A BETTER SOCIETY THROUGH RESEARCH DISCOVERY

Front Cover: “Kindred,” a bronze sculpture by Bill Barrett (MFA ’60), was commissioned by the School of Social Work and installed on the west side of its building in 2002. Barrett says his creative approach is “taking a chance while searching for truth” — a fitting description of the way social workers approach research as well.
FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

In fiscal year 2017, which ended on June 30, 2017, research expenditures at the University of Michigan School of Social Work grew by 6 percent. This growing, sponsored investment in social work research has helped U-M SSW faculty address many of society’s most vexing problems and is a measure of our faculty’s research excellence and influence. Social work research must continue to anticipate social problems and lead with solutions, and we do this every day through our own work and by educating the next generation of emerging social work researchers to do even better.

This year’s results show that the pipeline for new and innovative research at the School of Social Work remains strong. The total number of externally funded projects awarded to faculty in FY 2017 rose by 11 percent. The number of proposals submitted for new research awards dropped by 11 percent, but the dollar value increased by 74 percent. Investments in social work research are investments in our communities, our nation and our global society. These investments have yielded 175 publications by School of Social Work faculty over the past year. We celebrate that our faculty have particularly excelled in publishing studies that are directly related to our core values of diversity, equity and inclusion. Our researchers are working locally, nationally and internationally to find solutions to some of our world’s most important challenges, including health and mental health disparities, interpersonal violence, child wellbeing, child welfare and juvenile justice, preventing and alleviating poverty and meeting the needs of the elderly. Our school is also building a range of multidisciplinary research groups to bring increased focus and impact to our research activities while maintaining a strong portfolio of supports for individual investigators. With this strong performance in FY 2017 and the U.S. News & World Report ranking of #1 School of Social Work in the country, the University of Michigan School of Social Work is reaching out, raising hope and changing society.

Joseph Himle, PhD
Associate Dean for Research and Howard V. Brabson Professor of Social Work, School of Social Work, and Professor of Psychiatry, Medical School
A selection of honors received by U-M SSW faculty from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

**M. Antonio G. Alvarez**
Kurt Hahn Award, Association for Experiential Education.

**Linda M. Chatters**

**David Córdova**
Selected to be part of the NIDA Diversity Scholars Network (NDSN). Funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the NDSN aims to improve the funding of outstanding underrepresented early stage investigators in substance abuse research and build a sustainable independent research career.

**Jorge Delva**
Member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (Health and Medicine Division).
Accepted into the 2017-2018 New Leadership Academy Fellows Program. The learning strategies informing the fellowship experience are premised on a recognition that the demographic, democratic and discursive foundations on which modern higher education have been built are changing.

**Lorraine Gutiérrez**
Ranked a high impact female social work scholar in the article “Citation Impact of Women in Social Work: Exploring Gender and Research Culture,” which was published in *Research on Social Work Practice.*
Selected as a fellow of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare. The academy is an honorific society of distinguished scholars and practitioners dedicated to achieving excellence in the field of social work and social welfare through high-impact work that advances social good.

**Edith C. Kieffer**
Fellow, Center for Healthcare Research & Transformation (CHRT) Policy at the University of Michigan.

**Lydia W. Li**
Program co-chair, Gerontological Society of America (GSA) Meeting.

**Rogério Meireles Pinto**
Fellow, Center for Healthcare Research and Transformation (CHRT) Policy at the University of Michigan.

**Mary C. Ruffolo**
Fellow, Society for Social Work and Research.

**Shawna J. Lee**
Inducted as a member of the 2017 class of Fellows of the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR). The SSWR Fellows were established by the society to honor and to recognize current SSWR members for their individual accomplishments, leadership and contribution to SSWR as a scientific society.

**Laura Lein**
American Men’s Studies Association’s Advocate Award.
Joseph P. Ryan  
Fellow, Society for Social Work and Research.

H. Luke Shaefer  
“$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America,” shortlisted for the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize.  
Best Scholarly Book of the Year for “$2.00 a Day,” the Society for Social Work and Research.  
Finalist for the Annual Literary Award for Adult Nonfiction Books for “$2.00 a Day,” Columbia School of Journalism and Nieman Foundation, Harvard University.  
Winner of the Hillman Prize for Book Journalism for “$2.00 a Day,” Sidney Hillman Foundation.  
Named a “torch recipient” as a top leader under 40 in the field of social insurance, National Academy of Social Insurance.

