

Profile: Leslie Alyssa Bamba

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Leslie Alyssa Bamba

Leslie Alyssa Bamba, LCSWA, is an online Doctor of Social Work (DSW) student living in Texas. Bamba holds a Master of Social Work (MSW) from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Beyond being a doctoral candidate, Bamba is a Peer Mentor through Tulane School of Social Work's [Peer Mentoring Program](#), which aims to decrease feelings of isolation, increase guidance on adjusting to doctoral studies, and provide mentoring experience and training to recent or soon-to-be DSW graduates. We've asked her a few questions about the DSW program and her experience as a Peer Mentor.

Why did you decide to get your DSW? Why Tulane?

I decided to pursue my DSW for greater career mobility and choice, particularly in administrative, supervisory, or research roles. Prior to my acceptance to Tulane, I completed a semester with another DSW program and decided the program did not align with my career goals and family needs. I selected Tulane's DSW program because of its flexibility, rigor, and alignment with CSWE standards.

Did you receive mentorship in the early days of your DSW program? How was that?

I received peer mentorship my first semester and it was foundational to my success in the program. My mentor, Dr. Karlissa Wise was the catalyst to understanding the importance of cohort support during the DSW journey. Her monthly check-ins eased my first semester nerves and provided the support needed to develop my DSW battle rhythm. She provided me with the opportunity to co-author her qualitative study, teaching me the fundamentals of writing for publication, while enabling me to complete the secondary APP early into program. Through Dr. Wise's guidance I have created my DSW community, and it has carried me through the short but intense seasons of this program.

Why did you decide to become a mentor?

Being a mentor is an opportunity to give back to our DSW community, just as my mentor, Dr. Wise gave to my peers and me.

Share a little bit about your APP and the work you do, both academically and professionally. In what ways has the DSW program helped you grow?

A majority of my social work career has been serving the veteran and aging community. I am in my last semester of the DSW program and serving as a DSW teaching fellow in the Disaster Resilience Academy under [Dr. Stephanie Felder](#), TSSW Adjunct Professor. My primary APP is a systematic scoping review of the Veteran Health Administration's whole health services and healthcare outcomes among U.S. veterans. My group - Dr. Felder and Micheal Krusinsky, DSW candidate, and I - submitted our manuscript to the Journal of Military Social Work and Behavioral Health this month. My secondary APP was a collaborative qualitative study of child protective service worker safety, led by my DSW mentor, Dr. Karlissa Wise, Dr. Latoya Carter and DSW candidate, Rachal Barr. We published our study in May 2024.

Because of the DSW program I am confident in my abilities to research, problem solve, analyze policy and implement effective solutions to complex problems. I am a better researcher and social worker. I know the skills I have gained through the program will enable me to serve my community more effectively. I have developed lifelong connections and friendships that extend beyond the DSW program.

What's your best tip for incoming DSW students?

1. Create a DSW community you can lean on throughout the short but intense seasons of the program.
2. We are all wanting to do great things with our research but be mindful of the program timeline and APP feasibility. You can always continue your research after graduation. Sometimes it is better to scale down, collaborate and select projects that are manageable that will get you to the DSW finish line!
3. Be proactive and engage with our DSW community. Our DSW support staff, professors, and colleagues have a wealth of knowledge and experience, tap into their superpowers!
4. Overall, stay curious and inspired by the opportunity to grow and connect with some really cool people!

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