



Washington
University in St. Louis

BROWN SCHOOL

Forthcoming Graduates

2017 - 2018
PHD PROGRAM





Washington University in St. Louis

BROWN SCHOOL

Fall 2017

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to introduce you to our upcoming graduates of the PhD program at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis. We have an exceptionally promising group of graduates who are excited to bring their scholarship, teaching, and leadership experiences to your institution.

As you review their research interests, biographies and curriculum vitae, you will find that our graduates have an impressive roster of publications and presentations at national conferences such as the Council on Social Work Education, Society for Social Work and Research and the American Public Health Association. Some have secured extramural funding of their dissertation research as well.

Please contact the PhD Program Manager Marissa Franklin at (314) 935-2941 or via email (hardwrictm@wustl.edu) if we can help facilitate a meeting with any of our graduates, or if we can provide you with additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Renee M. Cunningham-Williams".

Renee M. Cunningham-Williams, PhD, MPE, LCSW
Associate Professor & Associate Dean of Doctoral Education
Director, Doctoral Program in Social Work
Director, NIDA T32 (TranSTAR) Pre- and Postdoctoral Training Program in Addictions
Washington University in St. Louis



Haley Becker

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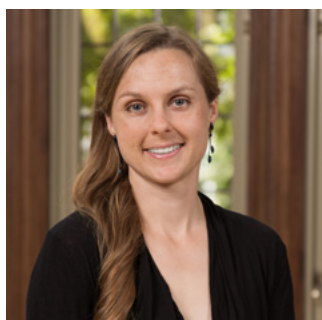
TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/hbecker

Haley Becker's current research focuses on program development and modeling of the dual burden of malnutrition in developing countries, with a special focus on the role of physical activity in mitigating negative health outcomes. For her dissertation project in Haiti, she is employing both qualitative and quantitative needs assessments for the purposes of developing a school-based physical activity and nutrition intervention.

Becker has expertise in the areas of obesity prevention, physical activity, young child and adolescent nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies (zinc, iron, and vitamin A), and geographic information systems (GIS). She earned her MPH from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Public Health. Prior to pursuing her PhD, she worked for a non-profit implementing worksite-based wellness interventions and conducting environmental evaluations both for the prevention of overweight and the promotion of physical activity and nutrition.

RESEARCH INTEREST:

- Prevention of chronic illness, obesity, and health disparities



Ivy Blackmore

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/iblackmore

Ivy Blackmore is a McDonnell International Academy Scholar and serves as the coordinator for a research project that aims to identify contextual facilitators and barriers to implementing a poultry production and nutrition intervention in three indigenous communities in Cotopaxi, Ecuador. The research proposal, co-written by Blackmore and principal investigator Associate Professor Lora Iannotti, was funded by the Center for Dissemination and Implementation and the Global Health Center at the Institute for Public Health.

Prior to pursuing her PhD, Blackmore worked in proposal development for the International Development Group at RTI International and served for 2 1/2 years as a Peace Corps agriculture/food security volunteer in rural Nicaragua. Her time in Nicaragua led to her interest in rural livelihood security and improving socioeconomic development in underserved, hard to reach places.

Blackmore earned her Master of Public Policy from Duke University (2012) and her Bachelor of Arts from Bowdoin College (2007).

RESEARCH INTEREST:

- Program evaluation and formative research focused on food production systems in rural Latin America



Maxine Davis

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/mdavis

Maxine Davis' research focuses on people who act abusively in intimate relationships, and on interventions that are designed to help them change. With specific attention on Black-American and Latinx populations, her work is concentrated on designing, improving and evaluating promising interventions for partner abusive men.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- Intimate partner violence/abuse (IPV/A) perpetration
- Partner abuse intervention programs
- Batterer treatment and prevention
- Religious and spiritual abuse in IPV/A
- Community-based participatory research

Her dissertation, supported by a grant from Catholics For Family Peace, explores a voluntary, church-based partner abuse intervention program serving Latino men in Chicago. Davis has presented her research at several national conferences and has published in peer-reviewed journals. She is committed to serving ethnic minority communities and conducting research that engages them as equal partners.

