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**NEXUS**  
THE PRACTICUM NEWSLETTER

*NEXUS provides news, practicum features,  
supervisory tips and resources to our field instructors.*

 Washington University in St. Louis

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Visit [brownschool.wustl.edu](http://brownschool.wustl.edu) for the latest news and events, plus access to field instructor resources.

# OFE & CP Introduces New Site Visit Model for the MPH and MSW Programs

In 2013 the Office of Field Education and Community Partnerships (OFE & CP) is rolling out a new field site visit model to enhance the quality and consistency of monitoring student progress in the field. Here are the highlights:

## ONE

### **Building a professional relationship.**

With the new model, the site visit will be conducted after the field instructor and student have an opportunity to develop a professional rapport and when the student has progressed beyond the orientation stage and well into the competence stage in the practicum.

## TWO

### **One site visit per practicum experience.**

Approximately midway through a student's entire foundation or concentration practicum experience, one site visit will be completed by a Brown School professional. If additional visits are desired, field instructors can contact the site visitor to make arrangements.

## THREE

### **Field advisement and continuity.**

Upon matriculating at the Brown School, students will be assigned to specific OFE staff for field advisement. All site visits will be completed by the same Brown School professional staff member for both the foundation and concentration practica for the MSW program and the MPH practica, thus providing continuity in field advising and support throughout the student's practicum experience.

## Tips for the Field: Helping Students Succeed

The Office of Field Education and Community Partnerships presented outcomes from the Field Instructor Assessment Tool (Fall 2010-Summer 2011) at the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) conference in November. In summary, field instructors reported 95% of Brown School students met, exceeded, or consistently exceeded expectations in 9 out of 10 competencies at both the foundation and concentration levels. The only exception related to Competency #8: engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services; the percentages of students who met or exceeded were slightly lower (93% for foundation-level students and 88% for concentration-level students).

The data reflects the many things that are going right in the field; however, there are also 5-12% of MSW students who are not demonstrating competency. OFE & CP has found that when competency is not met, issues fall in one of two categories: student's

professional behavior (addressed in competencies #1-4) or the agency's interpretation of operationalizing practice behaviors (competencies #5-10). If your student's behavior is unprofessional or you're challenged by how to operationalize practice behaviors through tasks at your organization, the following tips may be helpful:

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### Student Professional Behavior

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***My student just provided me a copy of the ELA and said s/he needs it signed immediately because the deadline for submission was a week ago.***

Don't make your student's crisis your crisis. The ELA is the student's responsibility and there are consequences for late submission (e.g., completion of "Compliance Review Form," possible loss of hours).

***My student continues to come late to practicum (after several reminders of the agreed upon hours). When s/he arrives s/he's more interested in her laptop than the agency's activities and complains of being tired because of a part-time job.***

Field instructors can initiate a "Practicum Improvement Plan" which outlines issues, expected outcomes and consequences.

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## Student Professional Behavior *continued*

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These plans are often the catalyst for change in behavior, leading the student to a successful experience.

Contacting a Brown School professional may be helpful as well. When students are experiencing stress that can interfere with their practicum performance (e.g., financial or personal health/mental health issues), support systems within the school can prove to be very beneficial.

If the student continues to demonstrate a lack of professionalism and intent to change behavior, termination or failure of practicum may result.

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## Agency Interpretation of Competencies

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***We're a clinical site. What type of task can I assign a student to demonstrate an ability to engage in policy practice?***

If your organization participates in an advocacy day in Jefferson City, have your student assist in the preparations or plan to attend the event; or have your student submit a letter to the editor regarding an issue relevant to your agency.

***We're a macro-focused organization and do not provide "direct client contact."***

Engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation (related to competency #10) occur at all levels of practice and these skills reach beyond those who are directly receiving agency services.

You may also contact OFE & CP for assistance.

Contact **OFE & CP** for additional support you need to ensure your student's success in practicum.

# Successful Beginnings and the Developmental Stages of the Practicum Experience



Foundation practicum is one of the most transformational experiences for our students. After a semester of coursework (involving lectures, case studies, leadership workshops, reading assignments, research papers, and more), students are eager to see how their lessons can be put into practice. To prepare students for this empowering experience we have them enroll in an integrative seminar concurrently with their first semester of practicum. The seminar fosters the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge and promotes the development of professional competencies in a supportive environment. It provides students the opportunity to process their applied learning experiences.

