

SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

FALL
2026

Announcements

Faculty Awards

Congratulations to our Faculty:

Dr. Nancy Kusmaul for receiving the Knee/Wittman Outstanding Achievement Award from National Association of Social Workers.



Dr. Tiffany Banks for receiving an Advocacy Award from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. AIDD members selected 150 members to recognize for their merit, impact, and contributions in the areas of research, policy, practice, advocacy, and service.

Dr. Kerri Evans for being selected for a Fulbright Scholar Award at CQ university in Sydney, Australia.

Leadership Change

Congratulations to Dr. Kusmaul on her appointment as chair and associate dean of the Social Work Program, effective July 1, 2026. She has assumed interim leadership of the Erickson School of Aging as well.

We also want to thank Dr. Wiechelt for her incredible leadership and all support she has provided the program, faculty, staff, and students.

Reminders

Advising



Please check your email inbox regularly for updates and announcements from Aurora or your advisor about important dates.

Office Location

Our temporary office is located in Sondheim Hall Room 301 while Sherman Hall continues to be renovated.

Upcoming Events

- First Day of Classes: **August 24**
- Pizza Party(open house): **August 25**
- Schedule Adjustment Deadline: **September 4**
- Labor Day (no class): **September 7**
- Fall Recess (no class): **October 12-13**
- Holiday Recess (no class): **November 25-27**

Front Office Contact Info

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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR



**DR. NANCY
KUSMAUL**

Welcome to the 2026–2027 Academic Year!

On behalf of the faculty and staff, welcome to the Baccalaureate Social Work Program at UMBC. Whether you are walking into your first social work class or entering your final year of field placement, we are thrilled to have you in our community.

I am deeply honored to introduce myself as your new Associate Dean and Chair. Drawing from my years as a practitioner and educator, my passion is breaking down barriers, expanding access to opportunities, and fostering inclusive environments where students thrive.

In this role, my primary goal is to ensure you feel supported, heard, and fully equipped for the field. Choosing social work means choosing a path of purpose. Our discipline demands academic rigor, deep empathy, a commitment to social justice, and the courage to advocate for systemic change. The skills you will build here—critical thinking, active listening, understanding people in their environments, and policy analysis—are more vital than ever.

As you navigate the year ahead, keep these guiding principles in mind:

- **Embrace the Uncomfortable:** Social work asks us to examine our biases, question systemic inequalities, and lean into difficult conversations. Growth happens at the edge of your comfort zone.
- **Connect Theory to Practice:** Lean on your professors, engage in class simulations, and dive whole-heartedly into your field experiences. The classroom provides the framework, but the community is where it comes alive.
- **Prioritize Self-Care:** You cannot pour from an empty cup. Personal well-being and community care are essential practices for ethical, sustainable social work.

Our faculty and staff are researchers, practitioners, and advocates deeply invested in your success. My door is always open—please stop by to introduce yourself and share your goals. Thank you for bringing your passion, diverse perspectives, and dedication to human rights to UMBC. Let's make this a transformative year of learning and impactful action.

Warmest regards,

Nancy Kusmaul, PhD, MSW
Associate Dean and Chair

Faculty News



Dr. Kusmaul has been awarded the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Knee-Wittman Outstanding Achievement Award. This award recognizes an individual or group that has had a significant impact on national health and/or mental health public policy, professional standards, or exemplary program models. She has been actively involved in service provision, program development, research, and policy advocacy aimed at improving health and well-being for older adults and their family caregivers for over 25 years. She has nearly 70 peer reviewed publications addressing nursing home quality, trauma-informed care, and policy impacts on older adults and their families. She also single authored a groundbreaking policy text, *Aging and Social Policy in the United States*. [Learn More](#)



Dr. Evans has been selected for a Fulbright Scholar Award at Central Queensland University in Sydney, Australia. The Fulbright Scholar Award (funded by Central Queensland University - CQU) enables exceptional U.S. scholars to undertake research at one of CQU's regional or metropolitan campuses with the opportunity to contribute to the bilateral relationship between Australia and the United States as well as research priorities of CQU.



