Welcome from the Dean

Every fall, we extend a warm welcome to new and returning students. The start of the new academic year always affords us the opportunity to look back on the most significant accomplishments of the previous year and to look ahead to the rich potential that is inherent in the future.

Last year, the faculty continued to honor Columbia University School of Social Work’s tradition of excellence through rigorous scholarship with the publication of groundbreaking research in a long list of top-tier, multidisciplinary journals. In addition, they maintained a busy schedule of national and international presentations and thoughtful interviews with media outlets ranging from The New York Times, the Financial Times, The Washington Post, and CNN.com to The Telegraph and The Asahi Shimbun.

We were pleased to celebrate Dr. Katherine Shear’s fitting appointment to the World Health Organization—International Classification of Diseases workgroup on mood and anxiety disorders. Associate Dean Allen Zweber’s record of accomplishments was acknowledged when he was asked to serve on the planning committee for the nationwide VA Cooperative Studies Program research into topiramate treatment for alcohol-dependent veterans.

In another example of faculty eminence in the area of substance abuse, Dr. Nahila El-Bassel received a secretarial appointment to serve on the National Advisory Council on Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Faculty members were also the recipients of impressive grants and support, including a new R01 from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to Dr. Fred Swamala. Another grant was awarded to Dr. Susan Witte by the National Institute of Mental Health for a project that will test the tools of microfinance in an effort to reduce HIV infection among sex workers in Mongolia.

The year has also brought well-deserved recognition to Professors Sheila Akabas, Ronald Feldman, Irwin Garfinkel, Ada Mui, and Steven Schinke; Associate Professors Dana Alonzo, Rogério Pinto, and Elwin Wu; and Assistant Professor Michelle Ballan through a variety of awards, appointments, and special citations.

These awards and academic milestones would not have been possible without the loyal, ongoing support of alumni who remain connected to the School and Columbia long after they have graduated. We were pleased to receive a $761,000 gift from the estate of alumna Linda Matheson ’66MS, ’74DSW and a bequest of $776,000 from former CUSSW staff member Dorothy K. Mullen. Professor Emeritus Mullen, who has held the Willma and Albert Musher Chair, has a postretirement schedule that is full of presentations and research-related commitments.

As we prepare to embark on a new academic season, I must note another milestone: the retirement of two among our most distinguished faculty members, Dr. Sheila Kamerman and Dr. Edward Mullen. Professor Emeritus Mullen, who has held the Wilma and Albert Musher Chair, has a postretirement schedule that is full of presentations and research-related commitments.

In this issue of Spectrum, you will read about some of the exciting, cutting-edge initiatives under way at the School that are conducted in service of our global, national, and local communities. The hard work and commitment of the faculty, students, administrators, and alumni who make these programs and more possible speak volumes about the vitality and energy of our community. Eminence, excellence, and innovation—these are all part of the strong fabric of the School’s intellectual life and societal commitments.

The very best to you,

Jeanette C. Takamura
Dean and Professor
Sheila Kamerman

International Child, Family, and Social Policy Luminary

By Jessica Troiano

A festschrift in May in honor of Dr. Sheila Kamerman featured the best and brightest from the international child welfare policy community. Kamerman, Compton Foundation Centennial Professor Emerita of Social Work, retired from the School this year after 31 years as a policy leader, researcher, and educator. Her retirement prompted scholars, government officials, and executives to fly in from around the world to celebrate her work. For a full day, they engaged in rich, lively, and insightful discourse about some of the most compelling issues we face in attempting to provide children with decent life chances. Participants who came and planned to leave early in the day remained from start to finish.

Dr. Sheila Kamerman’s career as an internationally renowned child, family, and social policy scholar was in some ways an accident of fate. “It was serendipitous,” says Kamerman. She was referring to the opportunity to work with Dr. Alfred Kahn as she began her doctoral studies in the social policy and planning track at the Columbia University School of Social Work in 1969. Kahn, a legendary social policy expert, asked her to serve as his research assistant on a national study on child policy. This project, coupled with her interest in international social issues sparked by travel abroad, launched her long and distinguished research and teaching career.

Throughout, she, along with Kahn, shaped the discourse for decades in child, family, and social policy. Early childhood education and care, child poverty, and parental leave policy have been the foci of Kamerman’s work. In the late 1960s and early 70s, maternity and parental leave were unheard of in the US but were expanding in other countries. One notable development occurred in 1974, when the Swedish government established paid parental leave. “When I went talks around the country and discussed Sweden’s parental leave policy,” says Kamerman, “people did not believe it.” At the time, Americans were incredulous that a country would support mothers and fathers while they cared for their infants.

Times have changed, says Kamerman, but the US still lags behind other developed nations in this regard. “We think very differently today, but what the implications were for child well-being,” she says. Kamerman is the author, coauthor, or coeditor of more than 30 books or monographs and almost 200 articles and chapters. Best known for her research on family policies and the impact of parental leave policies on children, she has served as a consultant for UNICEF, UNESCO, OECD, UNDP, and ISSA throughout the more than three decades that her career has spanned. During that time, Bra- zil, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and a host of other nations have benefited from her advice. And social policy students have for decades read books that she and Alfred Kahn coauthored. There is no refuting her status as a world leader in social policy.

Kamerman’s work has also influ- enced many scholars closer to home, including Dr. Irwin Garfinkel, the Mitchell I. Ginsberg Professor of Contemporary Urban Problems, who now teaches at Fordham University. “Sheila’s ability to be a highly respected global scholar and a dedicated mother (of three), wife, and grandmother (of six) has been an inspiration to many of the women who have worked with her,” says Gatenio Gabel, a mentor who now teaches at Fordham University. “Sheila has had on her life. “Sheila’s work is carried into her life. She truly understands parents’ struggles to find balance in their work and family life.” Kamerman’s family was on hand to mark the occasion.

The Sheila B. Kamerman Schol- arship, a new scholarship funded by her many supporters, has been established by the School in her honor to enable the preparation of future generations of scholars as they study at the School. Those who receive a Sheila B. Kamerman Scholar- ship will have as their inspiration a leader, researcher, and educator whose legacy is incomparable.

If you wish to contribute to the Sheila B. Kamerman Scholarship Fund, visit https://giving.columbia.edu and designate your gift to the School online.

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One Giant Inspires Another:
A New Compton Foundation Centennial Professor

By Michelle Scott Okabayashi

When Jane Waldfogel was at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, she read a book written by Drs. Sheila B. Kamerman and Alfred J. Kahn that changed the course of her career. That text, Social Services in the United States: Policies and Programs, described the field in which she wanted to work. “I left the course determined to get a job in child and family policy,” she said.