Trina Shanks  
Ranked number 17 in the top 20 of most cited African American scholars in social work. The article, “African American Faculty in Social Work Schools: A Citation Analysis of Scholarship,” was published in Research on Social Work Practice.  
Treasurer, Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR).

Kristin Seefeldt  

Michael Spencer  

Robert Taylor  
Ranked number 1 in the top 20 most cited African American scholars in social work. The article, “African American Faculty in Social Work Schools: A Citation Analysis of Scholarship,” was published in Research on Social Work Practice.

Richard Tolman  
Received the 2016 Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work. The U-W alumni advisory board recognized his efforts to engage men as allies to prevent violence against women.

Kathleen M. Wade  

Daphne Watkins  
Ranked number 18 in the top 20 most cited African American scholars in social work. The article, “African American Faculty in Social Work Schools: A Citation Analysis of Scholarship,” was published in Research on Social Work Practice.

Bradley J. Zebrack  
Inducted as a member of the 2017 class of Fellows of the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR). The SSWR Fellows were established by the society to honor and to recognize current SSWR members for their individual accomplishments, leadership and contribution to SSWR as a scientific society.

Fulbright Senior Scholar (Australia), United States Department of State and Australian-American Fulbright Commission, 2017.
RESEARCH BY THE NUMBERS

NUMBER OF PROPOSALS PER FISCAL YEAR

2017 TOTAL PROPOSAL COMPOSITION

Submitted

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### Research Expenditures

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### Externally Sponsored Expenditures

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Twins research

CRISTINA BARES’ research on testing the influence of a special twin environment on cigarette initiation was published in Twin Research and Human Genetics. In this work, Dr. Bares used data from twin and sibling pairs and tested whether a special twin environment, part of the environment individuals within a family share that is specific to being a twin, contributed significantly to the variance in cigarette use initiation in adolescence. The findings indicate that the special twin environment did not significantly contribute to variance in cigarette initiation in adolescence. These are important findings because they suggest that twins are not more similar than other pairs of siblings in their cigarette use and that findings from twin studies can generalize to other sibling relationships. Bares summarizes the research: “Adolescent twins do not influence each other more than non-twin sibling pairs, despite how close they are to one another or how much time they spend together.” What’s next for her is to “try to figure out what aspects of the familial environment of twins and non-twin siblings are the active ingredients that lead adolescents to use substances.”

Hispanic youth

Although the family has been shown to be among the most influential systems in shaping adolescent HIV risk behaviors, including drug use and sexual risk behaviors, several important gaps exist in the literature. Cross-sectional or relatively short longitudinal research designs have relied solely on one report (parent or adolescent) with regard to how well the family functions, and have not focused on Hispanic populations. DAVID CÓRDOVA and colleagues’ research aimed to address this important gap by demonstrating how parent-adolescent discrepancies in reports of family functioning are linked to HIV risk behaviors among Hispanic adolescents over time.

Their research suggests that adolescent and parent discrepant views of how well the family functions play an important role. Family-based preventive interventions focused on adolescent-parent discrepant views of family functioning may have great utility in ameliorating adolescent risk behaviors, particularly among Hispanic populations.
Interprofessional collaboration

Neither HIV-infected patients nor those at risk for HIV consistently receive life-saving care, particularly if they also face untreated mental disorders, unstable living arrangements or active substance abuse. Racial disparities in retention in HIV care have also been identified. ROGÉRIO MEIRELES PINTO’S research in New York and Michigan shows that provider-level, agency-level and policy-level factors may all increase access to HIV testing, frequency and quality of primary care and support service referrals, and thus better retention of underserved individuals in care. These factors—which include provider knowledge base, pressures to link patients to evidence-based services, competition for funding and fear of losing patients to other agencies—may form the basis of interventions to facilitate the HIV Continuum of Care and thus prevent the transmission of HIV and other communicable diseases.

Older adults and neighborhoods

In “Neighborhood predictors of falls among community-dwelling older adults,” EMILY NICKLETT and colleagues (2017) found that older adults were less likely to fall if they lived in neighborhoods perceived as more socially cohesive (i.e., “I feel a part of this area,” “people in this area will help you,” “I trust people in this area”) and with fewer indicators of physical disorder (i.e., absence of rubbish, perceived safety walking alone at night). This research makes an important contribution to the field of environmental gerontology and healthy aging.

