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IN THE LOOP

PhD in Social Welfare, The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York

<https://socialwelfare.commons.gc.cuny.edu>



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Rolling into the Fall Semester

Needless to say, the summer has been intense with heat waves across the country, heavy rains and floods, and wildfire smoke and air quality alerts. I hope you and your families have stayed cool, healthy, and safe during this time. I also hope you were able to find some time to rest, relax, and recharge. We are now entering our last month before the Fall semester begins on August 25th. In preparation for the Fall semester, I would like to draw your attention to several important dates that are also listed on the [academic calendar](#):

- August 15th - registration begins for newly admitted students
- August 17th - last day to apply for leave of absence
- August 25th - first day of the semester
- September 14th - last day for level changes
- September 14th - last day to deposit dissertation for September 30th degree
- November 28th - spring 2024 registration begins

Enjoy the remaining 25 days of summer break! - Barbra Teater,
EO PhD in Social Welfare

FEATURING:

- Message from Executive Officer
- Mina Rees Library Resources
- Student Achievements
- OMH Funding Recipients
- The Virtual Town Square
- Message from our Quantitative Methods Coach
- Student Spotlight

Mina Rees Library Resources

The GC's Mina Rees Library is full of resources to help with your PhD studies. Resources are available [online](#) and in-person at the GC. Librarians are available to answer your questions 24/7 through the [online chat](#), or you can schedule a free [one-on-one consultation](#). New to the GC, or just need a refresher? Attend one of the "Introduction to the library" online workshops. Register [here](#).

Student Achievements: June & July

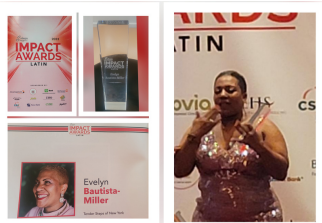


Dennis Torres had the honor of participating in the NYC Dept. of Veterans Services; Military Transition Summit on June 24, 2023, as a panelist in the Higher Education session. Panelists shared valuable insights and experiences with fellow veterans and service members, discussing the challenges and opportunities of transitioning into higher education. *"It was a fantastic opportunity to contribute to the dialogue on supporting our military-veteran community in their educational pursuits."*

Sabretta Alford (with **Esther Son**) had their article "Piloting a community-based, culturally adapted health promotion program for children with ASD and developmental disabilities in Korean Immigrant Families. Health and Social Work" accepted into the Health and Social Work Journal.



Evelyn Bautista Miller received the Schneps Media Latin Impact Award on July 27, 2023 for her work with Tender Steps of New York.



Justin Cabrera successfully defended his dissertation "Nursing Perspectives on Intimate Partner Violence Screening in the Emergency Department".



2023 alumnus **Paul K. Ayernor** recently accepted the Senior Research Analyst/Program Manager position at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health.

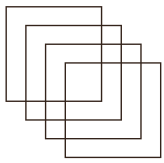
New York State Office of Mental Health: Announcing 2023/24 Funding Recipients



The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) has provided the PhD in Social Welfare with \$40,000 to be spent over the next three years to fund doctoral students. The aim of the funding is to support increased diversity amongst Mental Health Professionals in New York State. We would like to congratulate **Gilbert Nick** and

Monica X. Thompson who have accepted the award for the 2023/24 academic year. If you are interested to see if you are eligible to apply for funding please email Barbra at bteater@gc.cuny.edu or Janille at jbagcal@gc.cuny.edu





The Virtual Town Square



Ian Williams
Program Social
Media Fellow
@igraywill

- [Twitter was rebranded as "X"](#), continuing transformations initiated by Elon Musk's private equity backed acquisition last fall. The website URL remains the same for now, but logo, design, and branding have all been replaced. Features and settings continue to change; briefly, it was not possible to view Tweets (or whatever they'll soon be called) without an account.
- [Meta launched Threads](#), a direct competitor to Twitter, with a strong initial showing of new users. Users later dropped, reminding a critical reader that hype-driven descriptive statistical data is often superficial and needs to be contextualized.
- Meta also altered settings in Facebook in Canada to [restrict access to news websites](#), after the Online News Act was implemented, requiring social media companies to pay news companies for accessing their content.
- Reddit implemented a plan to restrict free third-party to its data sets through "rate-limiting", which impacts the ability of researchers to study and pull data from the platform. The company justified this as a response to artificial intelligence web-scraping. [Users revolted, making over 8,000 subreddits private.](#)
- LinkedIn started [testing AI image generation software](#) in its user interface.
- Twitch gained national attention after [video game streamer and influencer Kai Cenat organized a spontaneous flash mob-style gathering](#) for video game console giveaways in Union Square led to over 60 arrests. Cenat was arrested and charged with inciting a riot.

Summer Travels and Exchanges

This summer is the first time in a while that I've [posted content on my Instagram account](#). The occasion? A three-week trip to Berlin, Germany. It was not quite a vacation, nor quite a research trip - a moment to enjoy the affordances of flexible summers during PhD education. I felt compelled to document and share ephemeral moments of the trip, visual motifs, architecture, patterns, and themes. Much of my time was spent in the company of other academics and activists, exchanging ideas and experiences, getting some much needed perspective and distance from my very NYC-centric life.