It seems entirely appropriate that Waldfogel, professor of social work and public affairs at Columbia University’s School of Social Work and visiting professor at the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion at the London School of Economics, was named to succeed her mentor, Kamerman, as Compton Foundation Centennial Professor for the Prevention of Children’s and Youth Problems. Kamerman recently retired from the School this year after 31 years. “Sheila was the founder of the field of comparative child and family policy and has made immense contributions to the study of so many areas of child and family policy,” Waldfogel says. “It is a great honor to be appointed to the study of so many areas of child and family policy in this field in which she wanted to work.”

Waldfogel has dedicated her career to helping children living in poverty find a way out. A former child protective services worker, she is a noted authority on children’s health and education, and the child welfare system and has testified before Congress on related issues. Her research on the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) has been widely cited by diverse organizations ranging from the AFL-CIO to the Alfred P. Sloan Work and Family Research Network and Massachusetts Nurses Association. She has also been quoted in articles in The New York Times, Newsweek, and Britain’s The Observer.

Her latest book, Britain’s War on Poverty (Russell Sage, 2010), received positive reviews in both the US and Britain. “When I first decided to write the book, I intended it for a US audience, but it is getting a lot of attention in Britain as well,” she explains.

In 1995, Britain launched an ambitious campaign to end child poverty in 20 years and cut it in half in just a decade. The campaign, which has met its first milestone, is the focus of the book, which examines the campaign thus far and why it has worked.

Britain’s War on Poverty followed another well-received text, What Children Need (Harvard, 2006), about family and public policy in the United States. A review of the earlier book by the advocacy group Mothers’ Movement describes it as “a clear-headed, systematic approach to analyzing and summarizing the conclusions of the best available research on families” and calls it “required reading for serious proponents of mothers’ and caregivers’ economic rights.”

This past June, Waldfogel appeared at a congressional briefing on child poverty sponsored by the bipartisan children’s advocacy group First Focus that drew, among others, US Senator Robert Casey from Pennsylvania, who has called for shielding education and early childhood funding from budget cuts. Waldfogel spoke about what Britain’s campaigns against child poverty can teach the US, where one in five children currently lives in poverty. “Child poverty is often seen as intractable, but one of the most critical aspects of Waldfogel’s research reveals that in a number of areas, from tax credits to Head Start, the US used existing US programs as a model for their success,” says Bruce Lesley, president of First Focus. “Waldfogel’s analysis proves that substantially reducing child poverty and protecting and investing in American children, even in tough economic times, is not only possible, but with the right amount of political will can become a reality here in the US as has been done in Britain.”

Her latest book, Britain’s War on Poverty sponsored by the National Women’s Law Center, where she is examining child care policies in Britain and other nations that have made progress in this area, including Germany, Norway, and New Zealand.

“Although much of my work to date has focused on analyzing the effects of US policies on child and family well-being, I am increasingly interested in comparative work,” explains Waldfogel. “I think there is a lot for us to learn from other countries, particularly about policies that don’t yet exist in the US.” These policies include paid maternity leave, universal childcare benefits, and part-time or flexible schedules for parents.

Just as Kamerman was a role model for Waldfogel, Waldfogel has become a mentor for a new generation of social science researchers. Among them is Anna D. Johnson, a postdoctoral research fellow at Georgetown University who got her PhD at Columbia’s Teachers College, where Waldfogel sat on her dissertation committee. “She is a champion of families, in particular low-income families ... a terrific mentor and teacher,” says Johnson. “I’ve had the chance to be a student in her class, to be her teaching assistant, and to collaborate with her as a scientist-in-training. Across each of those experiences, I have benefited tremendously from her expertise and knowledge.”
Mullen’s Case for Evidence-Based Practice
Supported the Promise of Transformation

By Ann Levin

On January 29, 1971, readers awoke to a front-page story in *The New York Times* announcing that the most influential social service agency in the US was abandoning individual casework to focus its resources on attacking larger social problems in the community.

This radical change in direction at the Community Service Society of New York was stimulated by a series of studies that questioned the effectiveness of individual and family counseling services. The services had dominated the profession for decades.

The effectiveness studies had been directed by Edward J. Mullen, then director of the agency’s Institute of Welfare Research. Dr. Mullen was a newly minted doctoral graduate from the School of Social Work at Columbia University. His research had found that many social work interventions of the era were largely ineffective. It helped to stimulate the development of “evidence-based practice,” which relies heavily on and is shaped by scientific research findings. By using science-based evidence, the profession has a greater likelihood of producing measurable as well as palpable outcomes toward the improvement of the lives of individuals and families and of organizations and communities.

Over the years, Mullen has been a leading voice for transparency and accountability in social work practice, inspiring legions of students and earning the deep respect of his colleagues.

“His research had found that many social work interventions of the era were largely ineffective. It helped to stimulate the development of ‘evidence-based practice,’ which relies heavily on and is shaped by scientific research findings. By using science-based evidence, the profession has a greater likelihood of producing measurable as well as palpable outcomes toward the improvement of the lives of individuals and families and of organizations and communities. Over the years, Mullen has been a leading voice for transparency and accountability in social work practice, inspiring legions of students and earning the deep respect of his colleagues.”

“Before the 1980s and even into the 1990s, it was generally assumed that social interventions were effective,” Mullen says. “The prevailing view was that if social workers were well trained and well supervised and were providing quality services, then intervention outcomes would be positive. This assumption is no longer accepted. Now evidence of effectiveness is required.”

Mullen’s former students speak of him with reverence and affection. “He has a real passion for doing what’s right,” says Jennifer Bellante, an assistant professor at the University of Chicago and one of Mullen’s doctoral students at Columbia in 2003–2006.

She noted the courage it must have taken for Mullen to question whether interventions actually achieved their desired outcomes, especially 40 years ago. Today, that question is easier to tackle because of computer search technologies that enable researchers to review large pools of data, including unpublished studies and studies in other languages.

“Technology has caught up with Ed Mullen,” she jokes. “He was driven by questions before we were capable of answering them.”

Stanley G. McCracken, another former doctoral student on the faculty at the University of Chicago, says he owes his teaching style to Mullen, who spent so much time grading student papers that they came back in a sea of red—all of it constructive criticism.

“He’s the kind of person who, when you meet him, you want to be like him,” McCracken says. “Some people who have brilliant ideas are just so abrasive, you don’t want to be around them. Any one of us would cut off our arm for him.”

Ronald A. Feldman, dean emeritus of the School of Social Work, recalled working with Mullen during Mullen’s tenure as associate dean, from 1987 to 1992, to recruit an outstanding group of faculty members whose work then propelled the School to the top of the rankings in scholarly productivity.

“He always looks for what’s best in building institutions, both in academia and the social work profession,” Feldman says.