Through her teaching, Davis encourages students to build skills in team work, advocacy, and the critical examination of research methods/findings. She brings an enthusiasm for diversity, a passion for work promoting domestic peace, and a spirit of hope to institutions that encourage and promote social activism, rigorous scholarship and excellence in teaching.



Allison Dunnigan

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/adunnigan/

Allison Dunnigan has nearly 10 years of direct practice working with vulnerable families in a variety of contexts including the juvenile justice, community mental health, and child welfare systems, including 5 years post-MSW. This work informs her research and teaching, which includes teaching Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups and being the lab instructor for the first-year doctoral statistics course progression for the past three years.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- Child welfare
- Juvenile justice
- Crossover youth
- Methodology
- Policy evaluation

Dunnigan was the project coordinator on a federally-funded intervention study that yielded three juried presentations and two manuscripts that are presently under review. Her work has been published in peer-reviewed journals with a first-author publication entitled "Chronic Health Conditions and Children in Foster Care: Determining Demographic and Placement-Related Correlates," which was published in the *Journal of Public Child Welfare* in 2017. In addition, Dunnigan was selected as a doctoral fellow to the Third Annual Haruv Institute on Child Maltreatment.



Donny Gerke

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/dgerke

Donny Gerke's research agenda broadly examines mental health, substance use, and other social determinants of health disparities and health risk behaviors in vulnerable populations. His scholarship is informed by over five years of post-MSW practice experience in community-based health promotion with adolescent and adult LGBTQ populations at risk for HIV, STIs and substance misuse.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- Health disparities and health risk behaviors in vulnerable populations
- Mental health, substance use, and other social determinants of health in ethnic and sexual minority populations

In his dissertation, he investigates the relationships between exposure to violence (child abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence, community violence), mental health problems, substance use, and HIV risk behaviors in 170 Black and White gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men ages 18-34, recruited from community-based HIV prevention agencies in St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri.

Competitive grants received include: F31 National Institute on Drug Abuse Pre-Doctoral Training Award, the National Association of Social Workers Foundation Jane B. Aron Doctoral Fellowship, and the Society for Social Work and Research Doctoral Fellows Award.



Cal Halvorsen

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/chalvorsen

Cal J. Halvorsen's research focuses on longer working lives, self-employment and entrepreneurship in later life, and older adults as social innovators. Using five waves from the Health and Retirement Study, Halvorsen's dissertation assesses the characteristics of self-employed older adults and the effect that self-employment has on financial, physical, and mental well-being, in comparison to wage-and-salary work.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- Productive aging
- Longer working lives
- Self-employment in later life

As the only social work scholar to receive the 2017 Dissertation Fellowship in Retirement Research from the U.S. Social Security Administration, his dissertation incorporates multiple imputation, longitudinal multi-level modeling, and propensity score analysis.

With experience as a lead instructor, Halvorsen's teaching interests include courses in social gerontology, "macro" social work practice and research methods. Previously the director of research at the national nonprofit, Encore.org, he led nationally-representative surveys and qualitative studies. Halvorsen earned his MSW from the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis and his BA in international studies, with honors, from the University of Iowa.



Hyunil Kim

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/hkim

Hyunil Kim's research focuses on developing the best possible evidence to help improve the safety and welfare of children and directly enhance the ability to address child abuse and neglect (CAN). His research agenda has been shaped by three years of post-MSW field work for Missouri Child Protective Services.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- Child welfare
- Child abuse and neglect (CAN)
- Child Protective Services
- National administrative data linkage for innovative longitudinal and multilevel analyses of nationwide CAN dynamics

His current research focus includes: (1) cumulative prevalence of CAN, (2) ecological risk and protective factors, (3) linking various national databases for innovative longitudinal and multilevel analyses of nation-wide CAN dynamics, (4) disparity and bias in CAN, and (5) prevention and treatment services for CAN.

Kim has first authored and co-authored several peer-reviewed publications appearing in the *American Journal of Public Health*, *Child Maltreatment*, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, and *Children and Youth Services Review*.