Dr. Banks has been awarded an Advocacy Award from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. AIDD members selected 150 members to recognize for their merit, impact, and contributions in the areas of research, policy, practice, advocacy, and service. [Learn More](#)

new to social work?
looking for community at UMBC?
passionate about social issues?



Join Social Work Student Association



follow our
instagram:
[@umbcswsa](https://www.instagram.com/umbcswsa)



join our
myUMBC
group:
Social Work
Student
Association



general body
meetings
every other
monday 12-1!
open to
everyone!

This organization is open for full participation by all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or any other protected category under applicable federal law, state law, and the University's nondiscrimination policy.

SOCIAL WORK STUDENT ASSOCIATION (SWSA)



Officers

Bekkah West
President

Olivia Gazaway
President

Angelie Colachagua
Vice President

Allisson Murillo-Coreas
Treasurer

Corey Bryce
Service Chair



WHAT IS SWSA

THE SOCIAL WORK STUDENT ASSOCIATION IS A UMBC STUDENT ORGANIZATION WITH AN INTEREST IN SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL ISSUES. SWSA ORGANIZES SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES TO BENEFIT LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND SUPPORTS PROGRAMS AND EVENTS DESIGNED TO SERVE, EDUCATE, AND ENTERTAIN SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS. SWSA ALSO STRIVES TO HELP STUDENTS MAKE CONNECTIONS TO SOCIAL WORKERS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COMMUNITIES SURROUNDING UMBC.

JOIN US FOR FUN, SERVICE AND NETWORKING! ALL MAJORS ARE WELCOME.

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR [GOOGLE CALENDAR](#): COLLEGE NEWSLETTERS GIVE STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND ALUMNI A PEEK INTO WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE. THEY'RE ALSO A GREAT PLATFORM FOR STUDENTS TO HONE THEIR SKILLS. THE NAMEPLATE IS ONE OF THE MOST NOTICEABLE ELEMENTS OF A NEWSLETTER. MAKE YOURS SIMPLE BUT MEMORABLE, PREFERABLY WITH A CATCHY TAGLINE.

INTERESTING HEADLINES GRAB YOUR READERS' ATTENTION AND MAKE THEM WANT TO READ THE STORY. INCLUDE THE MOST UNIQUE OR URGENT ELEMENT IN YOUR STORY TO DRAW YOUR READERS IN. TO GO WITH YOUR HEADLINE, CHOOSE A PHOTO THAT IS NOT ONLY STRIKING, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, TELLS A VISUAL NARRATIVE. NEXT IS THE BODY TEXT. FOR NEWS STORIES, PUT THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS AT THE BEGINNING. HOWEVER, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS FOR FEATURE STORIES, WHERE YOU'RE ALLOWED TO BE MORE CREATIVE.

CHECK OUT OUR INSTAGRAM! [@UMBCSWSA](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ANY QUESTIONS, YOU CAN EMAIL SWSA AT UMBCSWSA@GMAIL.COM



[VIEW CONSTITUTION](#)



[WEBSITE](#)



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The Universities
AT SHADY GROVE



SOCIAL WORK STUDENT ASSOCIATION (SWSA) AT SHADY GROVE

About This Group

To provide social work students opportunities to meet and discuss ideas and concerns with other social work majors, and help students make connections and provide resources in communities. Along with promoting social work through community philanthropic activities, group activities, discussions, speakers, and other activities to social work students and all interested parties.



[Contact Us](#)