In *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development* (2009), authors H. Frederick Sweitzer and Mary A. King identify the following predictable stages of development for students beginning their practicum experiences: Anticipation, Disillusionment, Confrontation, Competence, and Culmination. The integrative seminar instructors at the Brown School use these stages to assist students in understanding and processing their first field experiences. While students experience the stages at different rates, they appreciate learning what to expect. They are often relieved to know that their

feelings of anxiety or frustration at the beginning are not uncommon and that they will ultimately feel competent and accomplished at the end of their experience.

In addition to including the stages of development in our integrative seminar, they are covered in session #2 of the field instructor certification training. We believe if you review your training materials from session #2 with your students, emphasize the importance of self-knowledge, and inquire about their development process, you will assist in their transformation into social service professionals.

# Field Education Transformed

We are pleased to announce the creation of the Office of Field Education and Community Partnerships. Formerly known as the Office of Field Education, the new organization reflects our dual priorities for field relationships – professional training for our students and community engagement with the School as a whole.

## The Office will now have two departments:

**Applied Learning**, which is focused on student learning and the site visit process; and

**Field Coordination**, which is focused on partnership development and communication of field options to students.

With this restructuring, we would like to congratulate Cynthia and Diane on their promotions and welcome new additions to the team. We look forward to streamlined communications and enhanced impacts in the Office of Field Education and Community Partnerships.



**Cynthia Williams, MSW, LCSW, ACSW**, has been promoted

to be Assistant Dean for Field Education and Community Partnerships. In her new role she will also assume responsibility for monitoring and maintaining sound competency-based local, national, and international educational partnerships and field units suitable for student participation in practica and to strengthen partnerships and design of applied learning experiences for students.



**Diane Beckerle O'Brien, MSW, LCSW** has been promoted to Director of

Applied Learning. In her new role, Diane will assume responsibilities as lead teacher for the Foundation Integrative Seminar and will provide leadership, planning, and direction to the OFE & CP for all applied curricular elements of both the MSW and MPH degree programs. She will support students through field advisement and site visits, and will work with all incoming foundation-level students.



**Gabriel Carrillo, MSW,**  
Field Site  
Coordinator  
for the MSW

program, supports MSW students in practicum planning and supports advanced standing students through field advisement, site visits, review of student practicum registration and educational learning agreements, and monitoring student assessment of field experiences.



**Stacey Spruiel, BA,**  
Administrative  
Coordinator,  
plays a key role

as the first point of contact for students and community partners. She provides web-based support and coordinates Brown School field education events, programs, and trainings for students and field instructors. She also provides administrative support to the Collaborative Field Project, a collaboration among field education departments of the Brown School, University of Missouri-St. Louis, Saint Louis University, and Fontbonne University.



**Rachel Sonia John, MSW, MPH,**  
Practicum  
Coordinator,

supports MPH and MPH/MSW dual degree students through field advisement, site visits, review of student practicum registration and educational learning agreements and monitoring of student assessment of field experiences. She observes MPH student progress in the field and provides advisement and support to MPH/MSW student as an integrative seminar instructor.



**Nicole Brueggeman, MSW, LCSW, MA,** has  
joined the

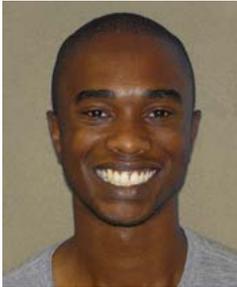
Brown School Office of Field Education as the Applied Learning Seminar Facilitator. She is a Brown School alumna with field-related experience as a past Integrative Seminar instructor and field instructor. Nicole will facilitate numerous sections of the applied learning integrative seminar, complete foundation and concentration site visits, and support students with their practicum planning.

# Field Education Around the Globe and In Our Community

The Office of Field Education & Community Partnerships likes to highlight the learning experiences of some of the students who recently completed practicum. Last summer, students participated in practicum in 19 states, the District of Columbia, in 16 countries, and right here in St. Louis. The following stories provide a sense of the Brown School's impact on the world.

## GERONTOLOGY AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

**Student:** Aniekan Akpaninyie, MSW, 2012  
**Agency:** St. Louis Area Agency on Aging  
**Location:** St. Louis, Missouri



I completed my concentration practicum at the St. Louis Area Agency on Aging (SLAAA), an organization that coordinates a wide range of community-based services to older adults in the City of St. Louis.

