



THE FELLOW

EDITORIAL BOARD

Ama Nyame-Mensah

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The Fellow is the official peer-reviewed publication of the Ph.D. students at the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania

GREETINGS!

Happy New Year! Welcome back to all the PhD students and candidates! Hopefully, everyone had a relaxing and rejuvenating winter break and is ready to have a productive semester!

We'd like to send positive thoughts and well wishes to all of the candidates working on their dissertations and to those on the job market, this semester. Also, congratulations to the first-year cohort, who made it through their first semester of the program!

As your DSSC co-chairs, we hope to create a positive and supportive environment within the PhD program. If you have any ideas or suggestions of how DSSC could be more supportive for PhD students and candidates, please send us an email at sp2dssc@gmail.com.

We look forward to connecting with you all at one of the upcoming social events (and your ideas of events are requested).

Best wishes for a great semester and 2018!

Best,
Megan Farwell, Dan Heist, and Marquisha Lawrence Scott

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Kel Kroehle, MSW

Prior to coming to Penn, I lived for seven years in the world of LGBTQ nonprofits. And let me tell you, I had my conference suitcase down to an art: two pairs of printed leggings, a jacket that popped, some winged eyeliner, and a few political buttons to lead the conversational way. I knew the people, I knew the material, and I knew what I was getting into.

But this year, I entered PhD-land. Among all the adjustments I've made in the last several months, this January presented me with one of the biggest challenges yet: packing to present at the Society for Social Work and Research conference...my first academic conference ever. Suddenly my leggings became questionable, as did my buttons. Will these people take me seriously? Will I get misgendered? Will I get a bad grade? I'm not in Kansas anymore!

Enter my advisor, Amy Hillier. Prior to school, during the first semester, and now grappling with my suitcase, Amy has reminded me time and time again 1) it is because of who we are and where we come from that we do our work, and 2) the work is only worth doing if and when we are ourselves, because it's only then that we can genuinely connect to one another. This was the nature of our presentation at SSWR (a paper about the paradigm-shifting, boundary-breaking experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming high schoolers), so why shouldn't it also be the nature of the presenters?

So I packed up my leggings and headed to Washington, D.C. for the conference. Though my hands were shaky as I walked in the door, much to my surprise I found...a room full of humans. Humans! I breathed.

Having crossed the anxiety threshold, the SSWR conference opened its arms. I found my SP2 community bustling about and held thought-provoking out-of-class conversations with professors. I giggled with my peers. I attended presentations that challenged me to re-think how I make meaning in the world. I met folks taking creative risks toward a more liberatory social welfare. Amy and I presented our paper and made exciting cross-disciplinary connections. I met other queer PhD students and faculty who shared their paths (and eyeliner tips) with me. I met up with an old friend in the city. I ate so many tasty snacks.

The presumed prestige of the word academic had intimidated me (to be honest, it continues to). I believed that to be published meant to be a walking encyclopedia of researched truths, removed from lived truths. At the conference, I realized I had been focusing on the work and not on the people behind it. And in doing so, I neglected to recall that the world of academia is made up of humans. Vulnerable, passionate, shifting, growing humans. And it shouldn't be any other way.

My advice: Some folks are published, some folks aren't. Ultimately, all of us are just people doing our best to use our stories to generate a more just world. So wear a pantsuit, or wear leggings. Whatever you choose, make sure you're packing for you.

PEER CITES

Publications

An, S., **Wu, V.**, & Guo, C. (2017). How Stakeholder Mobilization Saved Sweet Briar College. *Journal of Nonprofit Education and Leadership Special Issue II*.

Ma, C., & Smith, T. E. (2017). Increased alcohol use after Hurricane Ike: The roles of perceived social cohesion and social control. *Social Science and Medicine*, 190.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.08.014>.

Presentations

Flynn, K., & Sharlein, J., *Neighborhood Youth, Public Safety, and Police*. Society for Social Work and Research Annual Conference, Washington, DC, January 2018

Ma, C., & Iversen, R. (2018). *Mental Illness Prevalence and Disparities Among Hurricane Sandy Survivors: A Two-Year Retrospective*. The 22nd Annual Conference of Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR). January 12, Washington DC.
<http://sswr.confex.com/sswr/2018/webprogram/Paper31667.html>

Ma, C. (2018) Moderator, The session of “Health and Behavioral Health Prevalence, Outcomes, and Disparities”, The 22nd Annual Conference of Society for Social Work and Research, Washington DC. <http://sswr.confex.com/sswr/2018/webprogram/Session9376.html>.

Russell, A.R., Storti, M.H., and Handy, F. (2017, November 16-18). *Volunteering in Retirement and Retirement from Volunteering: Exploring the Interaction of Volunteer Engagement and Later-Life Transitions among Hospital Volunteers*. Paper presented at the ARNOVA Conference in Grand Rapids, MI.

Skolnick-Noguera, M. (2017, October). *Perspectivas: Social Policy, Race, and Tourism in Cuba*. Poster presented at the Penn in Latin America and the Caribbean's (PLAC) Third Annual Conference.

Wu, V. (2017). The Place Dilemma of Community Foundations. Presented at The Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Awards, Fellowships & Grants

Skolnick-Noguera, M.: Public VR Lab’s Immigration in Full Frame: Reimagining Migration project (2017).

Wu, V. Ph.D. Summer Research Fellowship: Awarded for the project “Disadvantaged Communities, Unchained Leadership? Community Foundations’ Strategic Use of Social Media for Social Change” (2017).