Officers

Addie Crowley
President

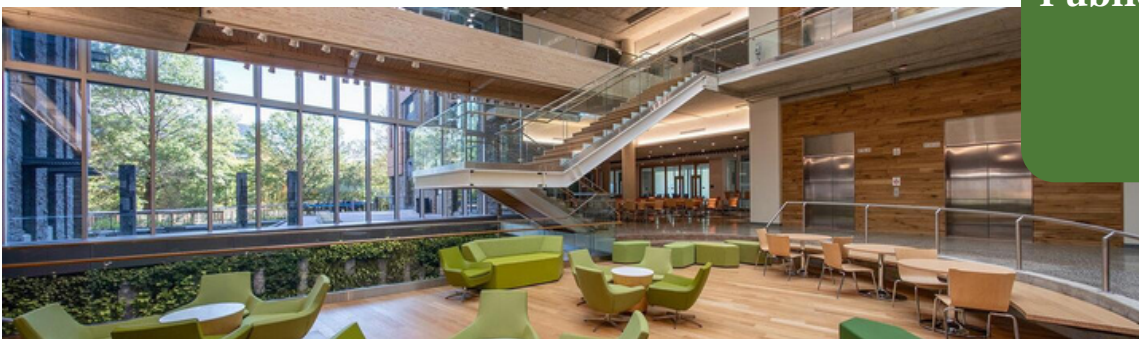
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swsasg](https://my3.my.umbc.edu/groups/swsasg)



usgswsa1@gmail.com



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Combined Programs, Double Majors, and Minors

Social Work students can enrich their degree by pairing it with programs offered across UMBC. Below are interdisciplinary options organized by department.

All social work majors are **required** to complete a minor or a second major of particular interest to the student. The minor provides students with the opportunity to explore another discipline in support of professional development.

All minor courses of study must be a minimum of 18 credit hours, 9 of which must be completed at the UMBC or USG campuses at the 300 or 400 level.

Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Public Health

For combined program details, visit the [Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Public Health's Combined Programs page](#).



Combined Programs:

- Public Health/Social Work Double Major
- Sociology/Social Work Double Major
- Sociology Minor/Social Work Major

Minors:

- [Public Health Minor](#)

Department of Emergency and Disaster Health Systems

Minors:

- [Public Administration/Policy Minor](#)



Department of Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies

Minors:

- [Gender and Women's Studies Minor \(GWST\)](#)
- [Critical Sexuality Studies Minor](#)



Combined Programs, Double Majors, and Minors Cont.

Department of Psychology

For combined program details, visit the [Department of Psychology's Combined Programs page](#).

Combined Programs:

- Social Work/Psychology Double Major

Minors:

- [Psychology Minor](#)

Erickson School of Aging Studies

Minors and Concentrations:

- [Minor Concentration in Management of Aging Services](#)
- [Minor Concentration in Health, Wellness, and Aging](#)
- [Minor in Aging Studies](#)



**THE ERICKSON SCHOOL
OF AGING STUDIES**

SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS
**MANAGEMENT OF
AGING SERVICES
MINOR**
**COMBINE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH
LEADERSHIP IN AGING SERVICES.**

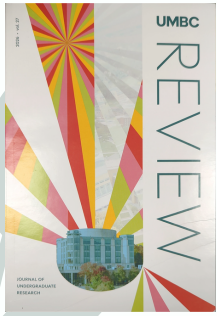
**YOUR SOWK COURSES
CAN FILL
2 ELECTIVE SLOTS**
APPROVED OPTIONS
SOWK 260 • SOWK 388
SOWK 389 • SOWK 470

YOU MAY ONLY NEED:
3 CORE COURSES + 1 AGNG ELECTIVE
• AGNG 200
• AGNG 300
• AGNG 310

**SCAN TO
GET STARTED**


**TALK
WITH US**
Student Pathways &
Engagement Coordinator
rumshak1@umbc.edu

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF LONGEVITY THROUGH SOCIAL WORK.



UMBC Review: Journal of Undergraduate Research Vol. 27

Maryland State Bill 83, Public Health - Overdose and Infectious Disease Prevention Services Program: Critical Analysis and Advocacy Efforts
Corey Bryce - Dr. Kerri Evans