Much of my time was spent conducting an evaluation of the Home Delivered Meals (HDM) Program. Using Meals on Wheels

**Nominate** your public health student for the  
**MPH Outstanding Practicum Student Award**  
by **March 4, 2013**

Association of America's Nutrition Assessment Tool, I collected information ranging from diet quantity and quality to food security. In addition to advising the organization on the program, my work earned the organization much needed funding for the HDM Program.

The SLAAA collaborates with other organizations in St. Louis to provide a utility assistance

program. I helped older adults and individuals with disabilities complete applications to receive funds for their past-due utility bills.

In the fall, I returned to help write a grant for the LeadingAge Innovations Fund and implement a grant SLAAA received from the Daughters of Charity Foundation of St. Louis that will better serve clients through more effective case management.

DISEASE  
PREVENTION AND  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
RESEARCH

**Students:** Andrew Nylander, MPH, 2013  
Carolina Paez, MPH, 2013  
**Agency:** Fundacion FES Social  
**Location:** Bogota, Colombia



Andrew Nylander and Carolina Paez spent their practicum at Fundacion FES Social in Bogota, Colombia. This was Andrew's first time working in Latin America, but for Carolina, this was a return home with a new research focus in her hometown. During this practicum experience they had the opportunity to work on several public health projects that were focused on physical activity and chronic disease

prevention. They worked on a study of physical activity patterns and how the usage of motorized transportation influenced these patterns. Andrew and Carolina were responsible for determining what analysis should be conducted and developing the research study for publication in a journal.

They went into the field to see current physical activity interventions instituted by the city of Bogota and also conduct field work to study the diverse nature of the built environment. The opportunity to work with professionals from a variety of fields, including public health,

## PRACTICUM AWARDS NOMINATIONS

The Dr. Clara Louise Myers Outstanding Practicum Student Award nominations are due March 4, 2013.

This award is given to recognize one outstanding student in the MSW program from each of the following concentration areas:

- Children, Youth & Families
- Gerontology
- Social Economic Development
- Mental Health
- Health
- Individualized

Candidates must have completed a concentration-level practicum and are eligible for graduation in December 2012, May 2013, or August 2013. These students should demonstrate initiative, self-awareness, and commitment to the ethical values of the profession.

physical activity, medicine, nutrition, and industrial engineering made this practicum a transformative experience. For one project, Andrew and Carolina worked extensively with industrial engineers to study social network analysis and to understand how various research groups focused on physical activity

research have collaborated together over time. This required Andrew and Carolina to learn from the engineers about the capabilities of the network analysis tools and coordinate with the public health team to ensure that the project ran efficiently.

# Announcements

## School Social Work Verification Now Available in Missouri

Individuals who have a social work degree from an accredited college or university and have a national credential in school social work or have demonstrated competency by passing the “Praxis II: School Social Worker Content Knowledge (0211)” exam are eligible to apply for the verification document directly from the university from which they graduated.

If you’re a Brown School graduate and are interested in pursuing the “Document of School Social Work Program Verification and Acknowledgement of Completion,” schedule your Praxis II exam and then complete the [Brown School application](#).

To learn more about the Praxis II exam and register to take the test, visit [Praxis II Overview](#).

If you have questions about the exam or the application, contact [Diane Beckerle O’Brien](#).

## MPH ACCREDITATION

The Brown School’s Master of Public Health program was accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH).

This national “seal of approval” publicly recognizes the quality of our public health program, faculty, staff, and students. We are excited about building new partnerships with the public health profession, our communities, and global colleagues.

Our process of program development, self-study, and accreditation review was a collaborative and spirited effort. We could not have done it without the terrific work and support of many. Thank you to all who contributed to our program’s success.

## Professional Development Workshops

We offer a 40% discount to Brown School field instructors. Most of our classes are eligible for Missouri & Illinois Social Work continuing education units (CEUs). For complete course information and to register, [visit brownschool.wustl.edu/profdev](http://visit.brownschool.wustl.edu/profdev).

### Researching State Legislation – 3 CEUs

Friday, March 8, 2013; 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

We will discuss how to formulate policy research questions, analyze content, and search online databases with particular focus on researching Missouri legislation. Participants will receive an updated 2011 state legislative search guide.

### Building Effective Teams (2 part series) – 6 CEUs

Fridays, April 5 AND April 26, 2013; 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

This two-part workshop will share an innovative model of managing teams. Participants will learn to fulfill their own professional commitments while meeting team and organizational objectives. We will discuss the management skills and work environment needed to build a team that is both self-directing and high performing.