At the end of June, Mullen retired from the School of Social Work. However, Mullen, the Willma and Albert Mushkin Professor Emeritus, isn’t slowing down. The next few months will bring a series of speaking engagements at conferences here in the US and in Europe. He will continue his duties as editor in chief of Oxford Bibliographies Online—Social Work. He’s also looking forward to spending time in his gardens on two acres in Bucks County, PA, which he shares with his partner of 41 years, and in their second home in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

In lieu of a retirement celebration, Professor Emeritus Mullen has requested the School to start a new scholarship that can be established in his name. The School is inviting his many colleagues and friends to honor him by contributing to this fund. To do so, visit https://giving .columbia.edu and designate your gift to the Edward J. Mullen Scholarship Fund.
Driven by Science:

The New Willma and Albert Musher Professor of Social Work

By Michelle Scott Okabayashi

Out of project offices at the School to the marketplaces of Kazakhstan, where her teams conduct research and provide interventions, Dr. Nabila El-Bassel’s work on understanding and addressing the interrelated social problems of abuse, substance abuse, and sexuality is regarded as among the most impactful in the world.

Her groundbreaking evidence-based research on intimate partner violence and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases led to the first-ever couples-based intervention to reduce the risk of HIV and STDs, a model recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. El-Bassel, professor and director of the Social Intervention Group (SIG) and Columbia’s Global Health Research Center of Central Asia (GHRCCA), was approved by the Trustees of Columbia University to be the new Willma and Albert Musher Professor of Social Work, succeeding Professor Emeritus Ed Mullen. As the Musher Professor, El-Bassel will also bring to her ongoing work the contributions made through SIG and the GHRCCA. The appointment is particularly relevant as El-Bassel says, “From the time I was in high school, I was interested in using science to solve social and behavioral problems that people face.”

Earlier this year, El-Bassel was tapped by Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius to be the first social worker to serve on the National Advisory Council on Drug Abuse at the National Institutes of Health. The 18-member council, composed primarily of medical doctors and psychiatrists, meets three times a year to review grants and approvals, focus on policy and funding issues, and provide direction and guidance to the Secretary. “I am excited to be named to this advisory body,” says El-Bassel. She believes her background and training as a social worker and social scientist will provide a unique perspective on the multidisciplinary committee.

“Serving on the National Advisory Council will help me better understand the broader agenda of NIDA [National Institute on Drug Abuse] and the type of studies needed to generate a more profound impact,” she says.

El-Bassel began working at Columbia in 1985 and joined the faculty of the School in 1994, becoming a full professor in 2003. Through SIG, she pursued research into HIV transmission, partner violence, and drug abuse. The group researches, develops, and tests intervention models that focus largely on prevention in couples in which one partner has HIV or an STD and the other partner does not.

A noteworthy study, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, focused on mixed-status African American couples. “This was a unique study because it was guided by an Afro-centric paradigm,” explains El-Bassel. The study used the traditional African concept of “eban,” which means “fence,” to symbolize the safety and security of one’s family and relationships.

Project Ebàn’s results showed a clear drop in the transmission of HIV and STDs in couples who took part in the tested interventions, which included eight weekly sessions led by co-facilitators who were also African American. The findings were published in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

Another major area of work involves El-Bassel’s leadership of the GHRCCA, Based in Kazakhstan, the Center works on solving public health and social issues in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, in partnerships with governments, universities, and non-governmental organizations. Major problems include tuberculosis, migration, environmental health, drug abuse, and chronic and communicable diseases, including HIV.

The staff of 30 is comprised of graduate and postgraduate students, faculty, researchers, and other professionals in health and social service. Training activities take place at Columbia and at the GHRCCA, sometimes using web-based technology.

In the Columbia Magazine (Fall 2010 issue) cover story on the work of the GHRCCA, El-Bassel notes that the AIDS epidemic in Central Asia is escalating rapidly, nearly tripling in the last decade. The Barakholka market in which her teams worked in Kazakhstan may become the hotbed for HIV transmission across the region. “Barakholka, which draws migrant workers from all over Central Asia, is a place where the AIDS epidemic could explode,” she says. With 15,000 stalls and 30,000 workers, the year-round market is practically a city unto itself, and the influx of migrants moves not only goods across the region, but also diseases through drug users, their partners, and sex workers.

For the past four years El-Bassel has lead multiple initiatives in the region to find and implement evidence-based programs that impede the progression of HIV/AIDS. Her partners in this research include the WHO, UNAIDS, the CDC–Central Asia, and numerous foundations in Almaty, such as the Kazakh Institute of Public Health.

“The work we are conducting with the government and local organizations is informing culturally congruent policies and prevention strategies to help stem the spread of HIV/AIDS in Central Asia,” says El-Bassel. “We are also preparing the next generation of research scientists to address
Tenured! CUSSW Faculty Reach the Highest Bar

By Anna Bahney

As university faculties have expanded disproportionately in part-time and non-tenure-track positions, the number of tenured positions has grown much more slowly, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education. At private research institutions like Columbia University, the number of tenured, full-time faculty members grew by only 17 percent between 1993 and 2007. During the same period nationwide, non-tenure-track full-time faculty and part-time faculty grew by 156 percent and 116 percent, respectively.

At the Columbia University School of Social Work, nine individuals who have been recommended for tenure have been awarded tenure since 2004. In the face of increasingly part-time and non-tenured faculty at universities, this is a significant commitment by the University. It is noteworthy as Columbia arguably has among the most demanding tenure requirements in the nation.

“If you’re in an academic institution, tenure is the equivalent of an Olympic gold medal to which faculty aspire,” says Dean Takamura. “Tenure represents a commitment by the institution to the scholar for a lifetime.”

“Arguably, Columbia’s requirements are much higher than most in the country,” Dr. Takamura adds. “When the award is given to those who are committed to making a mark, it is being national and international leaders in their field, and to undertaking high-impact research that will shape the field.” In addition, the individual must be a strong educator and provide significant service to the academic and world community.

Those who have achieved tenure would not quibble with the notion of a high bar at Columbia.

“The tenure process was very challenging,” says Dr. Viciki Lens, who worked as a public interest lawyer for 15 years and now explores the intersection between law, social work, and social policy in her research.

However, she adds, the process that culminated in her receiving tenure in July 2010, “led me into new areas and new ways of thinking and help me create a cohesive and coherent research agenda.”

She, like many of her colleagues, credits the School with creating a stimulating environment that encourages excellence.

“The Columbia University School of Social Work is an incredibly exciting place to be,” Dr. Lens says. “I think I was always challenged and stimulated by my colleagues, whether in presenting my research or discussing teaching and curricular matters.”

There is no common path to earning tenure, except that it must be earned. Completion of postdoctoral training can help a faculty member firmly establish their research plans before taking on the additional responsibility of teaching. One’s teaching is inevitably enhanced by that ongoing professional activity.

