The Dean’s search committee has successfully concluded its work. It is my great pleasure to announce that Dr. Patrick Bordnick, Professor and Associate Dean for Research in the Graduate College of Social Work at the University of Houston, has accepted appointment as Tulane’s ninth Dean of Social Work, effective July 1, 2016. Above is a full story about Patrick and the energy and credentials he brings to our School.

Over the last few weeks, I have been asked on many occasions about my own plans. I’m not “retiring.” I am stepping down after 15 years on the job as the School’s dean. The University has generously afforded me a full-year sabbatical to retool, rejuvenate and even rejoice a little. Following this, I’ll return to the School as a tenured professor. I am excited about the year ahead but given the important work and very full agenda over the next several months, it doesn’t feel entirely real just yet. I know it will soon, but there is one more budget to deal with, the expansion of the School to the fifth floor of our building, new hiring, and lots of other deep and exciting engagements over the next couple of months. Despite this “unreal” feeling, I have made plans. I’m thrilled to continue and deepen my scholarly work and projects with my colleagues both here at the School and afar.

Dr. Reggie Ferreira and I are in the beginning stages of a study to examine the relationship between social vulnerability and resilience in relation to the trauma of our response to disasters.

Dr. Patrick Bordnick will take over as TSSW’s ninth dean on July 1. (Courtesy Photo)
“In Houston, we assessed the health and behavioral health disparities in the city and how the College of Social Work could serve the needs of the community. So when I was looking at New Orleans, I actually conducted a similar assessment. I learned that there was much commonality between Houston and New Orleans which is not apparent at a first glance. I thought some of the programs and strategies that we had developed in Houston would translate well in New Orleans and make a similar impact in the community. I was also excited by the strong clinically-focused students and faculty at TSSW. I think putting together strong community-focused programs with clinically-oriented students is the way we’ll move forward in New Orleans and grow TSSW.”

Patrick holds a bachelor’s in psychology, a Master’s in Social Work, and a Master’s in Public Health. He completed his Doctorate at the University of Georgia School of Social Work. He completed an NIH-funded post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston focused on smoking and substance abuse. In 2000, Patrick returned to the University of Georgia as a faculty member. While at Georgia, he received his first NIH grant to use virtual reality technology to study nicotine dependence. In 2007, he joined the University of Houston where he founded the Virtual Reality Clinical Research Laboratory. The lab is a state-of-the-art facility that uses the latest computerized technology to study human behavior for the assessment and treatment of addictions including alcohol, drugs, food, and other mental health disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

“In the future, I think my main goal is to raise the school’s reputation among the national and international communities for clinical training, community practice, and disaster mental health programs including disaster leadership training,” said Patrick. “I know these are lofty goals for the TSSW but I think being recognized on the national level is important. It’s about taking all the strengths of the talented faculty and students that are here in the school and putting the puzzle pieces together.” He goes on to say “We have a lot of talented researchers here, so getting more federal funding and doing community-level prevention and intervention research is very important. It serves the research mission of the school along with giving something back to the community. Serving the community is one of my core beliefs and I want to incorporate this belief into my long term plan for the school.”

But why Tulane?

“It was about finding the right fit,” he said. “When I saw the Tulane opening and I learned more about the TSSW, I grew more and more excited about the prospect of coming to New Orleans. It felt right. I literally went home the evening after my interview and told my wife that Tulane feels like where I belong.”

Outside of being a Dean, Patrick has three daughters – 10, 11 and 13 years old – and is married to Allison, who is an epidemiologist/toxicologist. All of Patrick’s children play soccer. Instead of early Saturday morning cartoons, his family watches as many international soccer matches as they can especially his family’s favorite team, Manchester United.

The avid photographer also has three dogs – a Great Dane, a rescued Labrador mix and a rescued Shih Tzu along with one cat. Patrick said the entire family loves all types of music from rock to country to blues, so New Orleans should offer them a chance to expand their love even more.

When asked what he hoped people thought about the TSSW, Patrick hopes TSSW will evoke thoughts of strong clinical practice and community based social work programs working to eliminate health and behavioral health disparities in New Orleans and beyond.

Incoming Dean Patrick Bordnick visited the school in March with his family including wife Allison Stock and three children, left to right -- Fang Hua (Age 10), Ying (Age 13) and Mae Ying (Age 11). Bordnick will take over as Dean on July 1. (Photo by Joseph Halm)
Although our alumni are no longer roaming our halls in search of knowledge, our students are just as hungry as those more experienced hands who are reading this. Here are just a couple projects going on in the community, in the classroom and in our faculty’s research arenas.

The Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy (DRLA) at TSSW has been awarded a $3.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to implement the second phase of its Disaster Resilience Leadership (DRL) program over the next three years.