American Indian/Alaska Native youth and young adults

SANDRA MOMPER is the lead investigator on the Manidookewigashkibjigan Sacred Bundle: R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Project, a SAMHSA funded State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention Project. The Sacred Bundle project serves American Indian/Alaska Native youth and young adults ages 10-24 in Detroit, Southeastern Michigan and the 12 Tribes of Michigan. She collaborates with American Indian Health and Family Services of Southeast Michigan, state and county suicide prevention authorities, and crisis centers. The Sacred Bundle project utilizes evidence-based practice interventions and treatment strategies, as well as culturally infused practice-based evidence to provide gatekeeper trainings and Hope and Wellness suicide screenings to expand the safety net of suicide prevention and intervention for urban and Tribal American Indians/Alaska Natives who are at higher risk of suicide attempts and deaths than other racial/ethnic groups in the United States.

Their project has been so successful that Indian Health Services is now contracting with them to support some of the gatekeeper trainings in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. The Hope and Wellness Screening Toolkit will be available for tribes and urban Indian centers as a guide on how to conduct screenings in Native communities.

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Detroit summer youth employment

TRINA SHANKS conducted a retrospective evaluation of Detroit’s 2016 summer youth employment program, which provided more than 8,000 young people with a work experience. The findings from this evaluation were presented to several key bodies, including the Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation, Detroit Youth Employment Consortium, Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation Board and the Youth Sub-committee of the Mayor’s Workforce Investment Board.

Shanks says, “It is exciting to be engaged in an effort that is growing and receiving both public and private investment. Based on interviews with key stakeholders and an examination of strong youth employment programs in other cities, our recommendations focused on developing a strategic vision for the program and formalizing important parts of the system so essential improvements become sustainable and institutionalized.”

Research on race and microaggressions

ROBERT JOSEPH TAYLOR’S research results make significant contributions to the literature on everyday discrimination. Skin complexion has a significant effect on the type and degree to which African Americans are exposed to routine race related experiences. Obesity is positively associated with discrimination for males, but not females, and may indeed contribute to previous findings that African American men report more unfair treatment than women (Ifatunji and Harnois 2016). His study contributes to the growing literature on discrimination by investigating everyday discrimination as a multidimensional construct.
PhotoVoice and the Great East Japan Disaster

Disasters exacerbate pre-disaster inequities and intensify the vulnerability of women and other marginalized and disempowered groups. Professor MIEKO YOSHIHAMA launched a PhotoVoice project to engage women affected by the Great East Japan Disaster in developing more effective disaster responses and policies. Begun in 2011, PhotoVoice is an ongoing participatory action research effort. Yoshihama says, “The act of taking photographs and sharing and listening to stories prompts many participants to examine their life conditions and how their lives are connected to and influenced by complex structural and sociocultural forces. Exhibiting their photographs and voices, making public presentations and interacting with the audience represents action toward the change the women envision.”

Low income and social isolation

KRISTIN SEEFELDT’S book, “Abandoned Families: Social Isolation in the Twenty-First Century” was published. Through in-depth interviews over a six-year period with women in Detroit, Seefeldt charted the increasing social isolation of many low-income workers, particularly African Americans. She analyzed how economic and residential segregation keep them from achieving the American Dream of upward mobility.

Patient-centered care

BRADLEY ZEBRACK received a grant from the Merck Foundation to establish the University of Michigan as the National Program Office for the Merck Foundation Alliance to Advance Patient-Centered Cancer Care. The project is conducted in collaboration with faculty at the School of Nursing and the SSW Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group. This project involves an evaluation of innovative psychosocial and supportive care services that could ultimately translate into improvements in the quality of cancer care in the USA.
Cross Campus Child Wellbeing Working Group

The Cross Campus Child Wellbeing Working Group came together to harness collaborative expertise across campuses in Michigan to do strong science on child development that would have implications for developing better interventions and treatments. The group is evaluating data from several large data sets, including the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study, in order to research questions about child development such as the effects of spanking on children. A particular area of interest for the Working Group is neighborhood effects on parenting and child development. Studying the level of neighborhood crime, the number of vacant houses or the ability of neighbors to work together on neighborhood problems helps focus on the interplay of neighborhood advantage and disadvantage for optimal development of children.

The Working Group is led by U-M SSW Associate Professors ANDY GROGAN-KAYLOR and SHAWNA LEE, Associate Professor Sacha Klein (MSU), and Assistant Professor Julie Ma (UM-Flint), who all bring significant research experience in child development.