But it is not enough to have a clear research agenda. There must be a supportive environment, hard work, persistence, and patience.

According to Dean Takamura, “We believe it is very important to select faculty with great care. We look for a good fit and then invest heavily in and provide rigorous support to our tenurable faculty. Associate Dean for Research and Academic Affairs Allen Zwean, our Committee on Academic Appointments, and our senior faculty work diligently at this. Junior faculty who partner with us and strive as hard as we do to ensure their success are likely to be pleased. Associate Dean Zwean and I feel strongly that one of the most important things that we can do is prepare the next generation of academic leaders. We are convinced that we can work successfully toward tenure with those who are interested in excellence.”

Other faculty who received tenure since tenure is the gold medal equivalent include: Dr. Vincent Guillamo-Ramos, now at NYU; Dr. Wei-Jui Han, previously at NYU; Dr. Karin Niederer, a labor and health economist who studies wage gaps and how they affect the well-being of low-income families with special emphasis on Ronais N’Doye and Paul Miny, who is the Maurice V. Russell Professor of Social Policy and Social Work at Columbia University. Dr. Melissa Delva, associate professor of epidemiology, and Dr. Michael Barta, associate professor of health disparities and the effects of social environments and policies on families and children as well as being the director of the Social Indicators Survey Center; and Dr. Susan Witte, who works in the areas of HIV/AIDS and adult and child sexual violence.

Each one with Columbia’s highest prize—tenure—for their accomplishments as scholars.

When students come to Columbia University School of Social Work, they are encouraged to dream big. How their dreams are actualized depends partly upon their chosen path. This is a challenge to be celebrated as the School, its faculty, and its staff offer an unparalleled number of pathways to a student’s professional fulfillment. Among four methods of practice, seven fields of practice, nine dual-degree programs, and four multidisciplinary minors, CUSSW students are able to tailor their diplomas to their distinctive interests.

Pivotal selections students make much later than the end of their first year are their advanced method of practice and field of practice. The advanced method a student chooses—Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP), Social Work, Administration, and Social Policy (SEA), Advanced Generalist Program (AGPP), or Policy Practice—offers a distinctive opportunity to address a wide range of contemporary concerns that are central to the profession.

The ACP is designed for students interested in working directly with individuals, families, and groups. “Students are taught to be attuned to their clients on multiple dimensions and to respond in ways that will enhance their functioning and promote their growth. To ensure positive therapeutic outcomes, students of clinical practice also learn a repertoire of evidence-based interventions,” says Dr. Robin Garey, associate professor. Among the strengths of the ACP are its curricular emphasis on trauma-based cognitive behavioral therapy and the wealth of practice knowledge generated and shared in the literature by the ACP faculty, which includes Dr. Katharin Shear, M.D., the Marion E. Kenworthy Professor of Psychiatry in Social Work.

SEA students learn skills related to advocacy, management, and leadership at nonprofits, public agencies, and social programs in the for-profit sector. “This method is rarely taught in other schools of social work and is unique at Columbia in its focus on all three sectors of the economy,” says Dr. Shelley Akabas, professor and director emerita of the Center for Social Policy and Practice in the Workplace. “We also have a Management Fellows Program, which allows select students with prior experience to specialize in SEA from the outset of their educational experience,” adds Akabas, who co-leads SEA with Dr. James Mandberg, assistant professor.

Students who pick AGPP are trained to “simultaneously attend to the capacities, potential, and unmet needs of the people with whom they will work and of the communities and organizations with which they will collaborate,” says Dr. Marion Riedel, associate professor of professional practice, who oversees the method with Dr. Ellen Lukens, the Sylvia D. & Mose J. Firestone Centennial Associate Professor of Clinical Social Work. “Students who choose the social policy practice track acquire and use multidisciplinary knowledge and skills as microeconomics and statistics for policy analysis and advocacy that prepare them for policy and advocacy careers in the nonprofit sector, international organizations, and in the legislative and branch offices of local, state, and national governments,” says Dr. Irwin Gartinkel, the Mitchell I. Ginsberg Professor of Contemporary Urban Problems, who oversees the policy method.

In addition to choosing an advanced method, students also specialize in one of seven fields of practice that address a broad range of contemporary social concerns. These are Aging: Contemporary Social Issues; Family, Youth, and Children Services; Health, Mental Health, and Disabilities; International Social Welfare and Services; Social Work and the World of Work; and National Social Welfare and Services to Immigrants and Refugees; School-Based and School-Linked Services.

Each of these choices is not enough; students can earn a second degree in nine disciplines as they work toward the completion of a master’s in social work. These areas of study range from law, social work, and public policy and administration to special education, divinity studies, business administration, international affairs, urban policy, and Jewish studies. Students can further customize their master’s program by pursuing a minor in one of four areas: business administration, environmental and sustainability studies, law, and public policy and administration.

“We aim to prepare students who will be able to speak as an intelligent scholar would, to be critical consumers of research, and to practice translating and bringing the best available evidence to bear,” says Marianne Yoshikai, senior assistant dean for academic affairs and associate professor of professional practice. “As their careers progress, that’s what will help them sustenance and progress to ever more sophisticated levels of professional practice.”

CUSSW students are encouraged to dream big. How their dreams are actualized depends partly upon their chosen path. This is a challenge to be celebrated as the School, its faculty, and its staff offer an unparalleled number of pathways to a student’s professional fulfillment. Among four methods of practice, seven fields of practice, nine dual-degree programs, and four multidisciplinary minors, CUSSW students are able to tailor their diplomas to their distinctive interests.
The Office of Advising at the Columbia University School of Social Work (CUSSW) helps students navigate the questions and options they ponder as they study to earn their degrees. Students have academic advisers and year-round workshops through the advising office as resources. Director Vega and Counselor Dixon and their full team of advisers help students achieve their academic goals, choose an area of concentration, coordinate faculty mentoring or tutorial opportunities, navigate the Columbia system, and balance home and school life.

With more than 800 master’s students, CUSSW offers a variety of paths to the MS degree. “We help students think about how they spend their time at school and lay out all the possibilities,” says Vega ‘04MS, who is a trained family therapist and also teaches at the School. “One of the wonderful things about CUSSW is that there are a lot of options and study tracks, but that can be overwhelming. Students sometimes need help in clarifying and realizing their goals. We can open up opportunities students may not have known exist.”

Vega says that all social work schools have some sort of advising support, but he believes CUSSW is one of the few that has an office devoted to it. This year, the workshop “Choosing your Specialization—Selecting a Method and Field of Practice,” a comprehensive look at all study tracks and options, drew 120 students out of a first-year class of 350 students. “A major decision for first-year students is choosing their study track for their second year,” says Vega. “We work with students as they make those decisions.”

