Greetings from the Program Chair

It is with great pleasure that I write this greeting for the fourth issue of the NEIU Advocate. This newsletter represents a celebration of all of our achievements during the past school year. While the inaugural issue was dedicated to the passing of our beloved professor and friend, Joseph Cytrynbaum, the current issue continues to honor his spirit as we look back on some of the efforts that have made us the premier, undergraduate social work program in the city of Chicago. To that end, our program continues to grow at a rapid rate as we are now at a projected 450 majors for fall 2013, over 100 minors, and 97 graduates as of May 2013. This issue marks a celebration in our continued growth and academic excellence. Peace and Blessings, Jade
In the Community: Dr. Jackie Anderson and Students from the Alliance for Student Social Workers (ASSW) Bring Motivational Speaker Tonier Cain to Chicago

In June 2013 students from the Alliance for Student Social Workers (ASSW) at NEIU raised $1,000.00 through numerous bake sales and funding activities to bring Tonier Cain to Chicago to speak at Deborah’s Place, Chicago’s largest provider of supportive housing for women who are homeless and the partner agency for ASSW.

“Whatever you did. Wherever you’ve been… There is hope,” she remarked to the women at Deborah’s Place. Tonier brought this message of hope and her personal story of trauma and recovery at a private speaking engagement for the women of Deborah’s Place. Tonier is a renowned motivational speaker and a consumer advocate with an uplifting story about turning her life around. After years of addiction, multiple incarcerations, and over 20 years of homelessness, Tonier was able to overcome the trauma she suffered as a child to transform herself into an inspiring figure for those who have shared her experiences and an advocate for trauma-informed care. Tonier is the subject of the documentary "Healing Neen" which chronicles her past struggles with unspeakable abuse, unrelenting violence, and betrayal, and how she triumphed over her past trauma to help others.

During this event-filled week, Dr. Jackie Anderson arranged scholarships for 30 social work seniors from NEIU to attend a Trauma Conference in Evanston, Illinois, sponsored by the Naomi Ruth Cohen Foundation, for which Tonier Cain was the featured speaker. This year's topic was "Help, Hope, Healing After Trauma: A Conference for Survivors and Those Who Care". The Conference helped inform and reaffirm the clear connection between complex trauma and addiction and homelessness, and how trauma-informed care can help in recovery.

In preparation for the conference, all social work seniors viewed the documentary "Healing Neen" in their field seminar courses, and learned about Tonier Cain's story of tragedy to triumph. After viewing the documentary, students sponsored bake sales, funding drives, and other activities to raise the money needed to bring Tonier Cain to Chicago.

Tonier Cain is currently a team leader for the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. The NEIU social work program would like to thank Tonier Cain for bringing a message of hope to her audiences and sharing her personal story of triumph over trauma.
On Friday Oct. 26, 2012, NEIU’s Social Work Program organized the 3rd annual Bridge to SSA event. The event was held in the School of Social Service Administration (SSA) at the University of Chicago.

The event was first organized in 2010 by Marius Dancea who is an alumnus of NEIU and SSA, and a current instructor and program advisor in the Social Work Program at NEIU. Marius, along with NEIU’s BASW Program and University of Chicago’s SSA Admissions staff, started this annual event to provide an opportunity for BASW students to become motivated to pursue higher education and to explore the possibilities of obtaining a Master’s Degree from the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago.

BASW students in attendance had the opportunity to meet and speak with current SSA students, SSA admissions staff, SSA alumni, and NEIU BASW alumni students who have been accepted into the SSA program. Lunch and refreshments were served and at the end of the event, NEIU students had the opportunity to participate in a guided tour to experience and learn more about the University of Chicago. Everyone had a great time at the event, as evident in the smiles of the students and guests in attendance.

The following were in attendance at the event: Laura Hardy, Director of Admissions at SSA; Mary Debose, Assistant Director of Admissions at SSA; Jessica Ornelas, a current SSA student and an alumnus of NEIU’s BASW program (Jessica attended NEIU’s first annual Bridge to SSA event in 2010 and is one of three students that were accepted into the advanced standing program at SSA); Marius Dancea and Luis Ortiz, who are NEIU Social Work Program instructors; Katie Clancy, an alumnus of NEIU’s BASW program (along with her parents Tom and Juliet Clancy); Rodney Allen, a current SSA student and an alumnus of NEIU’s Interdisciplinary Studies Program; Ashor Jajou, Natasha Kastman, Floyd Stafford, Maryellen Zaborowski, and Jesse Self, who are all current students or alumni of NEIU’s BASW program.

The BASW students reported that they had a great learning experience, became more motivated to finish the BASW program at NEIU, and became more inspired to pursue higher education. Thank you to all who helped to organize this event.
The social work program was well-represented at this year’s student research symposium. Unlike other undergraduate social work programs in Illinois, all students in the BSW program at NEIU are required to take three (3) research courses to graduate. The Research Practicum sequence of courses is designed to enable students to plan and execute a practice- or agency-based research project which results in a research report and a symposium presentation at the completion of the sequence. It is this extensive research training that prepares our students well for graduate studies.