The Child and Adolescent Data Lab

The Child and Adolescent Data Lab was developed in response to major challenges facing the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in the United States. The mission of the lab is to harness the power of data to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, adolescents and their families. One of the many ways that the lab is working to better understand how children and adolescents move through (and at times between) the child welfare and juvenile justice systems is through a partner project with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the State Court Administrative Offices. A primary objective of this work is to move beyond simple population counts and estimates toward meaningful and actionable data analysis designed to impact policy and practice. The lab is developing data visualizations from shared agency records dating back to 2009 that capture important system indicators at the state and county levels. Researchers have been able to detect, for example, how many youth in the juvenile justice system had come to the attention of the state previously as victims of abuse or neglect. They have also tracked high school graduation rates of juveniles involved with the justice system, and looked at their mastery of third grade learning objectives to better inform the child welfare, education and juvenile justice systems on programming needed for these youth. Topic specific research briefs are being developed that will help guide policy and practice decisions.

The Data Lab initiative is led by U-M SSW Associate Professors BRIAN PERRON and JOSEPH RYAN, who each bring significant experience and leadership as co-directors of this important undertaking to:

- Create strong and long-lasting partnerships with state and local agencies
- Connect and analyze administrative data across agencies to help inform policy and practice
- Produce and disseminate useful products that advance the knowledge base.

“Although the Department of Health and Human Services and the Michigan courts collect and store vast amounts of data, these data are rarely turned into practical and actionable information,” explains Joseph Ryan. “Consequently, the policy, planning and program development processes are largely driven by clinical wisdom and anecdotal evidence. Both clinical wisdom and anecdotal evidence are necessary, but certainly not sufficient. In our current projects, we articulate specific plans to not only centralize and analyze—but, perhaps more importantly, use—large amounts of integrated administrative data to develop a strong empirical foundation that permits us to successfully enhance program development and evaluation and to help the department and the courts effectively target interventions.”

ssw-datalab.org
Treatment Innovation and Dissemination Lab

The Treatment Innovation and Dissemination Lab (TIDL) is a 24-member, multidisciplinary, multi-institutional team of faculty members, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students and community partners focused on improving psychosocial treatment for mental health needs and increasing access to evidence-based care for these conditions among traditionally underserved populations.

TIDL focuses on community-based participatory methods and the use of technological solutions to develop low-cost, sustainable interventions that address both mental health symptoms and functional outcomes.

JOSEPH HIMLE, PhD, founded TIDL in 2011. The lab is now co-led by Himle, MATTHEW SMITH and ADDIE WEAVER who have all dedicated their careers to improving the lives of individuals with untreated mental health needs. TIDL has a large portfolio of federal and foundation grants funding its research, which includes Himle's research testing the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention for unemployed, primarily African American adults in Detroit whose job attainment efforts have been compromised by anxiety (NIMH: R01MH102263); Smith's research testing the effect of a virtual reality-based job training intervention on employment outcomes among individuals with severe mental illness and autism spectrum disorders (NIMH: R01MH110524; NIMH: R34MH11153); and Weaver's work adapting and testing group cognitive behavioral therapy for depression to be delivered in a rural church setting (NIMH: K01MH110605).

As Himle explains, “Collectively, TIDL’s active program of research is addressing the unacceptable treatment access gaps and high unemployment levels among people with mental health problems in the United States. Our ultimate aim is to improve the lives of underserved, underrepresented groups with unmet mental health needs.”

tidl.ssw.umich.edu

Gender and Health Research Lab

The Gender and Health Research Lab, or GendHR (pronounced “gender”) Lab, focuses on understanding the mechanisms that influence the mental and physical health of racial and ethnic minorities, particularly as they apply to gender differences and gender role socialization.

The Gender and Health Research Lab pays attention to gender-related disparities in health; health education and behavior; and the use of social media in intervention research.

Co-directors JAMIE MITCHELL and DAPHNE WATKINS lead this groundbreaking lab to train the next generation of gender and health scholars on how to conduct rigorous research; increase members’ knowledge about health and gender disparities among marginalized groups; disseminate strong models for how to design, implement and evaluate culturally sensitive and gender-specific community-based programs; and communicate best practices for incorporating research into practice. Mitchell and Watkins say, “The GendHR lab is working to address key gaps in knowledge regarding how gender identity, roles and socialization operate as key social determinants of the disparate patterns of mental and physical health burdening marginalized communities.”
gendhrlab.com
SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

During the academic year 2016-2017, School of Social Work faculty members contributed 175 publications to the academic literature. ssw.umich.edu/r/research-publications-17


SELECTED EXTERNAL GRANTS
As of December 1, 2017, the School had 126 active projects/grants.
ssw.umich.edu/offices/research/projects-grants