Shilpa Joseph, enrolled in the 16-month program, connected with Dixon at an Orientation workshop in spring 2011 and scheduled individual meetings. “I really wanted to continue the conversations we had that day,” says Joseph. “Walter and Zita are really accessible, very open, and willing to listen.”

Dixon, who earned her master’s in social work at the School in 2005 and worked for four years as a policy coordinator with coalitions on social justice issues, focuses on Reduced Residency and Extended Program students, providing help with short-term and long-term academic planning and with general curriculum and academic-related issues.

The office’s support extends beyond the physical campus. A Facebook page offers event listings and deadline reminders, as well as links to videos from faculty, students, and alumni. The staff also uses Twitter to send out tweets and announcements such as these from last spring: “2nd year students u r in the home stretch of your final semester!! U can do this!” and “Remember that the Empire State Building will be lit up in honor of the newest Columbia graduates tomorrow night!”

Vega credits Leslie Roberts, program coordinator at the office, for the social media outreach, which is popular with students. He says social media “give students updates as well as words of encouragement.”

And just down the hall from Vega and Dixon are the Field Education Office led by Assistant Dean Claneren Moultrie and the Office of Enrollment and Student Services team led by Senior Assistant Dean David Yam and Directors Debbie Lesperance, Karna Lowe, and Kim Barberich that recruit, enroll, and provide support to students in their academic life at the School, including career and leadership development, course registration, financial aid, field placements, and student caucus activities. All are dedicated to supporting students so they will succeed in their academic journey at CUSSW.

Sometimes, Vega says, their most important role is to give students a boost of confidence during stressful times. “We want to make sure students’ needs and concerns are heard,” says Vega. “We take a very holistic approach and tend to the student as a whole person.”

By Anna Mantzaris
Making a Global Footprint
By Alexander Gelfand

In an era when governments in the West are grappling with financial challenges and rethinking their welfare commitments, Assistant Professor Jim Mandiberg is studying an extraordinary neighborhood in Japan, where local businesses are providing aging services ordinarily offered under the auspices of government.

Elderly Japanese from all over Tokyo flock to the Sugamo neighborhood, which is known in Japan as “Grandmothers’ Harajuku.” Harajuku is the hip Tokyo shopping district recognized worldwide for its appeal to fashion-conscious teenagers. There in Sugamo, older Japanese seek relief from aches and pains at a popular shrine believed to have healing powers. They frequent the largest Sugamo bank, which turned its entire second floor into a community center, offering free performances, snacks, and tea.

Long before the catastrophic March 11, 2011 earthquake and resulting tsunami in northeastern Japan to fend for their elderly kin, residents had adopted a business-driven model to fashion-conscious teenagers. There in Sugamo, older Japanese are courted by businessmen who work together to design, test, and offer social work practices that can be transformative. Faculty initiatives reflect our commitment to preparing professionals who are “citizens of the world” and to being in stride with Columbia, which has global centers in the Middle East (Amman), East Asia (Beijing), South Asia (Mumbai), and Europe (Paris) and soon-to-open centers in Turkey and Jordan. There is a need to stimulate economic development, build businesses, and organize communities in northeastern Japan to fend for their elderly kin, residents had adopted a business-driven model to strength the community center, offering free performances, snacks, and tea.

In Mumbai, India, 1,700 miles away, Professor Denis Burnett is investigating two important issues related to malnutrition among children. While the Indian economy has experienced impressive economic growth over the past decade or so, the incidence of malnutrition among children declined by only a relatively modest level. Kaushal is studying the association between malnutrition among children and gender inequality in India. While the Indian economy has experienced impressive economic growth over the past decade or so, the incidence of malnutrition among children declined by only a relatively modest level. Kaushal is studying the association between malnutrition among children and gender inequality in India.
Three years later, her oil paintings have been featured in two exhibitions, and she is exploring ways to combine her newfound passion for art with her fledgling career as a clinical social worker. She believes art can be a powerful tool in the arsenal of therapeutic techniques, especially in her native China, where social work practice is not widely accepted.

“I feel my artistic practice is part of my social work practice,” said Chen, who expresses herself through photography, oils, watercolors, and poetry.

Chen grew up in Beijing, earned an undergraduate engineering degree, and moved to the US in 1987. In New York, she worked for two large banks, selling financial products and managing client relations. Chen was firing, firing, and managing compensations on September 11, 2001. Suddenly, rather than “firing people, I wanted to help,” she said.

Her anguish was compounded by the deaths of two college classmates. One committed suicide; the other died after refusing treatment for breast cancer. Both had been deeply depressed but had not sought treatment because of the stigma in China attached to a weakness or problem. The futility of their deaths and her work experiences led her to social work as a second career. “When you see other people suffering, you process your own feelings,” she says.

In spring 2009, after her first year at the School, Chen went to China for four months to explore opening an intergenerational education center as a Stealthy Mental Health clinic. She consulted with Dr. Ada Mui, a professor of social work at the School and an expert in cross-cultural social work.

“Different cultures have different ways of doing things,” Mui says. “I told her to be very creative. You can’t deal with emotional issues in China as you would here with Americans.”

Chen had taken two semesters of painting with Joan Snitzer, director of Barnard’s Visual Arts Department. When she got to Beijing, she set up a studio. Snitzer’s class had helped her connect to her own feelings and emotions. She thought the same might be possible for others and began painting with the autistic daughter of friends. The results were astonishing. “She was able to talk to me. And her parents said she came home very happy.”

After that summer, Chen realized her clinical work had to include painting, and that China, still largely resistant to American-style talk therapy, was not ready for the center she envisioned.

Last January, Chen had her first show at Columbia Medical Center’s Russ Berrie Medical Science Pavilion, followed by a May exhibition at Harlem’s Chashama Gallery. She paints on the top floor of her row house in Hamilton Heights. It is decorated with her paintings and the sculpture and ceramics of her 17-year-old daughter, Julia.

Before Snitzer’s classes, Chen had taken her children mostly to free art classes at the Metropolitan Museum. Her innate ability impressed Snitzer, who says Chen quickly developed a “vital and personal” artistic language that incorporates aspects of her Chinese heritage and her social work practice. “Her new visual vocabulary proved to be useful in communicating difficult subjects that often cannot easily be expressed in words alone,” Snitzer says.

Chen is uncertain what her social work practice will look like, except that it will unfold in New York and Beijing, and will involve using art to facilitate work with clients. Chen is grateful to the School for helping her find a new and meaningful direction later in her life. Her 28-year-old daughter Diane, who worked briefly in banking, is now enrolled at the School of Social Work, too.

