

Sandra Rosenbaum School of Social Work
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Annual Report for AY 2020-21
Fall 2021

At the SRSSW, we are always working towards improving our social justice mission and increasing our diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout all our efforts. But in 2019, we developed a Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for our school to organize our efforts better and to make our work more transparent and accountable. The first year of official Implementation of our Strategic Plan was in this reporting period of AY 2020-21. As a part of this implementation, all committees in the school were asked to explicitly choose subgoals for their committee that addressed at least one area of the strategic plan. Our Committee on Diversity and Inclusion was tasked with convening our various committees and groups to report on our progress, and to document this progress on our web site for transparency and accountability (see: <https://socwork.wisc.edu/striving-for-equity/>). Two retreats were held in fall 2020 and winter 2021 to discuss work towards implementing the strategic plan.

Some of the efforts and progress are described below, organized by the three goals of our strategic plan.

Goal 1: Increase the diversity of our students, staff, faculty, and other governing bodies.

Justification: The SRSSW strives to promote diversity in race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, income, marital status, class, political beliefs, religion, immigration, and mental and physical ability. We aim to recognize and celebrate the importance of individuals' intersecting identities. Having a diverse student body is important to training the next generation of social workers who will be able to address complicated social problems because of their ability to anticipate, value, and integrate multiple perspectives in their work. Having a diverse student body is critical to forming such knowledge, perspective, and skill. Having a diverse staff, faculty, and other governing bodies is similarly important to encouraging dynamic, critical discourse and learning in our school community, and additionally provides role models for our students from underrepresented groups.

Efforts last year:

One of our specific aims within Goal 1 of diversifying all aspects of the school has been to diversify our MSW program. This involves increasing the number of BIPOC **applicants** to our MSW full-time and part-time programs, number of BIPOC applicants **admitted**, and the number of BIPOC students **accepting** our offer of admission. We provide information on this effort as just one example of our comprehensive approach to creating sustainable change by involving many different efforts across our whole school.

As Table 1 shows, we are starting to see success in increasing BIPOC application, admittance, and acceptance/attendance in our MSW programs due to our multiprong, schoolwide efforts.

Table 1. MSW program applications, admission, and acceptance Fall 2018 – Fall 2021

	Full-Time MSW Applicants			Part-Time MSW Applicants		
	Fall 2018	Fall 2021	% Change 2018-21	Fall 2018	Fall 2021	% Change 2018-21
All Applicants	237	234	-1.26%	121	70	-42.15%
Applicants Admitted	158	179	+13.29%	111	66	-40.54%
Applicants Accepted Offer	77	100	+29.87%	102	48	-52.94%
BIPOC Applicants	49	65	+32.6%	16	19	+18.75%
BIPOC Admitted	29	51	+75.9%	14	18	+28.57%
BIPOC Accepted	10	26	+160.0%	13	13	0%

* Our part-time MSW program has fewer recent applicants partly because we are closing our Eau Claire site option

Table 1 shows that between 2018 and 2021, while our overall number of applicants has stayed the same in our full-time program and gone down in our part-time program, we have seen increases of 32.5% and 18.75% for BIPOC **applicants** to our full- and part-time programs, respectively. We attribute this to **better recruitment efforts**. We made a **sustainable commitment** to improving our **recruitment** efforts by reallocating staffing dollars to create a new Recruitment and Awards Specialist position in 2019. This new professional staff person created and is implementing a strategic plan for recruitment that includes the aim to diversify our student body. Part of her/our plan is to work to develop relationships with Alverno College in Milwaukee, and the two Wisconsin Tribal Colleges. Long-term plans involve developing partnerships with HBCUs and HSIs. With this new position, we can attend more recruitment fairs and events (including fairs at universities with more diverse groups of students to recruit from), as well as hold more frequent group and one-on-one sessions both online and in person.