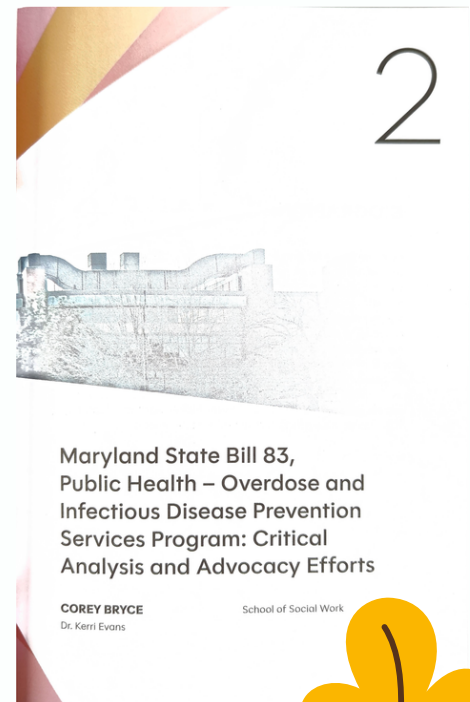
We would like to congratulate Corey Bryce on getting published in UMBC Review. Corey expresses her gratitude to Dr. Kerri Evans for her mentorship. *The UMBC Review is a peer-reviewed publication, completely directed by UMBC undergraduate students. All of the articles published in the UMBC Review go through a rigorous peer review process. I would like to offer a few details listed in the publication about Corey and her research.*

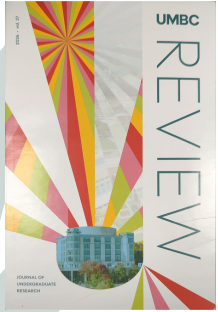
Corey Bryce is a returning student and social work major & sociology minor planning to graduate spring 2027. She works as a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist for Howard County's Health Department, allowing her to provide peer support and harm reduction education to members of the community as well as volunteering for the Maryland Alliance for Sensible Drug Policy. She plans to obtain a master's degree in social work and continuing her work on substance use, harm reduction, and public health.

Corey was introduced to the intricate processes of policy shaping and being shaped by social problems when taking social welfare and policy courses with Dr. Evans.

The abstract describes the focus on the research stemming from Maryland facing a fatal overdose epidemic and the influence of social factors and policy decisions.

The project considers Maryland State Bill 83 (2025) and conducts a policy analysis. The bill, which failed to pass the 2025 legislative session, focused on overdose prevention sites (OSPs) that offer evidence-based tactics to reduce harm. The paper includes an intentional advocacy plan to support OSP bill passage.





UMBC Review: Journal of Undergraduate Research Vol. 27

Evaluating the Relationship Between Frequency of Family Visits and Happiness Levels Among Older Adult Residents in Retirement Homes

Beryl Fuamazeh - Dr. Nancy Kusmaul

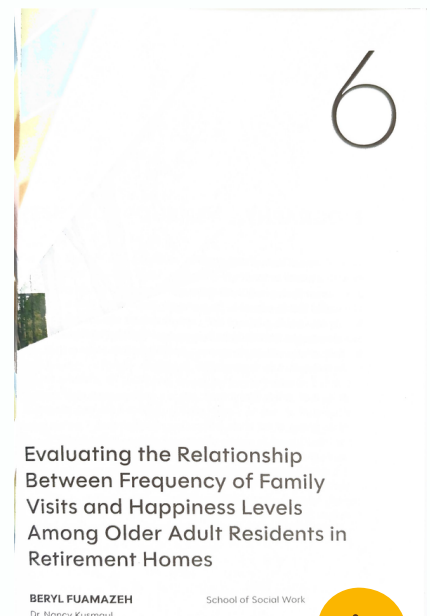
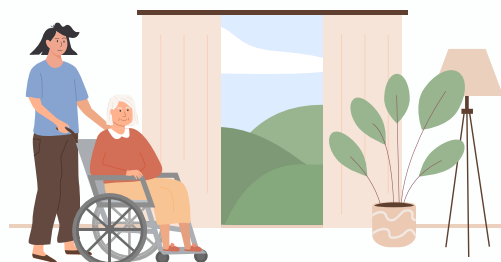
We also want to congratulate Beryl Fuamazeh on getting published in UMBC Review as well. Beryl expresses her gratitude to Dr. Nancy Kusmaul for her invaluable guidance and support and also thanks Dr. Louise Murray and the Erickson School of Aging for their continued support and encouragement.