“The two years taught me how to help others, but also how to help myself become a more complete human being,” Chen says. “It’s very powerful, this School. There are many core values that changed in me.”
By Ronin Davis

Another Exciting First: CUSSW Students Lead the Way

There are more than 22 student caucuses at the School of Social Work. Driven by impassioned interest, each one explores issues and concerns and offers activities and programs that extend the educational experiences available at the School and at Columbia. Over the years, student caucuses have stimulated new courses, brought exciting speakers, and helped to define new terrain for the School.

It is in the tradition of Columbia’s student-led caucuses that the Criminal Justice Caucus at the School of Social Work organized and offered its first skills-focused conference on criminal justice in January 2011. It drew nearly 150 students, professionals in the field, and community members, including formerly incarcerated individuals.

“Removing the Bars: A Skills-Based Conference on Criminal Justice” featured 30 presenters, including the Rev. Dr. Emma Jordan-Simpson, executive director of the Children’s Defense Fund—New York, who spoke on the “cradle to prison pipeline.” Students came from universities beyond New York, including Smith College in Western Massachusetts. Many came from NYU, Fordham, and other New York area institutions. Organizations represented ranged from the Osborne Association and Bronx Defenders to the Center for Constitutional Rights.

One highlight of the January 29 event was the panel Voices of People in the System, moderated by Adjunct Assistant Professor Dr. Kathy Boudin. The panel included a man who had been incarcerated for more than 37 years in prison and his daughter, who spoke about visiting him while he was confined and his missing most of her life. “The lesson for … social work students is that you can learn from your clients,” says Boudin. Faculty and professionals in the field led a total of 14 workshops, 7 of which were cosponsored by other student caucuses. Topics ranged from employment and education barriers faced by the formerly incarcerated to New York City’s “stop and frisk” policy, which has been criticized for singling out black and Latino populations.

The conference helped to prepare students for work with criminal justice issues and to ready them to forge connections with agencies, organizations, and communities involved with those concerns. Hands-on workshops taught students practical skills and included role-playing, brief case studies, and referral information. Caucus cochair Tanisha Douglas ’13MS says, “We wanted to empower the next generation of social workers.”

In addition to students and professionals from social work, law, and education, Harlem residents and other community members attended the daylong event, which was publicized through local media, websites, and listserves. During the lunch break, organizers arranged support groups, such as for people working with violent or sexual offenders or for white providers working in a system with a disproportionate number of minorities. In her keynote address, Jordan-Simpson discussed the demographics of the US prison population, noting that the lifetime risk for a child born in 2001 to end up in prison is 1-in-3 for a black boy and 1-in-17 for a white boy. Calling the high rates of minority incarceration “an American crisis,” she said she had met boys in detention who had not had a significant conversation with an adult until after they were arrested.

“We have sent [the wrong] message to young people—that is very clear. We’re not going to pay any attention to you until after you get arrested,” she says.

The Criminal Justice Caucus was founded in spring 2010 to provide a forum for expanding the knowledge and experience of social work students regarding criminal justice issues. The growing need for social workers in this area was acknowledged when the School included in its Contemporary Social Issues field of practice opportunities for students to prepare for jobs in courtrooms, prisons, and law firms.

The response from participants was uniformly positive; comments on evaluation forms included: “It was worth my traveling 60 miles to attend” and “Do it again.”

Duke Terrell, warden at the Metropolitan Detention Center and an adjunct assistant professor, says he was “impressed, inspired, and challenged.” “You’re a credit to your profession, and you’ll always be welcome in mine,” he adds.

More than social groups, CUSSW caucuses such as the Criminal Justice Caucus have had a serious purpose and, as a result, have sprouted new nonprofit organizations, new opportunities in the profession, and new leaders for the era.

Editor’s note: Davis is a second-year student at CUSSW in the Advanced Generalist Practice and Programming method, with a minor in law. He graduated from the University of Colorado, Boulder, with a BA in English and psychology in 2007 and worked at a detention and assessment center for juveniles before coming to Columbia. His fall 2011 placement is at the Legal Aid Society, where he will work for the Manhattan Assignment Diversion Project. Davis is one of three cochairs of the Criminal Justice Caucus.

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—REV. DR. EMMA JORDAN-SIMPSON
Among the most satisfying of the School’s involvements is its collaborations with partners to bring about transformations that have been long needed in large systems—transformations that will improve the quality of life of significant numbers of our neighbors and fellow New Yorkers. In some cases, the initiatives clearly have broad scale implications that will extend well beyond the city. We are pursuing them because we love New York City. Its big lights truly do inspire us. Here are just three examples.

**Workforce Development**

Employment concerns are mounting nationwide as the US economy undergoes transitions that will hopefully lead to a strengthened future. Meanwhile, prospects for work are harsh for many, including for many of our neighbors. Recognizing this, the School of Social Work is working with community partners to explore potential opportunities for long-term support of our local residents as they seek employment.

“The expectation is that through collaborations with our neighbors and the School of Social Work will gain a broader understanding of how best to support and assist in workforce development and workforce issues within the Harlem community,” says Cleavon Moultrie, assistant dean and director of field education at the School.

Anna Rubley, director of operations at Metropolitan College of New York and a member of the Men’s Ministry at Abyssinian Baptist Church, is one of several community leaders working with the School.

“Professor Mincy’s lectures will be a timely opportunity to clarify for New York City service providers and their clients the details regarding the EITC initiative. This public forum will afford much needed dialogue regarding EITC’s impact, benefits, and implications,” says West. “As the program’s host facility, Harlem’s Abyssinian Baptist Church will provide the perfect atmosphere for this extremely important opportunity for collaborative community dialogue.”

Rubley said the group hopes to grow its community partnership model over time.

**Juvenile Justice System**

As the School of Social Work sharpens its focus on criminal justice and law issues, researchers are honing in on how the judicial process itself affects the well-being of children and families. There are three efforts now ongoing that bear much promise.

First, in a new pilot study, Drs. Vick Lens and Craig Schweitzer are observing and analyzing the proceedings of New York City Family Court in the Bronx. They are looking into the impact of courtroom interactions and actions, trusting any child welfare cases on cooperation and acceptance of court decisions.

Lens, who is interested in the form and tone of communication, from the way the judge and respondent interact to how conflicts are resolved, will observe the courtroom from the inside. Schweitzer will survey the defendants when they leave the room to record their perceptions of the courtroom experience. Both expect that their findings will provide helpful insights and therefore inform recommendations that could result in the more effective handling, meting, and acceptance of decisions in the juvenile justice system.