Looking at Table 1, we also see a large increase in the number and percentage of BIPOC applicants **admitted** into our MSW programs between these years, which we attribute to both **better recruitment efforts** and **improvements to our admissions process**. Regarding the latter, our admissions committee created new questions on BSW and MSW admissions applications that first describe our values and commitment to social justice and diversity, and then ask applicants to discuss in their personal statement how they will contribute to diversity in the program. Applicants also write an essay analyzing a social justice issue. These questions both signal our values and allow us to admit students partly based on their experience and commitment to diversity and social justice. We also have improved our admissions process by making it more accessible -- having our recruitment specialist work with applicants to demystify the application process – to make explicit the implicit expectations of the admissions process. For example, for first generation students in particular, it is useful to have guidance on how to choose appropriate people to write letters of recommendation. In addition, because she has developed relationships with applicants, our recruitment specialist has become an informal mentor to admitted students, providing them another touchstone of support at the school.

Finally, Table 1 shows that our full-time MSW program has seen a large jump in number and percentage of admitted BIPOC students who **accept our offer**. We attribute this to **better recruitment efforts** and **increases in scholarships offered by the school**. Beyond the recruitment efforts described above, our Committee on Diversity and Inclusion also offered a comprehensive virtual “visit day” this last year for all admitted students. As one example of the event’s success, 88.8% of BIPOC students who were admitted to the full-time MSW program and who attended the Virtual Visit Day ultimately accepted their offer of admission.

Also aiding in both recruitment and acceptance is the 500% increase in the last five years in the amount of money our school gives to students for scholarships. The majority of that increase is for donor-funded full tuition admission scholarships, and we believe the promise of these scholarships will continue to help us grow the diversity of our applicant pool. For students from under-represented groups and low-income students, knowing that full tuition scholarships may be available is critical to even imagining the possibility of applying to graduate school, let alone being able to afford to attend. Our Board of Visitors and our Development and Fellowships and Awards Committee have all worked hard to make these opportunities a reality.

Regarding the impact of these full tuition scholarships on recruitment of BIPOC students, for the FTP and PTP MSW programs combined, our Fellowship and Awards committee awarded 64.7% of new admission awards to BIPOC students in Fall 2021 compared to 37% in Fall 2020. For FTP specifically, in Fall 2021, 90.9% of new admissions scholarships went to BIPOC students and 56.5% of new and continuing scholarships went to BIPOC students, compared to 44.4% of new and 42% of new and continuing scholarships to BIPOC students in Fall 2020. In fall 2021, 26.3% of the new incoming class of FTP and PTP MSW programs are BIPOC students and 33.3% of them are receiving a fellowship or scholarship that includes full tuition and fees, compared to 20.9% of our overall incoming MSW student population.

In our Title IV-E Child Welfare training program serving BSW and MSW students, recruitment efforts increased our overall number of applicants by 12%, as well as the racial diversity in our applicant pool. This year, 28.5% of our applicants identified as BIPOC, as compared to 20% of our applicant pool last year.

Regarding diversifying our faculty, over the last two years, we hired two new tenure track faculty and both were from underrepresented groups.

Goal 2: Improve a sense of inclusion for our students, staff, and faculty. Justification: We aim to create a school community where every person feels welcome, valued, heard, and well equipped to work to overcome historical injustices as part of their personal and professional development. While we aspire to have a diverse SRSSW community, diversity in itself does not ensure equity and inclusion. As such, we aim to provide an environment that promotes optimal learning, support, and growth for all our students, staff, and faculty, particularly those who hold identities that are typically marginalized in our society.

Progress last year:

- The Field Education program included information for students in orientation and the field handbook as well as training for field faculty on supporting BIPOC and other minoritized students in field. The information includes what to do and how to find support if encountering discrimination and lack of safety in field placements.
- In summer 2020, we created a web page titled “Supporting Black Lives” where we highlight our efforts in this area, including a series of seminars we offered and recorded last year in the wake of George Floyd’s murder (see list of these seminars under goal 3).
- In addition to the Supporting Black Lives events, we held events throughout the year with speakers from diverse backgrounds, such as the Beebe Lecture titled “Black Males Need a New Deal: Centering Psychiatric Healing in the Context of Social Mobility” by Dr. Sean Joe, Benjamin E. Youngdahl Professor of Social Development at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis. Sean Joe.
- The SRSSW Board of Visitors chose as its 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award winner MSW alumna Celena Roldán, the CEO of the American Red Cross of Illinois, named one of Chicago’s “Most Powerful Latinos.” Ms. Roldán serves as a positive role model for leadership in social work and will give a lunch and learn titled “Women, Leadership, and Social Change” for all students and alumni in fall 2021.
- The Committee on Diversity and Inclusion sponsors an annual school-wide Community Read that focuses on a book that addresses a racial or social justice issue. The committee chooses a handful of books, and then students, faculty, and staff vote on the final choice. In 2020-21, the book was Ada Deer’s book titled *Making a Difference: My Fight for Native Rights and Social Justice*. Along with purchasing Ms. Deer’s book for all members of the school, the Committee also provided resources for integrating the book into social work courses and sponsored a Lunch and Learn interview with Ms. Deer. For 2021-22, the book will be *Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America 1619-2019*, by Ibram X. Kendi and Keisha N. Blain.
- The building committee worked to create a more welcoming environment by updating pictures and art throughout the building, highlighting diverse members of our SRSSW community.
- We continued to host student groups in the school including a Social Work Student Union, Students for Social Welfare, Social Workers of Color Student Coalition, Social Work LGBTQ+ group, Radical Social Work Group, and Social Work Christian Fellowship Group. A faculty liaison works with each group to help them achieve their goals.
- Though challenged by COVID restrictions this last year, we held some virtual “Creating Spaces” events designed to build community within the school, particularly for students who identify as people of color, LGBTQ+, immigrants, and other minoritized groups.
- We secured a major donation to the Tamara Grigsby Fund for Diversity and Inclusion, which will allow us to increase our funding to events in this area.
- The curriculum committee worked on creating and piloting a *Checklist for Anti-Oppressive Practices in the Classroom* for instructors to use to integrate anti-oppressive content and practices into the classroom. This checklist will be discussed at a faculty retreat in fall 2021.

- We continued to use some of our donor funds for a Student Emergency Fund for our graduate students. We partner with the Dean of Student's Office to create a protocol where the Dean of Student's Office does the intake and assessment of need and the SRSSW pays. We partner with the Financial Aid office to create a protocol that ensures that international and DACA students can receive these funds. The support is in the form of grants of \$500-\$1000 each.
- While we have been giving out an Outstanding Staff Member award each year to a university staff member, this year the award came with money for the first time. Thanks to friends and family from the late Debby O'Connell, who was an extraordinary member of our staff for many years, we selected the inaugural winner of the Deborah Hannon O'Connell Award for Exemplary Service. In 2021-22, we will add a second staff award that will also come with money, to be awarded to an academic staff member.
- We made deliberate social media efforts to enhance an inclusive environment (e.g., in June for Pride month, we showcased students who identify as proud LGBTQ+ social workers). We made social media posts celebrating student awards and accomplishments.
- Our Assessment and Outcome committee administers the Comprehensive Assessment for Program Evaluation (CAPE) every spring to all our BSW and MSW students. This year improvements were made to this assessment instrument to have more inclusive questions around economic, racial, sexual, and gender identity, and to expand our questions aimed at understanding students' DE&I experiences at the school. The open-ended questions allow students to give feedback on their specific experiences. The questions are: 1. In what ways are community and inclusion promoted well in the UW School of Social Work? 2. In what ways could community and inclusion be better accomplished within the UW School of Social Work? 3. Please share any other comments that you have about your experiences with the Social Work Program.

Closed-ended items from the Program Experiences and Satisfaction Section include:

Perceived School Climate and Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

1. My courses contain sufficient content on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
2. The School offers an adequate number of workshops and resources on topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
3. The school provides a welcoming, supportive environment.
4. The school provides an atmosphere that demonstrates respect and affirmation for all persons.
5. Social work faculty members model the behavior and values of the social work profession
6. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Personal Experiences of Inclusion and Respect in the School

7. I am valued as an individual in this School.
8. I am personally treated with respect in this School.
9. I have considered leaving my program because I felt unwelcomed and/or disrespected.

10. I have found others with whom I could connect and give/receive support while in School.

11. I have to work harder than others to be treated equally within the School.

12. My voice is heard and valued by my peers in the School.

13. My voice is heard and valued by faculty in the School.

14. I see myself, my family, and my community represented in the classroom curriculum.

15. I see myself, my family, and my community represented among the students, staff, and faculty in the School.

The results from this survey are presented annually at our All School Meetings and in committee meetings for integration in our program initiatives. We are able to track changes in these responses over time.