Established in 2009, the DRLA trains current and future leaders in disaster resilience and humanitarian assistance in vulnerable communities across Africa, South and Southeast Asia and the Caribbean. The grant will enable the academy to expand its reach to India and Central America.

“Central America suffers from recurring flash floods, landslides, tropical storms, forest fires and earthquakes and is the world’s second-most vulnerable region (behind Southeast Asia) to climate change,” said DRLA executive director Ky Luu. “And India is highly prone to a wide array of natural, climate-induced and man-made disasters.”

Luu said the grant validates DRLA’s global mission “to promote resilient outcomes in the most vulnerable communities by strengthening local leadership capacity.” That mission is achieved, in part, through executive short courses, professional development and graduate and certificate programs, along with online tools and knowledge sharing.

DRLA faculty are in the process of identifying partners in India and Central America. Later this month, a contingent of high-level Indian government officials and academics will travel to New Orleans to see the DRLA program in action and meet with local disaster risk management stakeholders. The trip includes meetings with the U.S. State Department, USAID, FEMA, and the Department of Defense in Washington, D.C.

Having served as a DRL fellow and partner, Mohamed Osman of Mogadishu, Somalia, said the program fosters a culture of dialogue, a core building block for long-term peace and stability.

“It proves that building disaster capacity of vulnerable communities and thus saving lives depends on the capacity of our leadership, its innovative thinking and commitment to proven leadership skills and competencies.”

The former Tulane School of Social Work Building will soon become Mussafer Hall, thanks to a $5 million gift from David Mussafer, a 1985 graduate of Tulane, and his wife Marion.

Mussafer Hall will be a transformative space uniting career programming, academic advising and success services.

“David Mussafer himself is a model of the success that great academic and career planning can achieve,” Tulane President Mike Fitts said. “Tulane is indebted to him for this remarkable gift. His generosity will make us one of the few universities in the country to combine in one central location services dedicated to the success of students in their academics, careers and lives.”

Mussafer said he was drawn to the project after discussing Tulane’s needs with Fitts during a recent visit to campus with his father, Maurice Mussafer.

“It struck a chord with us,” David Mussafer said. “Young people are looking to take their studies and careers to the next level, and how great it will be to have a central place in the heart of campus to showcase these very important services.”

Mussafer is managing partner and co-chairman of the executive committee of Advent International, a Boston-based global private equity firm. He is a member of the Board of Tulane, the President’s Council at Tulane and founder of the Mussafer Family Endowment Fund, which supports the Cowen Institute for Public Education. He received a bachelor of science in management from the A.B. Freeman School of Business and an MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

The 16,000-square-foot building is currently being renovated, and plans are in the works to add a 7,400-square-foot extension in 2017. Together, the two buildings will feature 72 private offices, a multipurpose room, a research room, conference and breakout rooms, flexible use spaces, and an outdoor study space.

On Dec. 11, 2015, TSSW welcomed its newest group of alumni to its ranks as the 83-person Class of 2015 walked across the stage at Dixon Hall. Congrats to all of our graduates. (Photo by Ken Redler)
Would you like to belong to a TSSW Alumni LinkedIn Group?

We are looking to grow our School’s alumni group.

Here’s what you can do:

• Join LinkedIn and create your page
• IMPORTANT – identify on your page that you are a graduate/affiliate of TSSW

We currently have 325 members and growing, joining this group will help the School and you stay connected to all TSSW alumni.

Questions?
Contact Sheila Gold at 504-862-3488 or sgold@tulane.edu

Q&A with Verna Aucoin, TSSW Development Director

By Kirby Messinger, Development

TSSW is excited to welcome the newest member of our development team -- Verna Aucoin. Below is a quick question and answer session for our alumni to get to know Verna a little better.

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I’m a third generation New Orleanian and come from a big family – I’m one of 10! I have been married for 32 years and I have two children. They are 25 and 27 years old.

Why Tulane and why fundraising?

I worked for several non-profit organizations and after Hurricane Katrina I decided to make a career change and enter the world of fundraising. I had worked for years in healthcare and hospitals, and I really just wanted to try something new. I took a position with De La Salle High School in New Orleans as a development officer, and I really enjoyed the work. I love getting to know alumni and parents and hearing about their experiences. Tulane seemed like a great next step for me and I’ve worked here in fundraising since 2012. I just love what I do.

Why are you excited to work with the School of Social Work?

I’ve worked extensively in the healthcare field – from adult-day care to outpatient centers to the full continuum of care – and I have always appreciated the role of social workers. The work that they do is so important. Especially after Hurricane Katrina when disaster resilience and crisis work was so important, social workers were an integral component of our recovery. Social workers do work that matters, and I am so happy to be supporting them and the programs that make a difference.