### Encouraging Collaboration within Your Organization – 3 CEUs

Friday, April 19, 2013; 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

We will discuss the importance of recruiting, engaging, and celebrating people with diverse talents and skill sets. The workshop highlights the role of manager in encouraging collaboration within the workplace by focusing employees on the vision for the organization employing strategies for efficient decision-making within the collaborative relationship.

## RESOURCES



Are you familiar with **Heard@Brown**? The Brown School hosts an array of social work, social policy, and public health lectures. We have compiled an online audio library of key speakers that are available to field instructors who can't make it to our campus for lectures. You can listen in your office or download the MP3 to take it on the go.

# Field Instructor Appreciation Day

## Friday, March 15, 2013

Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis  
Registration deadline: March 8

**Early Bird: DSM-5: Clinical Challenges and Implications for Practice** – 1.5 CEUs  
8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.  
Michael Mancini, *Ph.D*  
*Associate Professor, Saint Louis University*

**Conference Registration:** 9:30 a.m.

**Morning Workshop:** 9:45 – 11:45 a.m.  
2 CEUs, Includes 0.5 Ethics CEU  
Keynote Speaker: Jason Purnell, *Ph.D*

### **Maximizing Human Potential: The Intersection of Health, Education, and Economics**

We have long known that health and well-being are strongly linked to socioeconomic status, commonly measured as a combination of education and income. However, our interventions have tended to focus on health, education, and household financial status separately. More integrated approaches are needed in order to impact persistent inequalities in health, education, and economic outcomes.

**Lunch:** 12:00 pm - 12:50 pm, Brown Lounge

**Afternoon Workshops:** 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
Select up to two (2) of the following afternoon workshops:

**Session 1: Role of Task Supervisor in the Practicum Experience** – 2 CEUs  
Linda DeSmet, *MA*  
*Family Services Coordinator, Alzheimer's Association*  
Cheryl Wingbermuehle, *MSW*  
*Director of Family Services, Alzheimer's Association*

**Session 2: Motivational Interviewing** – 2 CEUs  
John Colligan, *MS, CASAC*  
*Clinical Director, State of Missouri Department of Corrections*

[Click here to register for workshops.](#)

# FIELD EDUCATION CALENDAR

SPRING 2013

## FEBRUARY

- 11 ELAs due (spring semester)
- 22 Collaborative Training, Session #6: Evidence-based Practice & Field Instruction (Brown School)  
**Session Full**

## MARCH

- 4 Outstanding Practicum Student Nominations Due
- 11-15 Spring Break
- 15 Field Instructor Appreciation Day (Registration Ends March 8)

## APRIL

- 5 Collaborative Training, Session # 5: Field Instructor as Teacher, Mentor, & Supervisor (Fontbonne)

## MAY

- 2 Final Evaluation of Practicum Due (spring semester)
- 17 Commencement
- 20 Summer Semester Begins – First Day of Classes
- 20 Practicum Registration Due (summer semester)

SUMMER 2013

## JUNE

- 3 ELAs due (summer semester)

## Office of Field Education and Community Partnerships Staff

*Assistant Dean for Field Education  
and Community Partnerships*

**Cynthia D. Williams,**  
MSW, LCSW, ACSW

(314) 935-8348  
[cynthiadwilliams@wustl.edu](mailto:cynthiadwilliams@wustl.edu)

*Applied Learning Seminar Facilitator*

**Nicole Brueggeman,**  
MSW, LCSW, MA

(314) 935-4185  
[nbrueggeman@wustl.edu](mailto:nbrueggeman@wustl.edu)

*Administrative Coordinator*

**Stacey Spruiel,** BA

(314) 935-6602  
[SSpruiel@brownschool.wustl.edu](mailto:SSpruiel@brownschool.wustl.edu)

*Director of Applied Learning*

**Diane Beckerle O'Brien,**  
MSW, LCSW

(314) 935-7849  
[DianeOBrien@brownschool.wustl](mailto:DianeOBrien@brownschool.wustl)

*Practicum Coordinator*

**Rachel John,**  
MPH, LMSW

(314) 935-6303  
[rjohn@brownschool.wustl.edu](mailto:rjohn@brownschool.wustl.edu)

*MSW Field Site Coordinator*

**Gabriel Carrillo,** MSW

(314) 935-3456  
[gcarrillo@brownschool.wustl.edu](mailto:gcarrillo@brownschool.wustl.edu)

Contact [ofe@wustl.edu](mailto:ofe@wustl.edu) to update  
your contact information.

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