One highlight that might be of interest to Social Welfare colleagues is an exchange I had with an old friend, Bálint Vojtonovszki. We first met in 2012 when he was on exchange in NYC, studying community organizing with Community Voices Heard. I was an MSW student working on a campaign against workfare at CVH. I hadn't seen Bálint since then, but knew he and his wife relocated from Budapest to Berlin. Since I was teaching an online class on homelessness and social welfare policy this summer, Bálint suggested we meet up with some of his colleagues for an informal dialogue about homelessness in NYC and Berlin. Organized through the group [Freie Ungarische Botschaft \(FUB\)](#) a few of us got together for an evening and had a very interesting discussion about housing, homelessness, shelter systems, political organizing in social work, American and European politics, and a range of other issues. Bálint helped start a community organizing project, [„Zeit der Solidarität“ \(A Time of Solidarity\)](#), with [Verband für sozial-kulturelle Arbeit](#), doing action research with residents of homeless shelters - still very much an activist. It was invigorating to learn about his work and think about housing justice from an international perspective, as well as consider my own long journey in and around the social work field. It also gave me some interesting ideas and information to share with my students.



Student Spotlight: Shermira Busby

Let's Have a Conversation with Shermira!



Why did you apply to the PhD in Social Welfare? - I have spent 24 years within the CUNY community. During my time as an undergraduate and work-study participant, I did not have any interest in pursuing a career in academia. However, as I progressed through different roles within CUNY, my perspective began to shift. I owe my discovery of certain qualities within myself to some exceptional people who helped me along the way. After earning my MSW from Fordham University, I developed a strong passion for teaching. Fortunately, when the opportunity arose, I was offered an adjunct lecturer position at my alma mater. As an insider-outsider, I have a unique perspective on students' success and opportunities beyond the classroom. I am deeply committed to promoting equity in academia and have chosen to pursue a Ph.D. in Social Welfare to further this goal.

What do you want to do after you graduate? - I am committed to contributing to the movement for equitable change within the system, specifically at CUNY. The thought of defending my doctoral dissertation makes my skin tingle with excitement. Dr. Shermira Busby '27, Social Welfare Loading...!

What has been your favorite course so far as a student? Why? - Can I start by mentioning my favorite professors? A course only succeeds with a student-focused, motivating, and purpose-driven educator. I found the foundational classes to be enjoyable. Dr. Alexis Kuerbis introduced us to Methods of Data Analysis. Her teaching style was clear and concise, which made interpreting data using R-Studio easy to understand. Becca Cadoff, also the "Quant Queen," offered help to enhance the statistical significance for doctoral students who received additional support. This assistance would increase their likelihood of doing well in class (I hope I worded this correctly 😊). The Social Welfare Policy and Planning class with Joel Blau has expanded my understanding of social movements and how ideology affects social policy in the United States. I have found the literature from Katznelson, Cowie, and M. Alexander extremely helpful for my research and presentations. The knowledge-building course was a great start to my doctoral studies, and its structured approach has given me a solid background in theory and practice. My classmates have been instrumental in expanding my knowledge, primarily through their engaging discussions.

What leadership and/or employment positions do you hold within CUNY? - I proudly serve as a Higher Education Associate at CUNY- Director of Business & Industry Workforce Training, and bring 14 years of experience as an adjunct lecturer.

What's something that people would be surprised to know about you? - Art can be found in every aspect of life. I enjoy adding little touches to everyday things to make them more beautiful, like arranging flowers or presenting food in an appealing way. I tend to spend a lot of time ensuring everything is just right (I'll admit it!). I'm also a big fan of nature and love capturing its beauty through photography, like the way vines grow on old buildings. However, one thing that bothers me is finding chewed gum under tables. It's not art! That's why I don't chew gum.

What is the focus of your research? - My research interests include the economic recovery disparities that impact Black communities, labor diaspora, and policy implementation. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit Puerto Rico and spent a significant amount of time in Loiza, a town with a rich history of Afro-Puerto Rican culture. I interacted with the locals, admired the indigenous artwork, and witnessed the town's flag adorned with red, yellow, and green colors. This experience has inspired me to focus my research on an exploratory study of labor diaspora in the United States Virgin Islands.

What are you currently reading, watching, or listening to? - This summer, I've been enjoying audiobooks to make my commute and breaks more entertaining. I've listened to two titles: "Faces at the Bottom of the Well" by Derrick Bell and "Black Cake" by Charmaine Wilkerson. Netflix finally released Sweet Magnolia's third season, so I binged watched all ten episodes and followed 90-day Fiance the Other Way. As a form of self-care, I've also treated myself to movies at Alamo Drafthouse and enjoyed their comfortable reclining seats, nachos, and adult beverages. By the way, don't be fooled by the glitz - the Barbie movie is worth watching!

What's something we should ask you? What's your answer? - Have you ever taken a moment to reflect on how your younger self would view you now? My response is No. However, the past year made me think and speak about my younger years and the experiences that have molded me. If Shu, my moniker, were present, she would undoubtedly be impressed with my growth and development.