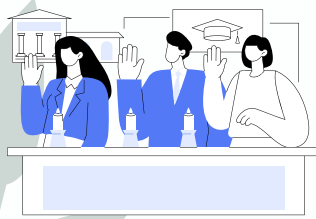
Beryl Fuamazeh graduated from UMBC in Spring 2026 with a major in Biological Sciences and a minor in Health, Wellness, and Aging and She is starting medical school in fall of this year. In her research journey, she has worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) in retirement communities since 2022.

Building close relationships with older adults led to many conversations with residents in which they confided that they missed their families. Those conversations stayed with Beryl who wanted to explore methods of better supporting an aging population.

Under Dr. Kusmaul's mentorship, she designed and conducted a study in spring of 2025 that examined the relationship between frequency of family visits and happiness levels among retirement home residents. The aim was to create awareness of the importance of staying connected with loved ones.

The abstract describes loneliness as a significant concern for the population and focuses on family visitation as a key factor in promoting emotional well-being and reducing social isolation. The findings were produced through an observational study conducted over one semester. The research involved biweekly surveys and reviews of visit logs.





2026 Phi Alpha Honor Society Induction Ceremony



Congratulations to our **2026 Phi Alpha inductees**:

*Tal Amit Adashek, Sean Erik Alvarado, Ashley Barrientos, Mischa Blevins , Willow Eve Brandey, Addie Crowley, Jenifer Cruz-Reyes, Nora Erabhaoui, Shannelle Hanson, Sergio I. Hernandez, Monique D. Holman, Mandi R. Kirk, Amy Lennon, Marina Leon, Raquel Mejia, Cherly Montano Herrera, Vanesa F. Navarrete, Sheilla Nkwenji, Angelina O'Day, Oluwaseun Titiade Olejiya, Cindy Melissa Orteiz, Josephine Prentice, Kolby Reese, Alexis Russell, Oliver Guy Trent Salter, Viorina S. Smith, Banka Djamilat Toure, Tiffany J. Townes, Melitza Victoria-Escobar, Alycia Wilson and our new **Honorary Member**: Kate Arbaugh*

The new Phi Alpha members were celebrated in an evening ceremony at UMBC Albin O. Kuhn Library Gallery on April 6, 2026.



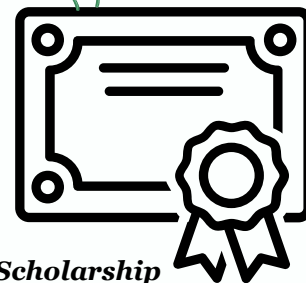
To learn how to join Phi Alpha Honor Society: Click [Here](#)



Student News



2026 Student Awards Ceremony



Congratulations to our students for their outstanding achievements:

Sergio Hernandez was awarded the ***Shirley Bembry Scholarship Award***

Ariane Seltmann was awarded the ***Dr. Gust W. Mitchell Scholarship Award***

Ashley Vasquez was awarded the ***Tejal Khajuria Memorial Scholarship Award***

Jossalin Hughes was awarded the ***Susan Bernstein – Charlotte W. Newcombe Memorial Scholarship Award***

Oluwaseun Olejiya was awarded the ***Rose Grabania Tice Scholarship Award***

Victoria Saah was awarded the ***Tina D'Angelo Memorial Scholarship Award***

Claudia Majano was awarded the ***Rose Careri Scholarship Award***

Andin Dinga was awarded the ***Gladys Salpeter Kraft Scholarship Award***

Maria Hoffen, Mia Cannon, Teddy Gordon, Mel Miguel, Elizabeth Cruz, Viorina Smith, and Ingrid Winkler were awarded the ***Outstanding Social Work Seniors Award***

Oliver Salter was awarded the ***Shady Grove Outstanding Student Award***

Stephanie Williams was awarded the ***Outstanding Undergraduate Student Alumni Award***

Tiffany Townes was awarded the ***Title IV-E B.S.W. Student of the Year Award***

Each year, the Social Work Program offers several scholarships for students in the major.

Read more about each scholarship [here](#), or contribute to the social work program scholarships by clicking [here](#)!