Second, it is common knowledge that the criminal justice system looms large in the lives of the 2.4 million children in the US who have an incarcerated parent. Imprisonment disrupts the parent and child bond. In many families, it results in economic strain and other negative impacts. Dr. Amanda Geller ’07 PhD, associate research scientist, is using Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study data from Princeton and Columbia to examine the effects of father incarceration on children. Geller discovered that father incarceration negatively affected children whose fathers lived with them prior to incarceration and children whose fathers did not previously live in their homes. Around their fifth birthday, these children exhibited more aggressive behaviors following their father’s incarceration. Their increased aggression exceeded that displayed by children whose fathers were incarcerated. Undoubtedly, use of this information in early childhood education and other programs will benefit these children’s lives.

And third, adjacent Assistant Professor Dr. Kathy Boudin is overseeing a college guidance and peer support program for adolescent boys and girls with an incarcerated parent. The Osborne Foundation-funded program, Teen College Dreams, supports children’s aspirations to attend college. The belief is that pursuing college will provide an alternative path instead of the one that led their parents to prison. “The goal is to raise public awareness of the child welfare system and to train professionals who will stay in the field. He wants Corps members to “stay in child welfare for the long term—not only as caseworkers, with MSW degrees earned later, but also as directors or even foster parents or adoptive parents.”

Foster Care System

Children’s Corps, a new program to interest recent college graduates in becoming child welfare workers, resembles Teach For America, the initiative through which graduates are recruited and trained to teach in America’s neediest communities.

Children’s Corps will recruit, train, and support college graduates to work in child welfare even if they had not previously considered social work as a career. Established in partnership with the Columbia School of Social Work, the program is led by Barry Chaffkin, LCSW and first-year assistant professor Dr. Kathy Boudin.

"In the short run it should provide a welcome infusion of new and talented young workers," says Professor Jane Waldgofst, who is involved in training and support for Corps members. "It will enlarge the pool of workers and create a larger group of people who are familiar with the child welfare system."

Children’s Corps grew out of a nonprofit organization founded by Chaffkin called FosterCare Change, which provides training, mentoring, and support for child welfare workers as well as long-term solutions for children in the foster care system. Chaffkin has two main goals: to raise public awareness of the child welfare system and to train professionals who will stay in the field. He wants Corps members to “stay in child welfare for the long term—not only as caseworkers, with MSW degrees earned later, but also as directors or even foster parents or adoptive parents.”

For Chaffkin, the bottom line is simple. “We want kids to go home faster or get adopted rather than age out of the system.”

"There’s nothing you can’t do, now you’re in New York / These streets will make you feel brand new / Big lights will inspire you / Let’s hear it for New York. New York. New York."

—_EMPIRE STATE OF MIND_ / JAY-Z & ALICIA KEYS

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A Test of Kokoro: Heart, Mind, and Inner Spirit

By Hiroyuki Takita

I watched CNN in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, announce—“Breaking News: Mega-earthquake and tsunami hit Japan.” Sendai Airport under water. Gas storage tanks on fire. A black ocean engulfing homes and highways. I called my sister and mother, two hundred miles south of the epicenter. They were safe.

In the days following the tragedy, everything seemed surreal, difficult to comprehend. We were all devastated—even the news anchor sobbed while reading the latest reports on national television. Watching our compatriots suffer, and facing what the prime minister called Japan’s “biggest crisis since World War II,” we asked ourselves, “What can we do to help?” Some people donated money and goods; others said a prayer, took a leave to help clean up debris and mud, or purchased products manufactured in tsunami-ravaged areas to boost the local economy. I requested a transfer from my office with CARE International in Vietnam to one in northeastern Japan. We were all unified and supporting one another through this crisis.

I received the transfer to northeastern Japan, and in late April I arrived in Yamada, Iwate Prefecture. By then I’d seen the ruined town on TV many times, yet it was still an emotional experience to walk between piles of rubble and empty lots in what was a fishing village of 18 thousand residents. A team of professionals had been dispatched earlier to conduct a preliminary assessment of psychosocial needs and had identified the elderly as a primary target for intervention. Based on that report, CARE asked me to develop a project to address their psychosocial needs and write a proposal for potential corporate funders. I interviewed local government officials, village leaders, elderly evacuees, and others to identify service gaps to be filled by CARE. I interviewed the staff of local NGOs based in Kobe, the site of the 1995 mega-earthquake that took more than six thousand lives, to draw out their best practices. I took on additional roles to meet the changing needs of the survivors, delivering food and other essential items, coaching staff members who had just arrived on policies and procedures, and identifying and visiting potential partners to synchronize activities.

During my month there, I experienced many physically and emotionally grueling moments—not just because I was dealing with survivors who were so preoccupied with basic needs that we could barely think about the future, but also because of the influx of national and international aid partners whose different perspectives had to be aligned with the overall objectives of the relief mission. But through this experience I realized how essential it is to have a good sense of humor, a positive outlook, and solid training. Helping survivors is one thing, but knowing your institutional capacity is another. As I learned at CUSSW, designing a project requires narrowing down big ideas to manageable, implementable activities. With that, it is possible to work with dedication, with a sense of kokoro—heart, mind, and inner spirit.

Editor’s note: Takita ’05MS is a project manager at CARE International responsible for day-to-day operations of Doi Thoai Project, a two-year program to reduce stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. Since graduating from the School, he has worked with several international organizations such as the UN in a number of developing countries.


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**FACULTY NEWS & NOTES**

**TAKING NOTE**

Assistant Professor Michelle Ballan received the 2010 AHEAD Recognition Award from the Association on Higher Education and Disability for outstanding contributions through work or research on campus to benefit students with disabilities. Dr. Ballan was also selected by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) to receive its 2011 Early Career Award. The award recognizes significant achievements and scholarly contributions to the field of developmental disabilities.

Professor Nabila El-Bassel was appointed by Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius to serve on the National Advisory Council on Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) through November 2014.

Professors Nabila El-Bassel, Ronald Feldman, Edward Mullen, and Steven Schinka were inducted into the Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare as fellows.

Professors Nabila El-Bassel, Steven Schinka, and Associate Professor Elin Wu were named among the most prominent social work scholars in HIV/AIDS. Publications productivity in the US in a study published in the Journal of Social Work in Health Care. Professor El-Bassel was identified as the most prolific HIV/AIDS social work scholar.

Professor Irwin Garfinkel received the 2011 Frank B. Briel Memorial Prize for the best article published in Social Service Review. The article, co-authored with Dr. Lena Nepomnyachy, is entitled "Child Support Enforcement and Fathers’ Contribution to Their Nonmaternal Children." Published in the September 2010 issue of the Review, the study critical and Nepomnyachy’s study examined the full package of child support received by mothers from the nonresident fathers of their children.

Associate Professor Neeraj Kaushal was named to the board of directors of the Columbia University Global Center in India. The Center, headquartered in Mumbai, India, provides a vehicle for scholarly activities throughout South Asia and advances the University’s academic partnerships and programs in the region.