How can alumni and friends of TSSW get in touch with you?

I am really excited to meet alumni and friends of the School of Social Work. My door is always open. I can’t wait to share the exciting work of our faculty and students. You can reach me at vaucoin1@tulane.edu or by phone at 504-314-7631.

Continued from Page 1....

MARKS: FLUTE PLAYING IN FUTURE PLANS

Charles Figley and I are considering expanding our work in Israel where we identified resilience truisms based on interviews with the country’s leading trauma experts. The idea here is to replicate the methodology in distinctly different cultural contexts such as Japan, the U.S., and South America.

I will be teaching the Journey to India class for the 15th consecutive year in September, a class that is very special to me. Over these many years in India, Karma Lhundup has been my trusted colleague, guide, and dear friend. Karma serves as the caretaker for an extraordinary community, and he and I have made plans to create a book on this community. The place is Tso Pema, deep in the Himalayas. It is a small village sacred to Tibetan Buddhists, Hindus and members of the Sikh religion. Above the village is a small community of monks and nuns, yogis and yoginis who live in lifetime retreat in a system of caves which were thought to be along the route of Padmasambhava, the Indian saint who brought Buddhism to Tibet in the 8th century. Karma and I will be conducting interviews with this community to illustrate the meaning it holds for its members and share their very special wisdom. This will be coupled with sensitive portraits.

There are a few personal plans which a year sabbatical will permit and fall into the rejuvenating category. I’m dusting off my flute and looking for a flute teacher. Swing dancing sounds pretty inviting, as does floating in a kayak in Louisiana’s many magnificent waterways and I can never get enough of working on photography. Of course, there are grandchildren which personify the whole idea of rejoicing.

By Kirby Messinger
TSSW alums Katie Ryan (MSW ’14) has always been interested in helping others, and she’s never been afraid of a challenge.

That’s why when she had the opportunity to help open a Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services (PCHAS) office in New Orleans she jumped at the chance to become the office’s Child and Family Specialist.

Katie received the opportunity, thanks to the previous trauma work she conducted as an undergrad as well as her experiences at her MSW internship at Hynes Charter School.

When Lakeview Presbyterian Church offered to host the new PCHAS office, Katie also got to carry over many of her clients from her internship.

“PCHAS is very interested in keeping strong relationships, so we can keep our families until the youngest child in their family turns 18,” she said. “Kids can be in our care for 18 years, or they can be in our care for a couple of weeks. It all depends on what their family situation is.”

Katie meets with five to nine clients a day from home visits to community visits at schools or at her office, which is a play therapy office. PCHAS offers this child therapy free of charge and also conducts parenting classes through TBRI, an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI uses Empowering Principles to address physical needs, Connecting Principles for attachment needs, and Correcting Principles to disarm fear-based behaviors. While the intervention is based on years of attachment, sensory processing, and neuroscience research, the heartbeat of TBRI is connection.

“We have clients who bring home millions of dollars a year to clients who barely bring home a penny a year,” she said. “We have a total spectrum of services. It’s amazing to see how our parenting classes affect people because everyone is going through something different.”

Katie even has a service dog – named Roux – to help with the therapy sessions.

“Our caseload is anywhere between 12 and 14 families that we go into the homes to help the families,” she said. “For example, I have a homeless mom and eight month old with two children in Philadelphia. We were able to step in and give her the financial assistance she needed to get into an apartment and care for her children. That’s what the child and family program is for. We want to give people a step up.”

PCHAS stepped in to pay the security deposit and a half a month of rent to get her into the apartment. Now, they’re also providing free parenting classes and other assistance for the children.

The New Orleans office, which opened in Feb. 2015, continues to grow despite not receiving a dollar in state or federal funding. In 2015, PCHAS of Texas and Louisiana helped more than 3,457 children and families. The program is funded through grants, such as from the Kellogg Foundation, as well as donors from private individuals to church communities.

“It’s amazing what people give,” Katie said. “Some people only give five dollars a year, and other people give thousands. We’re blessed to have this support.”

Katie, who earned a Certificate in Disaster Mental Health & Trauma Studies along with her MSW, said her TSSW education was key.

“My trauma work at Tulane really helped me understand how crisis management works with these families, not just in the schools but in real life, and how it impacts every day of their day.”

As for the future, Katie is applying for her doctorate in social work in trauma in school shootings.

“A lot of my clients have been affected by gun violence, and I see what an impact it has on their lives,” she said. “I want to be able to help make even more of a difference.”
Thanks to all the alumni, who came out for our 2015 CEU event, reception and football tailgate. More than 100 alumni attended the events and enjoyed an evening of music, food and good times, and several even answered the question “Why Social Work?”