Goal 3: Equip our students, staff, faculty, alumni, and social work community partners to be social justice leaders who can address diversity, equity, and inclusion in their lives and careers. Justification: We must constantly work to affirm our values of social justice, cultural humility, and anti-oppressive practice by continuing to produce and incorporate the newest knowledge, perspectives, and skills to do so. This means updating the knowledge, perspectives, and skills of not only our students, but also our staff, faculty, and community partners. Students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community partners of the SRSSW should be equipped, supported, and motivated to be social justice leaders on our campus and in our communities.

Efforts last year:

- The School of Social Work collaborated on applying for a successful Baldwin Wisconsin Idea proposal to establish a Center for DREAMers at UW-Madison. Through this Center, the School of Social Work is partnering with the Law School and multiple community agencies to increase access for the DACA community on campus and in Wisconsin to legal, educational, mental health and social services, and career resources. As a part of this collaboration, an MSW student is doing her field placement with the Center for DREAMers. Hopefully we will report next year on outcomes of this partnership, which should include the MSW student offering trainings on serving students and clients with DACA (for universities and agencies across the state).
- We continued to supplement classroom training for students by using donor funds to send students to the YWCA Racial Justice Summit for additional training on becoming anti-racist and anti-oppressive social workers.
- The Committee on Diversity and Inclusion offered a faculty lunch and learn focused on Universal Design and why it's important for the classroom.
- The Committee on Diversity and Inclusion held a lunch and learn discussion to reflect on a panel presentation webinar by the Crown School of Social Work on "Recovering Social Work Histories: Black, Indigenous, and Latinx Perspectives". The lunch and learn discussion focused on implications for incorporating more diverse voices into the curriculum.

- We organize and host an annual conference titled “Social Workers Confronting Racial Injustice”, which has been an important event for social workers and other human service professionals in the community, always with a long waiting list. This conference has been a way the SRSSW gives back to the community with training and CEUs. This last year, because of COVID, we pivoted and offered the conference virtually. We had 5,000 registrants on the first day and 4,000 on the second day. This conference provided important training around anti-racist and abolitionist ideas. A total of 26 speakers provided 11 breakout sessions and two plenaries (listed below)

Panel Title
Patrisse Cullors Discussion (Opening Keynote Feb 5)
Reimagine a Black Feminist Social Work (Closing Plenary Feb 12)
Centering Justice and Lived Experience
Exclusion by Design: The History of Anti-Black Racism in the Child Welfare System
Healing From Within
Preventing Further Harm: Addressing Violence Without Police
The Role of Social Workers in Immigration Legal Services Organizations
Walking Around That Corner of Trans, Race, and Class
Abolitionist Restorative Justice
Anti-Racist Organizational Change
Are African American Men Deserving of the American Dream
Supporting Healthy Families: Black Communications
Understanding the Impact of Racism & White Supremacy on US Immigration System

- We continue to ask students to rate instructors on items related to DE&I in student course evaluations, to provide feedback for faculty improvement.
- We continue to start events with recognition that the university occupies ancestral Ho-Chunk land.
- We finalized the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) training to be added to orientation as a day-long training as the second day of orientation for incoming BSW and MSW students in fall 2021. The goal is to equip new BSW and MSW students from day one with language, expectations, and confidence to address critical social justice issues in their classrooms and field placements. This represents an innovative curricular approach that highlights the school’s value of diversity, equity, and inclusion in its training.
- In February, the Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Program held a Book Club meeting following the Racial Injustice Conference, where they discussed this year’s IV-E Book Club book by Patrice Cullors, in relation to her presentation at the conference. Child Welfare faculty were also invited to read this book and participate.