**PROFESSORS OF PRACTICE**

Dr. Ellen Lukens was promoted to Professor of Practice. She has extensive clinical experience with children and families. She is currently the principal investigator on two federally funded grants. Her ongoing practice includes the facilitation of bereavement groups, support and process groups for families and individuals. Her work has taken her as far as Uganda, where she consulted with teachers and principals in a rural district focusing on grief and loss due to AIDS.

**NEWLY APPOINTED AT THE SCHOOL**

Dr. Susan Witte was awarded a promotion to tenure. Associate Professor Witte’s work has illuminated prevention interventions related to HIV/AIDS for couples, focusing specifically on the introduction of the female condom into couples-tar geted approaches, the recruitment of dyads into clinical trials, and the examination of the concordance of data drawn from couples.

**TENURE TRACK FACULTY**

Dr. Jeff Kjellstrand joins the School this fall as an assistant professor. Kjellstrand’s research is focused on positive youth development and intervention of youth at-risk. He comes to the School from Portland, OR, where he served as an assistant professor at Portland State University.

Dr. Marcus Lam will join the School in January 2012 as an assistant professor. Lam completed his doctorate at UCLA School of Public Affairs, Department of Social Welfare. His research examines the comparative organizational behavior and effectiveness of for-profit, nonprofit, and public providers in the delivery of social, health, and human services. He will join the Social Enterprise Administration faculty at CUSSW.

Dr. Andrew Hamid comes to the School with a wealth of clinical, programmatic, and research experience. He has served as Fulbright Scholar at Universidade do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and at Charles University of Prague. He will join the Social Enterprise Administration faculty at CUSSW. Hamid provided professional consultation to the US

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR RODRIGO PINTO** was named by Dean Takamura and selected by the Latino Social Work Task Force (NASW, NY Chapter) to be honored at the Seventh Annual Dinner Awards in March 2011. The event honors individuals for their leadership and contributions on behalf of the Latino community.

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JAMES MANDAGEN’S research was in a Dinocole of Higher Education (June 2011) article on a consumer research conference at Baylor University attended by more than one hundred professors.**

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**PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE**

Dr. Fred Ssewamala was awarded tenure by Columbia University. His innovative research, conducted largely in developing nations, embodies the social work profession’s multidisciplinary perspective. Associate Professor Ssewamala has accomplished this by designing and conducting research trials that assess promising program interventions for youth and families within communities where hope has been in short supply.

**TENURE TRACK FACULTY**

Dr. Ana Alonso has been promoted to associate professor. Her research is focused on the prevention of suicide. She has developed and tested novel interventions aimed at improving engagement, treatment, and adherence among suicide attempters, with special attention to hispanic individuals at particularly high risk of suicide who have demonstrated low treatment engagement.

Dr. Robin Gearing has been promoted to associate professor. His research interest lies in the areas of child and adolescent mental health intervention and treatment, and thus focuses on evidence-based interventions that improve social, academic, and familial functioning and on the development of interventions for youth and their families to improve the management and treatment of adolescent mental health and support the family structure.

**VISITING PROFESSOR** was named to the Provost’s Faculty Advisory by former Provost Claude Steele. She was also featured twice in The New York Times’ “Economist” blog, cited in a Washington Post opinion article, “Myths About Why Women Earn Less than Men,” highlighted in The Guardian; cited in a New York Times opinion piece on child poverty in the US; and a report she wrote on child poverty was presented at a congressional briefing in December 2010.

Associate Dean Allen Zweben has been appointed to the Planning Committee for the nationwide, multisite VA Cooperative Studies Program “Tierariative Treatment for Alcohol Dependent Veterans.” His book Treating Addiction: A Guide for Professionals, with Dr. William R. Miller and Dr. Alyssa Forchheimes, was recently published by Guilford Publications.

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**PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE**

Dr. Ellen Lukens was promoted to Sylvia D. & Mose J. Firestone Centennial Professor of Professional Practice. She is renowned for her leadership in the development and implementation of multicultural and psychosocial educational interventions for adolescents, adults, and families that are facing life challenges such as trauma, chronic illness, and mental illness.

Dr. Mary Semantti has been promoted to professor of professional practice. She has extensive clinical experience with children and families. She is currently the principal investigator on two federally funded grants. Her ongoing practice includes the facilitation of bereavement groups, support and process groups for families and individuals. Her work has taken her as far as Uganda, where she consulted with teachers and principals in a rural district focusing on grief and loss due to AIDS.

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A Meaningful PhD

BY ANNA MANTZARIS

Dr. Barbara Silverstone, an expert on aging and past president of Lighthouse International and the American Gerontological Association, was hooed as a PhD graduate at the School of Social Work’s 2011 Commencement in May, some 38 years after finishing her doctoral studies at Columbia.

Silverstone, who earned her DSW in 1973, is part of a group of 82 alumni who sought to have their DSW degrees converted to the PhD degree. Thus far, 24 have had their PhD degrees converted and 6 among them were hooded at the School’s commencement in May.

Silverstone and fellow alumnus Dr. David Ockert, founder and executive director of Parallax Center, an outpatient treatment facility for substance abuse in Manhattan, headed the task force from the Alumni Association’s Doctoral Graduates Committee and worked with Dean Takamura and Jennifer March, associate director of alumni relations, toward Columbia’s approval of the conversion. Ockert, who earned his DSW in 1984, was also in the first group to be converted.

Silverstone, a partner since 2006 in the social work consulting firm SBW Partners, credits Dean Juanna Takamura for enabling the process. “I think that Dean Takamura’s leadership was really critical,” says Silverstone. “She understood the issues and presented our case to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) Executive Committee and the administration.”

According to Jennifer March, associate director of alumni relations, the DSW was conceived originally as a research degree, following the model of the social science PhD at Columbia. In 1992, the School replaced the DSW with the PhD degree, now conferred by GSAS. “For many of our alumni, the PhD is seen as the ultimate degree that can be earned by a graduate of a research intensive institution,” explains March.

Dr. Heidi Mandel, who specializes in medical social work with palliative and hospice care patients, received her DSW in 1982 and welcomed the opportunity to convert her degree to a PhD this year. She said it gave her the opportunity to look back over some 30 years of experience and take pride in her achievement. “I think it’s a very exhilarating process,” says Mandel. “I really appreciate that the School paid attention. This is consistent with my experience with the School for the past 30 years.”

Dr. Phyllis Caroff; Dr. Teresa Gardian; Dr. Sheila B. Kamerman, Compton Foundation Centennial Professor Emerita of Social Work; Dr. Janet Lerner; and Dr. Allen Zweben, associate dean of academic affairs and research among those who now hold PhDs—a degree that acknowledges the research emphasis of their doctoral studies.