Hope to see everyone again this Fall on October 29!

SAVE THE DATE -- Oct. 29 is Homecoming 2016!
Bob Axelrod, LCSW, (MSW ’79) is now in private practice serving families and children in Sterling, Va. During his lengthy career in that community, he has worked for Juvenile Court, Northwest Center for Community Mental Health and Fairfax County Public Schools. He has extensive experience with children, adolescents, couples, and families, and is well versed in substance abuse issues. Bob has an interest in group dynamics and is certified to supervise clinicians earning their licenses in the State of Virginia.

Rebecca L. Fritz (MSW ’96) is Program Director at Gilda’s Club in Chicago, an affiliate of the Cancer Support Community, where she oversees the clinical program and membership. She supervises two clinicians, one outreach coordinator and a program administrator. She also coordinates with Program Directors of other Gilda’s Clubs around the U.S.

Elliot Pinsly, LCSW, (MSW ’07) currently resides in Nashville, Tenn, and is Director of Marketing & Business Development at Centerstone, one of the nation’s largest not for profit behavioral healthcare organizations. Since joining Centerstone in February 2009 as a clinician on the Intensive In-Home Treatment team, Elliot has served in numerous roles including Referral & Outreach Coordinator, Authorizations Team Manager, and Intensive In-Home Therapist. His wife, Jessica Pinsly, recently gave birth to the couple’s second child, Matthew Parker Pinsly, weighing in at 7 lbs., 11 oz. He joins his older brother, Aidan Bailey Pinsly, who is now 3 years old. Elliot also serves as the President and Chairman of the Davidson County Community Advisory Board, a 501c3 public charity organization that provides advocacy and resource support for the Department of Children’s Services.

In Memoriam

Doyce Bennett Ward (MSW ’58) passed away on Friday, August 28, 2015, at the V.A. Nursing Home in Jackson, Miss. Ward was born on Jan. 7, 1932, in French Camp, Miss. He served in the U.S. Army then returned home where he furthered his education at Southern Miss, Tulane, and Berkley pursuing a career in social work. He retired from Mississippi State Hospital as Director of Social Services. He was a member of Daniel Memorial Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife, Virgie L. Ward; children, Steve Ward (Donna), Tommy Ward, Debbie Dunlap (Fred); brother, Bobby Ward; brother-in-law, Bill Johnson; grand children, Matt Dunlap (Megan), Cliff Dunlap, Kaylan Ward, Angel Hager and Victoria Simpson (Cory); 4 great grandchildren and a host of nieces and nephews.

Visit offers glimpse into social work in Cuba

“It’s not like here.”

That’s how Odalys de la luz González Jubán, president of the Cuban Society of Social Workers in Health Care (SOCUTRAS), started to answer a student’s question during her weeklong October visit in New Orleans hosted by the Office of Global Programs at the Tulane University School of Social Work.

González said state participation is the biggest difference in social services.

“There’s much less involvement here,” she said. “I think social workers have government support here, but not to its fullest potential. I feel like there is more action here, but it’s more through programs or projects that are not regarding the state. I feel like there is involvement, but it is more in the private realm and more for individual interests and not at the societal level.”

As president of SOCUTRAS, González works to help integrate social work into the Cuban national health system and also advocates for Cuban social work around the world. In addition, she is a scholar, educator and practitioner of social work. It was her first visit to the United States.

“More than anything, just to have this opportunity has been amazing,” she said. “I could have never dreamt this.”

Her trip included visits to Kingsley House, the first settlement house in the South, and Esperanza Charter School, a social work field placement site working with Spanish-speaking community members in a school setting. She had a meeting with New Orleans Children’s Health Project.

She also visited the Veterans Administration Hospital, where the director awarded her a commendation medal.

González said she hopes to help erase the distorted view of Cuba and that people will visit the country to live the realities of Cuba, as well as people from Cuba doing the same in the United States.
WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Please share your thoughts, ideas, and information to be used in Postscripts. You can also visit our web site at http://tssw.tulane.edu/ and click on the alumni tab to complete this form or for additional alumni updates.

Name: ___________________________________________ Year of graduation: ______________________
Address: ________________________________________ City: __________________ State: _____ Zip code: __________
E-mail address: __________________________________ Phone number: ________________________________

Degrees/certificates earned: ________________________________________________________________

1) What are you currently doing professionally?

2) Have you received any special awards or honors, or have you been published? Please specify.

3) Have you been involved with Tulane School of Social Work since graduation? If not, what events or special services would draw you to become involved?

4) Do you have special news that you would like to share with other alumni (marriage, children, relocation, hobbies, new projects)?

5) Is there anything you would like to start seeing in Postscripts? Is there anything you think should be omitted from the newsletter?

Please complete and return to:
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