- In early March, the IV-E Program invited two PhD candidates to attend a meeting with IV-E students to discuss their research in crucial areas of diversity and intersectionality in child welfare.
- The IV-E program co-sponsored a training in March entitled “Practice Skills for Working with LGBTQ+ Youth in Foster Care”. This training had 237 registrants, and was very well-received, including participants asking our school to bring them back for a “part 2” of this training.
- In April, the Title IV-E program held their Spring Public Child Welfare Dialogue with national expert Ruth Paris to discuss her compassionate, strengths-focused work and research with parent clients who struggle with opioid addiction. 290 people registered for this training, including students, faculty, and community members.
- Associate Clinical Professor and Associate Director of Field Education, Amanda Ngola, hosted a video conversation with Dr. Sandra Crewe, Dean of Social Work at Howard University to discuss experiences of working in the field of social work as a person of color in settings and contexts comprised primarily of white colleagues and clients.
- We hosted a Zoom panel of three Black social worker alumni – Brian Benford (MSW '20), Dr. Charles Lewis (MSW, PhD), and Nerissa Vogt (MSW '20) who reflected on their career and personal choices that have put them inside the political process inside work on elections, running for office, and actively lobbying in policy making processes.
- Monique Minkens presented and led a discussion about the issues of systemic racism in the laws and programs surrounding domestic abuse and how White supremacy has affected the programs and supports. She also addressed some of the ways that social workers may perpetuate this racism through their work and discuss some suggestions of what social workers might/should do differently.
- SRSSW lecturer Jacquelyn Boggess, also director of the nINA Collective, gave a talk about effecting organizational change -- working with organizations, leadership teams, and individuals to determine why, whether, and how they intend to incorporate racial equity into who they are and how they work—internally and externally.
- We hosted a panel of community leaders in peer support titled “Dane County Peer Support Leaders Reflect on this Moment, Racism in Mental Health Services”
- We hosted a talk titled “**Defund the Police: What it means, why it matters, and how social workers can support the cause**” with community experts Ayomi Obuseh, Kadijha Marquardt-Davis, MSW '20, and Savion Castro, MMSD school board member.
- We hosted a conversation on “Anti-racist social work” with Jacob Hanifl, MSW '15.
- We hosted an MSW student panel discussion of a session titled “Social Work So White”
- We hosted UW-Madison SSW alumna **Maggie Smith**, MSW, who talked about her experiences supporting the Milwaukee Black Lives Matter protests, how she is supporting organizations active in Wisconsin with this work, and her current networking with other social workers around racial justice organizing.
- We sponsored doctoral student Sakara Wages to offer a YWCA lunch and learn titled “Subverting Oppressive Systems is a Superpower”.

- Our doctoral program continued to design and implement a new collective mentoring approach, which aims to move beyond a one-mentor training model to provide a variety of types of mentoring support to students across needs and faculty expertise.
- The doctoral program held several student discussions about the PhD program and curriculum using an anti-racist lens.
- The doctoral program held a workshop on Women and Leadership in Higher Education, presented by Terri Givens, CEO and Founder of Brighter Higher Ed. Terri Givens is a political scientist with 30+ years of experience in higher education and higher ed leadership, including leadership in developing programs for first generation students. Her workshop for the PhD program emphasized the importance of centering DEI principles in our work and drew on her latest book, *Radical Empathy: Finding a Path to Bridging Racial Divides*.
- We were an Institutional Supporter of the ***Social Work, White Supremacy and Racial Justice Symposium*** (a national series developed by schools of social work at the University of Houston, UCLA, Howard University, and Arizona State).
- Last year, our Office of Field Education had over 400 inter-agency agreements with these partner organizations to provide professional training. The Field Education office created a Canvas site where all field instructors can access and share DE&I resources for use in field unit instruction and with agency supervisors of our students.
- Field instructors provide the field syllabus and readings to agency supervisors to encourage integration between content and practice – this included providing readings focused on DEI.
- We continued to offer free Ethics and Boundaries training (required by WI Department of Professional and Safety Services) with free CEUs to our community partners; content included meeting needs of students during Covid and DEI considerations.
- For the first time, we used donor funds to offer stipends for some newly developed rural field placements to try to get social work students trained in and experienced with providing support in rural areas where social workers are badly needed.

In sum, despite the challenges the pandemic posed ins 2020-21, we made progress on implementing our Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. However, we have so much more work to do. We are dedicated and up to the challenge.