Lisa Pollack

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/lpollack/

Lisa Pollack is a PhD candidate at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis. Her current work focuses on racial and ethnic disparities in treatment and underlying conditions among women undergoing hysterectomy as well as predictors of post-operative complications. She was named a Lee B. Lusted finalist for the Society for Medical Decision Making 39th Annual Meeting for her current work and recently coauthored a manuscript published in JAMA about in vitro fertilization insurance coverage. Along with additional methodological training, she has had training in applied linear regression analysis, generalized linear modeling, multilevel and longitudinal modeling, structural equation modeling, survival analysis, instrumental variable analysis, meta-analysis, and decision analysis. She seeks a post-doctoral fellowship to continue investigating disparities in women's health to encompass women's cancer research and to study advanced methods for working with large data sets and advanced quantitative methods, including additional methods for causal inference for health disparities research.

RESEARCH INTEREST:

- Disparities in women's health
- Clinical outcomes
- Health services
- Decision science



Divya Ravindranath

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/divyarrs

Divya Ravindranath's dissertation looks at "Malnutrition among children of migrant construction workers: Status and Perceptions, Household Challenges and Policy Gaps." The study is located in the city of Ahmedabad, in western India.

Ravindranath earned her master's degree in social work, with a specialization in urban and rural community development, from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

She has worked in various parts of India on common pool resources, livelihoods and gender-related issues.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- Maternal and child nutrition
- Health outcomes among migrant workers
- Food and nutrition security
- Urban environment
- Gender



Mary Jo Stahlschmidt

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/mstahlschmidt/

Mary Jo Stahlschmidt has been an enthusiastic child welfare researcher for more than 10 years. The goal of her current research is to improve child welfare services by examining how organizational factors impact frontline service delivery and determining the best places in the system to leverage effective and sustainable change. Mary Jo is passionate about using system science methods in her research. Prior to beginning her PhD, she managed a variety of child welfare studies at the Brown School, including, a mixed-methods study on engaging fathers in parenting programs to prevent maltreatment and a trial of a new service delivery model to connect child-welfare involved families to a home visitor via their child welfare caseworker. She has a master's degree in industrial/organizational psychology and has served as a teaching assistant or co-instructor for management and organizational theory and behavior courses.

RESEARCH INTEREST:

- Child maltreatment



Erin Stringfellow

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/estringfellow

Erin Stringfellow aims to develop sustainable solutions that help more people reach a stable recovery from addiction more quickly. She is especially interested in social processes and patterns that undermine or support sustainable recoveries.

Stringfellow focused her methodological training in the systems sciences, including social network analysis, system dynamics, and agent-based modeling. She was trained in community-based system dynamics at the Brown School's Social System Design Lab, and she is using agent-based modeling for her dissertation.

She plans to use community-based modeling and research to identify and test "social leverage points" that support sustainable recoveries. The long-term goal is to develop a suite of options based on the strongest leverage points, from which individuals, families and community organizations can select for their unique situations.

Stringfellow's training was supported by T32 NIH predoctoral fellowships with the National Institute of Mental Health (2012-2013) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2013-2016).

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- Substance use/addiction
- Participatory and community-based dynamic simulation modeling and research
- Mental health and addiction services



Yi Wang

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TO ACCESS A CV, PLEASE VISIT: sites.wustl.edu/ywang

Yi Wang's cross-national research agenda aims to investigate neighborhood environments' influences on activity engagement and subsequent health outcomes (i.e., physical/cognitive functioning, mental health) among older adults in the U.S. and China. Her dissertation was awarded the Social Work Health Care Education and Leadership Scholars (HEALS) doctoral fellowship from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Foundation.

During her doctoral study, Wang has published several journal articles, book chapters, and newspaper articles; some of her papers were published in top-tier gerontology journals, including *The Gerontologist*. She also participated as co-investigator in several funded research projects in Beijing and Hong Kong.

As a doctoral student, Wang independently taught one MSW research course, led SAS labs, and completed teaching practica in several master's and doctoral-level courses. Originally from China, Wang earned her MSW from the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis.

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- Productive engagement in later life
- Aging-friendly community
- Community services to older adults
- Health and mental health among older adults