To that end, twenty (20) social work students (and sponsors) presented at NEIU’s 21st annual student research symposium. These presenters include: Zuleima Ocampo*; Virginia Foster*; Sherry Cornelio*; Patricia Martinez-Brito*; Alyssa Johnson*; Carla Gutierrez*; Catrina Jackson*; Helen Garfias*; Jennifer Stremtan*; Jonathan Barrera*; Karla Barrera*; Kelly Brombosz*; Krystle Kellick*; Richelle D. Peralta*; Vera Hosley*; Vonte White* (*Denotes Angel Resto as Sponsor); Kelly Webb (Sponsors: Milka Ramirez and Luis Ortiz); Patricia Markley (Sponsor: Job Ngwe); Rosanelly Lopez (Sponsor: Jade Stanley); and Robert O. Motley Jr. (2 papers – pictured left) (Sponsors: Job Ngwe and Luis Ortiz).

A full day of student presentations was followed by a university-sponsored dinner for symposium participants and an awards/certificate ceremony. The student presenters reported that the day’s events were an invaluable learning experience, and an great opportunity to receive constructive feedback on research projects.
Faculty News: Dr. Frank Gaytan, Dr. Milka Ramirez, Luis Ortiz, and Melissa Ramos Receive “The Student Choice Award”

During the academic year, Kelly Webb, class of 2013, created an award through the Honors Program to recognize students’ choice of faculty and staff. This year, among the many recipients, three (3) social work faculty received “The Student Choice Award”: Dr. Francisco Gaytan, Dr. Milka Ramirez, Luis Ortiz as well as one social work staff member, Melissa Ramos. This was an exciting event that recognized the dedication and hard work of the social work program’s faculty and staff. Congratulations to the award winners!

NEIU Social Work Welcomes New Tenure-Track Faculty for 2013-2014

Aimee Hilado Villalpando, PhD, LCSW

Assistant professor, social work, earned her Ph.D. in Social Work with Distinction from Loyola University Chicago. She also has a Master of Science in Applied Child Development, with a specialization in Infant Studies, from Erikson Institute. Dr. Hilado is a licensed clinical social worker specializing in direct practice with immigrant and refugee populations. She established and continues to advise RefugeeOne’s Clinical Social Work and Wellness Services, a mental health program at one of the largest refugee-resettlement agencies in Chicago. This program emphasizes the importance of evidence-based practice and cultural humility when working with trauma-exposed immigrants. Her teaching, practice, and research interests address culturally sensitive interventions for young children and adults with mental health needs. She is also interested in community-based models for early intervention with at-risk immigrant families and program evaluation.
News

This year 35 students (pictured below) were inducted into the Phi Alpha Social Work Honors Society: Amy Marie Bicknell; Ibeth Estefania Clavijo; Rukija Halilovic; Valeria Ramirez; Johnathan Barrera; Albert Richardson; Natasha Katsman; Patrise D. Washington; Rosa Enriquez; Angel Luis Martinez; Sara Gonzalez; Patricia Arroyo; Sera Nolan; Patricia Markley; Vanessa Barajas; Gabrielle Blum; Nicole Pruchnick; Kimberly Tilford; Sherry Cornelio; Nura Shadid; Karen De La Cruz; Tina Bonarigio; Grace Fesse Diyemba; Apryl Estes; Toya Rhashinda Hodges; Sherisa Benson; Isabell Ciszewski; Jeffrey Huhnstock; Allyssa Rizzardo; Angel Downie; Heidi Hammacher; Christine Kenning; Carla Gutierrez; Kelly Webb; Yesenia Nunez.

Class Notes

Rodney Allen has been accepted with advanced standing to the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and will begin the full-time Master’s Degree program in Fall 2013.

Robert Motley has been accepted with advanced standing to the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois-Chicago and will begin the full-time M.S.W. program in Fall 2013.
Lyssa Stoyko has been accepted with advanced standing to the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois-Chicago and will begin the full-time M.S.W. program in Fall 2013.

Priscilla Joseph has been accepted with advanced standing to the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois-Chicago and will begin the full-time M.S.W. program in Fall 2013.

Valeria Ramirez has been accepted with advanced standing to the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in 2013.

Gabrielle Blum has been accepted with advanced standing to the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in 2013.

Angel Martinez has been accepted with advanced standing to the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in 2013.

Vanessa Barajas has been accepted with advanced standing to the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in 2013.

Tina Bonarigo has been accepted with advanced standing to the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in 2013.

Nura Shadid has been accepted with advanced standing to the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in 2013.

Pati Arroyo has been accepted with advanced standing to the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in 2013.

Nura Shadid has been accepted with advanced standing to the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in 2013.
Apryl Estes has been accepted with advanced standing to the Aurora University School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in 2013.

Sera Nolan has been accepted with advanced standing to the New Mexico Highlands University School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in Fall 2013.

Kelly Webb has been accepted with advanced standing to the University of Southern California School of Social Work and will begin the M.S.W. program in Fall 2013.

GIVING TO NEIU SOCIAL WORK

You can make a difference for the next generation of social work professionals with your gift to the NEIU Social Work Program. Visit www.neiu.edu/give or call 773.442.4216 to make a contribution. We thank you for your support!