during his tenure. These days he continues to train first-year MSW students in the effective use of technology during their three-month practice lab. "When I first came here, I felt like the students were all my brothers and sisters. But now they are like my children," he laughs.

Woo's warmth and generosity are legendary, and the fondness he feels for the Faculty of Social Work

has always been mutual. His personal philosophy incorporates precepts from eclectic influences in his life such as the Boy Scouts, Christianity and Chinese ethics. In his words, it comes down to this: "Serve and respect others, but expect nothing in return."

Woo was a social worker in Hong Kong before immigrating to Toronto and says helping people is in his nature. He began volunteering as a Chinese translator for the Faculty early in his career, gradually taking on more responsibility until the late 1980s when he became an unofficial ambassador and fundraiser in the Chinese community. Since then he has helped to raise more than \$250,000 for the Faculty from individuals, families and foundations. Along the way he also became a major donor himself, funding the creation of "Simon's Garden" down the hall from his office. The comfortable nook full of lush plants is a quiet oasis for students and faculty. In 1996 the University of Toronto recognized Woo's service to the university by presenting him with the prestigious Chancellor's Award, making him the only



staff member to receive this award in the history of the Faculty.

Faculty, alumni and friends recently helped create the Simon Woo OSOTF II (Ontario Student Opportunity Trust Fund) scholarship, a fitting tribute to a man who has dedicated his career to lending a helping hand wherever and whenever he could.

Julia Sudbury

Uncovering resistance: Jails, justice and the fight against globalization



Julia Sudbury knew she was onto something when a half-day-per-week volunteer job with an immigrant women's project quickly became the highlight of her schedule. She was studying Hispanic and German literature at Cambridge University at the time and doing rather well at it – her professors were even talking about the possibility of doctoral studies. But those afternoons at the centre changed everything.

"I discovered what I was meant to do – work in the community, bring about change and tackle racism," she says. "I'd found my purpose in life, and I was passionate about it and good at it... I knew I could do it day and night." And in the more than 15 years since then, she has done just that.

Sudbury arrived at U of T this summer from Mills College in Oakland, Calif., where she was head of the Department of Ethnic Studies. She is one of several recent international recruits to the Faculty of Social Work and has the added distinction of being the inaugural Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Social Justice, Equity and Diversity. The federally-funded CRC program is designed to strengthen Canada's research capacity by attracting world-class researchers to Canadian universities.

After her transformative experience at the immigrant women's centre, Sudbury took her first steps towards becoming the acclaimed activist and scholar she is today. She worked with youth and disadvantaged groups as a community development officer for a couple of years before taking a job as the manager of an inner city community and educational centre run by and for African Caribbean women. During these years Sudbury also earned a master's degree in race and ethnic studies, but her heart was solidly in her day-to-day social work. "I considered myself a practitioner who happened to be doing higher education," she says. The idea of doing a PhD never even occurred to her until she realized it was a way of researching and writing a book that had been germinating in her mind for years.

"I was constantly reading literature that argued that black women were either too apathetic or too burdened to be politically involved. And here I was working at this black women's centre where everybody was doing so much. So my dream was to put this straight in a book." Her doctoral the-

sis at the University of Warwick became that book: *Other Kinds of Dreams: Black Women's Organizations and the Politics of Transformation*. It brought black women's political activism in Britain out of the shadows and integrated seamlessly with Sudbury's grassroots activities. In the end, she not only authored a book but also created a national network of black women activists. "The women were extensively involved in the writing process," she says. "They felt a real sense of ownership of the book."

The project intensified Sudbury's longstanding concern about the negative effects of globalization on minority women in the industrialized world. The move away from poverty reduction policies towards criminalization and punishment has had an especially devastating impact on these women, she says. "There's been a shift from the welfare state to the law and order state." Rates of incarceration of women of colour and aboriginal women have dramatically increased over the last 20 years in Canada, the United States and Britain. The media have put forward alarmist theories to explain this trend, citing the dangerous rise in "girl power" and the "new female criminal," but Sudbury's research points to the erosion of social services and the rise of a new more punitive politics of crime as the true causes. She says these cutbacks have forced some women to resort to theft, prostitution and drugs to support themselves and their children, while tough on crime measures have criminalized more activities and imposed harsher sanctions for drug-related and survival crimes.

Her disturbing research findings inspired her to join several groups that oppose what she calls the prison-industrial complex, a symbiotic relationship between government and corporate interests. She recently organized an "Education, Not Incarceration" campaign in California and spent last summer in Nigeria at an international conference on penal abolition. The conservative, tough-on-crime ideology that has led to the rising incarceration of poor and disenfranchised women has its roots in the United States, she says, but its influence extends beyond American borders. To gain an international perspective on her subject, she sought out other academics investigating trends in women's incarceration around the world. "I didn't want to just write papers about it but actually establish a field to have a wider impact. We're calling the field Transnational Feminist Prison Studies."

To lay a theoretical framework for this new area of inquiry, Sudbury edited a book, due out by the end of 2004, called *Global Lockdown: Race, Gender and the Prison-*

Industrial Complex. It includes the writings of scholars, activists, women prisoners and former prisoners. A second book, which Sudbury hopes to finish by next summer, will unravel the connections between globalization and imprisonment and detail her arguments against incarceration. The many hours and days she's spent speaking to women in prisons have strengthened

her conviction that incarceration does not solve but rather contributes to social problems. "Once I had been inside a women's prison, I could never turn my back on that experience." While she has volunteered for initiatives aimed at humanizing the prison environment, such as music programs, she is still fundamentally opposed to the institutions. "We have to be critical of attempts to empower or heal within punitive environments," she says. In addition to publishing these ideas, she has also helped make a film that exposes the bleak living conditions of women in San Francisco County Jail.

Yet women of colour and aboriginal women have always found ways to counter policies that are detrimental to them and their families, Sudbury says, and her next step will be to uncover and understand some of the innovative strategies they use to oppose social welfare cutbacks, aggressive criminalization and other effects of globalization. These methods can be subtle and even invisible, she says, but are no less valuable or important than more dramatic displays of defiance. "It's not only about demonstrating outside a WTO meeting. I think women resist globalization in ways we haven't even thought about, and I look forward to bringing them to light."

"Once I had been inside a women's prison, I could never turn my back on that experience."

reach

Reach Volume 1, Issue 2

Editor: Megan Easton

Design: Tammy Hunter/
Ireland + Associates

Published by the University of Toronto

Faculty of Social Work

Contact us:

246 Bloor Street West,

Toronto, Ontario,

Canada M5S 1A1

Phone: 416-978-6314

Fax: 416-978-7072

E-mail: reach.fsw@utoronto.ca

Web: <http://www.socialwork.utoronto.ca>

